

# Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6638

**Title:** AN ACT REVISING THE STATE'S ANTIDISCRIMINATION STATUTES.

**Vote Date:** 3/28/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/3/2023

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Judiciary Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

Currently, "age" is the only protected class otherwise included in the other antidiscrimination statutes to not be included in Sec. 46a-58. The inclusion of "age" will not only ensure that the protected classes are consistent between the various provisions, but also because adding it would convert a violation of the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act into a state violation as well. This bill also modernizes the definition of "sexual orientation", which currently dates back to 1991. The definition uses the outdated (and to many, offensive) terminology of "preference" and specifically refers to Connecticut's Penal Code regarding sex offenses. By excluding behaviors which constitute violations of that chapter, the definition plays into longstanding stereotypes connecting homosexuality, bisexuality, and criminal deviancy. This bill fixes those problems and moves the definition to the chapter's definitional section.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

None expressed.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Tanya Hughes, Executive Director, State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO):** She testified on behalf of both herself and CHRO Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp in support of adding "age", refining the definition of "sexual orientation", and deleting the word "preference" in the State's Antidiscrimination Statutes. She testified that current policies are out of date and, as such, should be revised in accordance with more modern, updated language. Explaining that this bill is intended to amend an umbrella anti-

discrimination policy, she offers that a combination of the lack of these amendments would mean that the state is failing to support the groups noted by this language.

**Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut**

**(ACLU):** She testified in support of revising the State's Antidiscrimination Statutes as she believes that the passage of such a bill would enable all people of LGBTQ+ background to live authentically, without harassment, discrimination, or violence. She emphasizes that such changes would benefit the described community in work settings, other public settings, as well as in their general lives. She cites previous decisions that the state has made in support of similar initiatives and offers that the language in such initiatives is now outdated and, as such, needs to be amended through this act to support more modern definitions of associated topics. Overall, she explains that adding "age" to the list of protected classes and modernizing the definition of sexual orientation will help to bring the state in alignment with the majority of the rest of the states in the country.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**James McGovern:** He testified in opposition to the bill, citing that the amendment does not do enough to protect people from discriminatory practices. Rather, he offers that protections against discrimination should extend to include political discourse in online settings, and that like issues related to gender or other attributes of identity need be protected, so should freedom of speech.

**Reported by:** James McNealey

**Date:** April 3, 2023