

Government Administration and Elections Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SJ-4

RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
CONCERNING DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX UNDER THE

Title: EQUAL PROTECTION CLAUSE.

Vote Date: 3/26/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/18/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration & Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This resolution moves forward a referendum to the voters of Connecticut to create an amendment to the state constitution that adds to the equal protection clause to provide that discrimination based on sex includes discrimination based on pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Lisa Thomas: Supports this bill as the Supreme Court has used a back door in their recent decision to establish abortion as a matter of state's rights by ultimately deciding to rule in favor of restrictive state laws and rule against state laws that protect and provide abortion access. States that this amendment is necessary for Connecticut to show its support for the right to choose and that the current laws in effect, while very strong, might not be enough to prevent the courts from ruling them null and void.

Matthew Blinstrubas, Executive Director, Equality CT: Supports this bill because it shows that Connecticut demonstrates a continued commitment to protecting the rights of LGBTQ+ citizens. States that there are aggressive efforts around the country to limit the rights of LGBTQ+ rights, and that these rights cannot be taken for granted in Connecticut, which

already shows a strong support for the community, and that they should be strengthened to ensure that rights are constitutionally enshrined.

Jennifer Levi, GLAD: Supports this bill because it recognizes the respect and dignity that Connecticut has already shown to the LGBTQ+ community by strengthening the protection of their rights to live without discrimination through the proposition of a constitutional amendment. States that this amendment shows a strong commitment to equal protection under the law and rejects any sort of discrimination based on arbitrary differences among citizens.

Gretchen Raffa, Vice President of Public Policy, Planned Parenthood: Supports this bill because abortion as a form of reproductive healthcare is a fundamental right that is being restricted across the country, resulting in one and three people of reproductive age being banned from having an abortion in their home state. States that this amendment will respect the decisions made by women and establishes those decisions as a private right that cannot be restricted by government and political interferences.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Mary Bascom: Opposes this bill because there is scientific proof that life begins at conception, and that recent developments have increased the likelihood of survival of prematurely born infants. States that this bill would allow abortion at any time during a pregnancy, even when the child is viable outside of the womb. Also states that she opposes gender-identity as a protected class and that mental illness is a common cause of gender confusion.

Cara Corson: Opposes this bill because it does not make sense to allow biological males to compete against women and girls in sports. States that there would be a clear advantage for these males if they decided to become a transgender woman and compete in women's sports. Also states that sex cannot change, as you cannot genetically change how you were born.

Rocco DiGenova, Culture of Life Director, Knights of Columbus: Opposes this bill as he believes the killing of unborn human beings is antithetical to the God-given right to life. States that these rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are threatened by the passage of this bill and that abortion is a barbaric way to destroy rights such as these.

Christopher Healy, Executive Director, Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference: Opposes this bill as it establishes the barbaric right to an abortion during the period of viability under the guise of protection from discrimination based on sex. States that this amendment goes against the principle that government should be promoting the protection of life, and that it establishes the value of life as something determined by politics instead of God. Also states that the ballot question for this amendment will be vague and might mislead voters into thinking the amendment does not allow certain extreme actions being taken such as late term abortion and sex changes for minors.

Lisa A. Maloney, LMFT, Executive Director, Pregnancy Support Center Inc.: Opposes this bill because abortion ends a life, and the Connecticut Constitution should be made so that lives can be free from danger or harm. States that this amendment does not acknowledge that

minors should not be making decisions about their gender, as they are not fully mentally developed and may not understand the consequences of such a decision, and that biological men should not be allowed to trample on women's sports.

Anne Manusky, President, CT Republican Assembly: Opposes this bill because the Connecticut Constitution allows the people to secure their liberties, rights, and privileges, which come from God. States that this bill does not acknowledge the fact that one cannot change their sex, and that sex is binary. Also states that there is no scientific proof that one can change their sex, and that the practice of gender affirming care or surgery is a pseudoscience.

Nichole Perreault: Opposes this bill because of her own experience of having two abortions that "nearly crushed her". States that abortions in the second and third trimester are some of the most traumatic experiences that a woman can have, and that many abortion advocates shame women who come out against the practice. Also states that 70% of abortions are coerced or unwanted, and that many women do not truly have a choice in whether or not they have an abortion.

