

Dear esteemed Chairs, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee,

Thank you very much for giving the opportunity to testify on HB 5654.

Before I was sworn in for my first mandate, I like many of my colleagues was working on bills introduction. It might have been too many bills some said, but I wanted to make sure I brought discussions on many domains involved with social justice.

One of my close friends was at my home when I thought I had introduced all the bills I prioritized, and my phone buzzed and I received a notification from the NY Times that NYC had passed the non binary gender option on birth certificates. My friend that was there is one of the leading state activists for LGBTQI Rights. We immediately drafted together the statement of purpose and intent of the bill, while researching what other states and cities had done at the time. Please see below the email, two OLR reports from 2019, and from a few days ago.

Why did we immediately work on this? Social Justice!

I quote Diana Lombardi, Executive Director from the Connecticut TransAdvocacy Coalition who wrote in testimony on the 2019 House Bill 5505 "Can you imagine what you would feel if your ID doesn't match your gender?"

For nonbinary people they face that every day, having ID that doesn't match their gender presentation creates barriers in employment, housing, education."

It is easy to understand how misrepresentation of one's identity on any document on the record or ID creates issues as shown above, but also easy to imagine the impact in terms of mental health.

These times we live in, are showing us more than ever the hate, injustice, inequities, violence, dismissiveness, that have "always" been here with us and around us. There are many efforts to boost and spread social justice such as healthcare reform, support for undocumented immigrants, the fight against environmental racism, restoring voting rights to parolees and incarcerated individuals, fighting climate change and the fight for nursing homes standards, a push for an increase in a failing mental health support, and much more. The legislature will promote a more equitable and just administrative system by giving the option(s) needed to acknowledge one's identity. Giving one or more non binary gender options is as important as giving the option for a person to fill their name.

I once again thank the members of the committee for taking the time to read through this email and ask that you please support HB5654 and vote to pass the bill out of committee.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Kind regards

Rep. Michel (he/him)

***CT State Representative for the 146th House District,
Honored to represent Stamford's South End, Shippan and Downtown,
Assistant to the Majority Leader
Co-Chair of the Connecticut Animal Advocacy Caucus***

**Member of the Environment - Planning & Development - Transportation
Committees**

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