

Why Connecticut's Anti-Discrimination Laws Should Include Gender Identity/Expression

- 1) *Discrimination on the basis of Gender Identity/ Expression is pervasive.*
 - Transgender and gender non-conforming people often have difficulty finding jobs, and unlike gays & lesbians, can be fired simply for being who they are.
 - Young women who dress in "male" clothing or boys who appear "too feminine" to their classmates face frequent bullying, taunting and violence, which make it difficult to concentrate on school.
 - Transgender people are frequently victims of verbal threats and physical violence, and are often deprived of jobs, housing, services, and even the custody of their own children.
 - The social stigma of being transgender prevents many targeted individuals from speaking out about discrimination they have faced.

- 2) *We can and should address discrimination in Connecticut law now.*
 - The CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) has declared that transgendered persons are protected from discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations and credit transactions.
 - However, CHRO protections are hard for the general public to rely on because they are not clearly mandated by state law.
 - Right now, employers, landlords, police, service providers and the general public must guide their conduct based on conflicting federal court decisions and the CHRO ruling, which leaves everyone vulnerable.
 - This bill makes those protections explicit and uniform within the CT non-discrimination statutes. Passing this bill would make it easier for employers, employees, landlords, police, businesses, service providers, and the general public to avoid discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression.

- 3) *Diversity & fairness are good for Connecticut.*
 - Several of CT's major employers already include gender identity/expression in their non-discrimination policies. This helps attract and retain creative, educated workers who seek inclusive organizations that respect individual dignity, valuing employees based on their professional qualifications and the quality of their work.
 - Over 150 Fortune 500 companies, including Connecticut based Aetna, Pitney Bowes, the Hartford, and Xerox, already include gender identity/expression in their non-discrimination policies.
 - Until we pass this bill, anti-bullying laws in our state do not protect students from being harassed at school on the basis of their gender identity/expression. This bill will help to provide a safe learning environment in CT schools, while teaching youth to be understanding and accepting of those different than themselves.
 - Connecticut College, Wesleyan University and Yale University already prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity/expression so that they can attract, and retain, the most qualified students.

Glossary of Terms

Sex: Refers to a person based on their anatomy (external genitalia, chromosomes, and internal reproductive system). Sex terms are male, female, transsexual, and intersex. Sex is biological, although social views and experiences of sex are cultural.

Intersex: Intersex people are born with sex chromosomes, external genitalia, and/or internal reproductive systems that are not considered "standard" for either male or female.

Gender Identity: The gender that a person sees themselves as. Gender identity is how a person feels most comfortable on the inside, which may or may not be consistent with how the person looks to others on the outside.

Gender Expression: The self-expressions, performance, actions, behaviors and dress of an individual as they relate to gender roles in a society; often conceived as "masculine" or "feminine."

Transgender: An umbrella term for people who do not fit in strict gender categories. Transgender (sometimes shortened to trans) people are those whose gender identity ("psychological self ") differs from the social expectations for the biological/physical sex they were born with. There is a difference between biological sex, which is one's body (genitals, chromosomes, etc.), and gender identity, which refers to levels of masculinity and femininity one feels inside. Additionally, transgender people may have any sexual orientation.

Sexual Orientation: Sometimes referred to as affection orientation or sexuality, sexual orientation refers to the kind of person an individual is physically and emotionally attracted to. Some examples are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and straight. An individual's gender identity/expression are not connected to the person's sexual orientation.

The Connecticut Anti-Discrimination Coalition includes:

ACLU of Connecticut | Anti-Defamation League | CT Sexual Assault Crisis Services (ConnSACS) | The CT Alliance for Business Opportunities (CABO) | CT Conference of the United Church of Christ | CT National Organization for Women | Connecticut TransAdvocacy Coalition | CT Women's Education and Legal Fund | Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders | Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network Connecticut | Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective | Hartford Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays | Gender PAC | Love Makes a Family | National Association of Social Workers (CT) | National Association for Multicultural Education, CT Chapter | National Gay & Lesbian Task Force | NARAL Pro-Choice CT | People of Faith for GLBT Civil Rights | Permanent Commission on the Status of Women | Planned Parenthood of CT | Rainbow Center, UConn | SAGE Center, SCSU | Transitioning And Loving Life (TALL) | True Colors Sexual Minority Youth and Family Services of CT