Testimony of Sarah W. in Support of H.B. 7135

Dear Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, and Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Sarah W., and I am from Hartford and a member of the Hartford Jewish Organizing Collective, which organizes Jews for collective liberation for all people. I am testifying in strong support of H.B. 7135, An Act Concerning The Provision of Reproductive and Gender-Affirming Health Care Services to Patients.

I am a parent of a trans/non-binary 7 year-old in the first grade, and I want to see this law passed to ensure that Connecticut is doing everything in its power to ensure that transgender people can access health care in the face of right-wing attacks by the federal government. I do not know yet what gender-affirming healthcare my child will need, but it is very likely we will need to access care within the next few years, and I am scared that it will no longer be available.

My child is creative, passionate, headstrong and sensitive and deeply assured in their gender identity. I have been so proud to hear them explain to their peers and their teachers what it means to be trans or non-binary. Coming from the South, I am grateful that my kids and I live in a time and place that mostly affirms trans and queer identities. Up until recently, it hasn't been a big deal for my child, our family, or the school–it is just one part of who my child is.

But it has been terrifying to see the far-right and now the federal government laser-focused on denying care to trans children and disparaging kids' identities and existence, including by misrepresenting gender-affirming care as "mutilation." While my child's school is still supportive, a few classmates started teasing my child after the inauguration, probably based on what they were hearing at home or in the media. Already healthcare providers in some states are no longer providing healthcare to trans children because of right-wing threats, including in blue states like ours, and I am worried this will happen in Connecticut too.

We need to act quickly to expand our shield law to protect our healthcare providers who are ensuring access to essential healthcare for trans people and reproductive health care services, including abortion, and I see H.B. 7135 as an essential first-step in demonstrating that Connecticut will protect trans people from right-wing attacks.