

Chairman Abrams, Chairman Steinberg, Ranking Members Somers and Pettit:

I respectfully submit the following testimony in support of [House Bill 6540](#), An Act Concerning the Prevention of HIV. I currently serve as the President of New Britain Pride, a civic organization with the mission of celebrating and educating the greater New Britain area about LGBTQ+ individuals and our community.

I believe that the proposed bill is important because, despite progress being made in HIV treatment, HIV remains a significant public health concern. More than 10,000 people are living with HIV in Connecticut.¹ Young gay and bisexual men of color are particularly at risk.² There is still no cure available for HIV, and treatment is complex, expensive, and life-long. By allowing minors to consent to PrEP, we would reduce the risk of HIV infection.

This bill would also update existing state law to prevent the transmission of HIV among young people. Currently, minors may receive HIV treatment without parental consent³ – but they cannot independently consent to PrEP, a medication used to prevent HIV transmission in the first place. *An Act Concerning the Prevention of HIV* would implement a targeted provision to address this harmful gap by adding language to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 19a-592.

I strongly support House Bill 6540 and urge members of the committee to vote for this important piece of legislation. The best thing we can do, as a society, is ensure that we provide preventative measures - This bill does that by ensure that youth have access to PrEP before contracting HIV. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

John Board
President, New Britain Pride
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¹ Connecticut Department of Public Health (2019), *HIV in Connecticut: Data Reported Through 2018*, <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DPH/HIV-Surveillance/CT-HIV-Fact-Sheet.pdf?la=en>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014), *HIV and Young Men Who Have Sex with Men*, https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/pdf/hiv_factsheet_ymsm.pdf

³ Conn. Gen. Stat. §19a-592