Valerie Mara, Superintendent, Connecticut Catholic Schools: Opposes this resolution because it could open all religious exemptions to litigation and render these exemptions null and void. States that gender identity policies enforced at Catholic schools might become unlawful as they could be challenged under this new amendment, potentially prohibiting the schools from disqualifying hires for religious reasons and potentially forcing males identifying as women to be allowed to stay in women's dormitories. Also states that the state needs to acknowledge school choice and a parent's right to determine their child's education.

Susan Bradford, CT Citizen: Opposes this bill because it is wrong for biological males to compete against women in sports, and that it violates Title IX. Also states that unrestricted abortion is wrong and that the decision to change one's gender should not be allowed to do so until they reach legal age and that such medical procedures can harm child and teen development.

Danielle Pimentel, Policy Counsel, Americans United for Life: Opposes this resolution because, if passed, could legalize abortion up until birth, which can be both dangerous for the mother's physical health as well as her mental wellbeing. States that this resolution could threaten Connecticut's ability to create life-affirming laws and laws that protect the health and safety of the mother and her child. Also states that it fails to acknowledge the natural reality of pregnancy as something that is normal and is not something to be treated as a disability, illness, or something that hinders a woman's ability to live freely.

Kim Jones, Co-Founder, ICONS: Opposes this amendment because it manipulates the meaning of sex in law and doesn't recognize the reality that biological males will have an unfair advantage competing against women in sports if they are legally allowed to do so. States that the current CIAC policy to allow males to compete in women and girl's support has clearly resulted in the loss of awards for female athletes. Also states that this amendment would provide a legal basis for allowing males to change and use locker rooms with females, thus putting their safety and privacy at risk.

Reverend Walter Nagle, Christ the King Church: Opposes this bill because it not only protects the barbaric practice of abortion at any stage, but it is a threat to human dignity. States that the resolution would ironically fail to protect unborn children from discrimination, and that it does not do anything to benefit the common good, but rather is an affront to religious liberties and those who value human dignity and life. Also states that this amendment could be used to force doctors to perform abortions even if they do not want to.

Grace Rhoads, Student, University of Connecticut: Opposes this bill because it would destroy the fairness of competition that are afforded to athletes through sex-based competition and would threaten their safety in competition and their privacy in locker rooms. Acknowledges that wrestling is co-ed and broken down into weight classes because weight is an advantage in wrestling, and that the male nature of increased muscle mass and testosterone is a clear advantage in competition. Also states that the religious freedom of Islamic women who wear a hijab would be threatened as they would be forced to change in front of biological men, which their religion forbids.

Suzan Sarris: Opposes this bill because it prohibits restrictions on abortion related to viability and also prohibits a parental notification requirement, which only benefits sexual predators and not young girls. States that this amendment would also prevent any restrictions against biological males competing in women's and girls' sports who are able to gain a competitive advantage. Also states that it could remove a parent's right to approve or deny their child from undergoing a gender transition, which could leave the decision to make a dangerous and irreversible change in the hands of an underdeveloped minor.

Suzy Smith, President, Pro-Life Council of Connecticut: Opposes this bill because it creates a vague and unclear amendment that could require that abortion be legal for all nine months of pregnancy. States that Connecticut already has statutory language and an executive order protecting the right to an abortion and that this amendment is extreme and unnecessary.

Several individuals expressed opposition to this bill, stating that the creation of an amendment to protect abortion rights at any stage of pregnancy is wrong and antithetical to the God-given right to life. Many individuals expressed their opposition to protecting gender transition procedures as these procedures can be damaging and irreversible especially for minors who are not required to have their parent's consent and may have the mental capacity to understand the consequences. Many also expressed their concern with allowing biological males to compete against women and girls in sports, which will place female athletes at a competitive disadvantage while leaving them vulnerable to injuries in competition and a violation of their privacy in the locker room.

