

Senator Flexer, Representative Blumenthal, Ranking Members Representative Mastrofrancesco and Senator Sampson, and distinguished members of the Government Administration & Elections Committee.

My name is Matthew Blinstrubas and I am the Executive Director of Equality Connecticut, a statewide grassroots organization with constituent supporters in every corner of the state, working to advance LGBTQ+ rights at the state and local level. I am here to testify regarding SJ35 [Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment Concerning Discrimination on the Basis of Sex Under the Equal Protection Clause](#).

As someone who was born and raised in Connecticut and has worked to advance LGBTQ+ health and rights for almost 20 years, I am so proud to come from a state that sees the value in protecting every member of our state family. I believe SJ35 embodies the core values of what Connecticut is about - dignity, empathy, health, dignity and equality for all. For over a half century Connecticut has led on reproductive health, protecting bodily autonomy, equal rights for women and LGBTQ+ people. It has been heartening to see overwhelming support for this proposal pouring in from every corner of the state.

Support for LGBTQ+ people in Connecticut goes back decades. It transcends geography, backgrounds, socio-economic class, and political parties. In 1991, Governor Weicker signed a law barring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

In 2005 Connecticut was one one of the early states to legalize civil unions for same sex couples and then became the third state to legalize same sex marriage through our supreme court in 2008.

When the legislature overwhelmingly passed a sweeping law codifying that the marriage decision, it was promptly signed into law by Republican Governor Jodi Rell.

In 2011, the legislature passed historic expansions to our non-discrimination laws on the basis of gender identity and expression. Since then, we have seen successful bi-partisan efforts to ban conversion therapy, update our parentage laws, and resource our community based organizations.

Time and again, Democrats and Republicans have come together to make sure people living with HIV have access to the life-saving treatment they need.

Equality and fairness is a value shared by all of us who are from this state. Without judgement, we see each other, without hesitation we help each other. What is so powerful about SJ35 is that it takes what we have accomplished together and enshrines it in our state's highest document.

Everything that SJ35 represents is the result of decades of progress and accomplishment of both parties. I cannot think of a safer place for what we've done together than in the protective hands of our constitution.