

Testimony in support of HB 7359 AN ACT CONCERNING A LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK

March 21, 2019

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and honorable members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Polly Sioux from New London, CT and Board Member of OutCT testifying in support of HB 7359 AN ACT CONCERNING A LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK.

OutCT is an LGBTQIA Organization that Serves Southeastern CT. OutCT's Mission is building a community through educational, cultural, and social programming that promotes acceptance, tolerance and understanding of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

As co-chair of OutCT's Youth Group, I am keenly aware of the needs of the LGBTQIA+ youth in Southeastern Connecticut, and I sincerely believe that these needs are not unlike those felt by the youth throughout the state. The next generation is facing significant issues around the redefining of gender and gender non-conforming. This puts them in great need of both medical and emotional support. Certainly there are a few clinicians in the area who serve this group of people, but their number is small and their resources are limited. Many of the youth that OutCT serves are socioeconomically challenged, either by income, ethnicity, religion, or family rejection. Because we are in a relatively small city in a relatively small state, our youth do not have access to the resources that they truly need. This bill provides them an opportunity not only to have their voices heard at the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of the state, but it also gives them hope that those in the positions to enact change will do so in a way that has their best interest in mind. In short, this gives hope to an often overlooked (yet rapidly growing) demographic in the State of Connecticut.

I urge the committee to vote favorably in support of HB 7359 to address the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in Connecticut and build a healthier and safer environment for the community. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards

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