

An Act Concerning Discrimination ~ HB 6452 Gender-inclusive Non-Discrimination Law in CT

Although discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression is pervasive, Connecticut has no explicit law protecting individuals from discrimination based on gender identity or expression in employment, education, housing, public accommodations and credit. ***An Act Concerning Discrimination*** would remedy this by adding the phrase “gender identity or expression” to CT’s existing non-discrimination laws, prohibiting this discrimination, AND making our state safe for all residents. For more information about this legislation, please contact Diana at diana@transadvocacy.com or (860) 247-6090 ext. 21.

Overview

- Discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression occurs when individuals are denied access to services or resources because their gender presentation is perceived as not matching their sex at birth.
- This bill gives the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) the authority to investigate complaints of discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression in employment, education, housing, public accommodations, and lending, and order appropriate remedies if such discrimination is found. It applies the same rules, procedures, and remedies that apply to other types of prohibited discrimination.
- The CHRO has already clarified that state law currently protects individuals from discrimination based on gender identity and expression. This bill makes those protections explicit and uniform. This bill will serve to make people protected by the law and those covered by the law aware of their rights and obligations.
- This bill uses the definition of “gender identity or expression” established in Connecticut’s hate crimes law, which passed in 2004 with a vote of 139-4 in the House and 33-0 in the Senate.

The Facts

- In 2007, CT legislators in 4 committees and the state senate cast 80 votes to pass this bill and only 9 to reject it. The House of Representatives did not vote on the bill so it died in the 2007 General Assembly.
- In 2008, the bill passed the Judiciary Committee with a vote of 37 to 6.
- Currently, 153 Fortune 500 companies, 356 private sector companies, and 85 colleges and universities, have non-discrimination policies that include gender identity or expression. These include businesses and universities located in CT: **Aetna, Pitney Bowes, The Hartford, 3M, and Xerox; and Connecticut**

College, Wesleyan University, University of New Haven and Yale University.

- Currently **13** states (including our New England neighbors Maine, Vermont and Rhode Island), plus Washington, DC, protect individuals from discrimination based on their gender identity or expression. Additionally, **122** municipalities have similar ordinances (*Kansas City, MO City Council unanimously approved an ordinance updating its anti-discrimination prohibitions to include gender identity.*). Currently 39% of the U.S. population is covered by gender inclusive Anti-Discrimination laws. Connecticut would not be trailblazing if we enacted this legislation. We would be joining a growing number of states committed to protecting all their residents from discrimination.

**Organizations that support equality in gender identity
and gender expression for all CT residents**

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 | Woman's Center, UConn

Do you want to see your agency or organization on this list?

For more information or to add your organization to the Anti-Discrimination Coalition, please contact Diana Lombardi diana@transadvocacy.com or call (860) 247-6090 ext. 21