

Testimony in Support of House Bill 6540
AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF HIV

By Kelly Wuzzardo
Committee Chair, New Haven LGBTQ Youth Task Force
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To the distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

I respectfully submit the following testimony in support of H.B. 6540, *An Act Concerning the Prevention of HIV*. I am a committee chair with the New Haven LGBTQ Youth Task Force, which advocates for LGBTQ youth in the areas of education, health, and social services.

I believe the proposed bill is important because stigma, homophobia, and privacy concerns pose obstacles to HIV related testing and treatment for youth. Many of the youth who would most benefit from PrEP are unable to access it due to fear of parental rejection. The number one question we get from students is “can I go to my doctor and discuss my gender identity/sexuality without them calling my parents?” LGBTQ youth have a high percentage of homelessness (compared to other groups) because families kick them out of the house when they learn that they are LGBTQ. Allowing youth to consent would foster trusting relationships between young people and adult providers by opening new avenues for preventative care. Providers may also serve as entry points to resources and support for talking to family members or other trusted adults about issues related to HIV, sexual health, and identity.

I strongly support H.B. 6540 and I urge you to vote favorably for this important bill. No young person should have to wait until after contracting HIV to access care. Your support will protect the health and safety of Connecticut’s children—ALL children. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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