These individuals include:

Danah Augustin
Ella Beckman
Lydia Bennett
Alton Blodgett
David Bolio
Jo-Ellen Dzamko
Joseph Brady
Maurice E. Bridge

Mark Buchanan, MD
Joe Calabro
Louis Caruso
Amy Chai, MD, MS
Kathryn Chester
Leon Clark
Greg Cleghorn, Gay Rights Activist
Anthony Congdon
Gary Corigliano
Michelle Cretella, MD
Dr. Linda Dalessio
Sayre de Graffenried
Sandra DeBlois
Mark Desrosiers
Joan Doback
Mr. Lawrence Duffany Jr.
Nancy Eaton
Sally F.
Ms. Cara Fusco
Jennifer Garvey
Brian Gedicks
Charles Giampietro
Joan Gould
Michael Guglielmo
Ira Haas
Tracy Hanson
Warrell Hauck, Sr. VP and PhD
J. Homan
Mary Juber
Juhyon Kang
Owen Kieran, Physician
Paul Knag
Ms. C. Marcella Kurowski
Robyn Lee
Lawrence Logan
Donna Lopiano, President, Sports Management Resources LLC
Kristina Loverro
Jolene Madison
Diane Marek
Charity Mathias
Thomas Meehan Jr.
Maria Messier, MSN RN
David Miller
Christina Mitchell, Parent, ICONS
Robert Mullen
Jackie Nash
Linda Papertsian
Mrs. Marion Pierce
R.J. Preece, Independent Policy Consultant

Chris Rhoads
Beatrice Rocker
Sharon Rondeau
Peter Rubsam
Katherine Salata
George Sarris
Mrs. Mercedes Saur
Rachel Scoville
Judith Smith
Philip Smith
Carol Soisson
Nicole Stacy
Annmarie Sullivan
Mr. John Tartaglia
Lisa Thibodeaux
Melinda Ulrich
C Donald Waldo
Jack Waldo
Mrs. Tracy Wang
Mrs. Teresa Wells
James Williams
Emily Woolsey
Isabelle Zaffetti
Nicholas D'Amato
Maureen Ciardiello
Manju Gerber
Kimberlee Anderson
Michael Barton
Mrs. Susan Beck
Carolyn Bennett
Maria, Anonymous
Christine Bolio
Louise Bridge
Jenna Bristol
Gary Burt
Mr. Rocco Carbone
Claudia Catani
Michelle Chamberlain
Subha Clarke, M.D.
Richard and Eileen Colicchio
Zachary Corey
Juan Corrales
Al Cowan
Dennis Crowe, Member, CT Liberty Alliance
Jennifer Damon
Anthony deRito
Mrs. Jeanne DiGenova
Angelo DiPietro
Donna Doyker

Nadine Ernst
S Kieran Foley
Edward Gales
Tom Garvey
Mrs. Lisa Gregory
Virginia Haas
Timothy Hathaway
Jason Hawes
Joy Herbst, APRN
Susan Israel
Raphael Kalikstein, Rabbi
Mrs. Constantina Karageorge
Dr. Jennifer Kim
Mr. Mark Koenig
Leo LaRocque, Deacon, St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish
Mr. Raymond Lonergan
Bruce Loughran
Mitch Lucas
Moinca Malo
Melissa Manion
Brendan Marra
Mrs. Elizabeth Medeiros
Steven Merola
Paul Messier
Laura Miller
Michael L. Molgano, Former State Representative
Courtney Muscat
Mary Nagy
Renata Papadopoulos
Karin Pasquale
Jane Peterson
Bill Regan
Suzanne M. Rodrigues
Christine Rowland
Joan Sadyan
Salvatore Sanzari
Stephanie Villeda-Schaedler
Maria Sena
Mary Smith
Edward Sopelak
Dorothy Stasney
Jennifer Tafuto
Marie Tessier
Claudine Thomas
Mr. Maher Twal
Edward Wachowski
Eric Waldo
Lisa Waldo
Christine Wasielewski

Ms. Lesley West
Rosemary Witkoski
Peter Zaffetti

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Liz Gustafson, Connecticut State Director, Reproductive Equity Now: Comments that abortion access is being hindered throughout the United States, and that Connecticut has already taken action to defend this access by accepting patients and doctors from states where abortion has been banned. States that there should be expanded protections for telehealth providers regardless of a patient's location. Also states that it is one of the organizations goals to support the advancement of legislation in the General Assembly that protects reproductive freedom from forces both in state and out of state.

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU CT: States that the Supreme Court has abandoned over 50 years of precedent based on recent rulings and states that such rulings have called into question the right to marry who you want, the right to reproductive and gender affirming healthcare, and the right to contraception. States that the issue of reproductive access is a matter of racial and economic justice as many of those affected by the restrictions on abortion across the country are those who are Black, Latinx, and low-income.

Reported by: Gabriel Marques, Assistant Clerk Date: 4/2/2024