

June 5, 2023

To: Connecticut Legislature

From: Jeffery M. Cleghorn, Esq.

Re: Testimony in Opposition to CT HB6638 - An Act Revising the State's Antidiscrimination Statutes

I am writing in opposition to CT HB6638 and in support of the Family Institute of Connecticut's concerns about HB6638 opening the door to nondiscrimination protections for celibate pedophiles and to object to the Act's redefinition of sexual orientation by replacing "sex" with "gender."

My interest and perspective are formed as a long-time gay-rights activist and attorney, most recently serving on the board of Lambda Legal (2015-2017) after beginning work in the gay movement in 1997 through 2003 on the legal staff of the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), and also serving on SLDN's Board from 2007 through 2013. I am a past president of the Stonewall Bar Association of Georgia and have also served on the boards of Georgia Equality and AID Atlanta ([biography attached](#)). I have, in recent years, become alarmed at the expansion of the gay rights movement to include phenomena that target children.

"Gender identity and sexual orientation are two different things," according to the National Center for Transgender Equality's website.

Sexual orientation is based on biologically determined sex. It describes whether a person experiences sexual or romantic attraction to men, women, or both, based on biological sex. The three orientations are commonly referenced as straight or heterosexual (exclusively opposite-sex attracted), gay/lesbian or homosexual (exclusively same-sex attracted), and bisexual (attracted to both sexes). Asexuality is a lack of sexual orientation.¹

HB6638 seeks to change the definition of "sexual orientation" to replace "sex" with "gender" and by redefining sexuality as an "identity" – thereby changing homosexuality into a "gender identity." HB6638's definitions section includes a separate entry for "Gender Identity or Expression," defined in a circular and therefore unhelpful manner, as "a person's gender-related identity [or expression]."

HB6638's language contains a definition of "Discrimination on the basis of sex" which evidences an awareness of sex as a biological reality by referencing the female sex's unique "pregnancy, child-bearing capacity." If gender and sex mean the same thing, then why not change this to "Discrimination on the basis of gender?" LGBTQ+/transgender activists, and the Queer Theory that blueprints their efforts, often assert gender is different from sex, arguing they possess an "innate gender identity" from birth. (They also argue gender is "fluid," a "social construct," and "on a spectrum," with little regard for their contradictions.)

¹ LGB Alliance USA lgbausa.org/definitions

If gender and sex are different things, then HB6638's redefinition of "sexual orientation" replacing "sex" with "gender" makes no sense. What is missing from HB6638 is a definition of Gender.

Further complications arise from the LGBTQ+/Transgender claims of the existence of many different genders, some say as many as "72" while others say it could be an "infinite" number. They assert these many different genders are each equivalent to the male and female genders and provide a corresponding list of exotic new pronouns for each.

Without a particular exclusion for pedophilia attraction, I'm concerned that MAPs could easily fit within one of the "identities" inside the LGBTQ+ gender world threatening the long fought for protections of gay men and women, lesbians and homosexuals. For these and other reasons, I caution you to be careful to exclude non-practicing pedophiles as a protected "sexual orientation" in this bill.

Background information

Jeff Cleghorn is a Georgia native, Army veteran, and retired lawyer. A 1984 graduate of North Georgia College in Dahlonega, he received a B.A. in Political Science. Afterwards, Jeff was commissioned as an Army intelligence officer and his military career took him from the DMZ in South Korea, to Checkpoint Charlie in (West) Berlin, to the Pentagon with the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Upon obtaining the rank of Major, Jeff left the Army in 1996 and enrolled in law school at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. In 1999, he began his legal career as Staff Attorney at the Service members Legal Defense Network (SLDN). Along with speaking out in the media, Jeff's advocacy on behalf of service members included White House and Congressional lobbying and acting as a liaison to senior Pentagon decision-makers.

Additionally, Jeff worked as a consultant to the San Francisco State University's Palm Center from 2003-05. He also served on SLDN's Board of Directors from 2007-13.

Jeff is a Past President of Atlanta's Stonewall Bar Association, and— in 2016—received its Longtime Service to the Community Award. Jeff was also the 2011 recipient of the Human Rights Campaign's Atlanta Dan Bradley Humanitarian Award. Jeff previously served on the Boards of Directors of AID Atlanta, Georgia Equality, and Lambda Legal (2015-17). His private law practice focused on family law litigation.