



Legislative Testimony
765 Asylum Avenue, 2nd Floor
Hartford, CT 06105
860-523-9146
www.acluct.org

Written Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 10, An Act Supporting Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs, Health Care Coverage, Transparency in Health Care Costs, Home and Community-Based Support for Vulnerable Persons and Rights Regarding Gender Identity and Expression

Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest, Ranking Members Seminara and Case, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Jess Zaccagnino, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am writing to testify in support of Senate Bill 10, An Act Supporting Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs, Health Care Coverage, Transparency in Health Care Costs, Home and Community-Based Support for Vulnerable Persons and Rights Regarding Gender Identity and Expression, with specific regard to Sections 16 through 22.

The ACLU-CT is dedicated to ensuring that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people can live openly without discrimination and enjoy equal rights, personal autonomy, and freedom of expression and association. Transgender people in particular face many barriers in receiving health care, including treatments specifically related to gender transition and gender affirmation. Transition-related health care continues to be explicitly excluded from many public health care programs and private insurance policies. Even once these exclusions are lifted, we must also work to ensure that trans people have meaningful, comprehensive access to transition-related care without burdensome and unnecessary preconditions and limitations on the types of care provided. Gender-affirming care is medically necessary care that can be life-saving for transgender youth. Medical decisions belong to trans youth, their parents, and their doctors.

Nationwide, legislatures have introduced at least 391 anti-LGBTQ+ bills this year alone, and Connecticut is not immune from this shameful trend.¹ Leading medical groups, like the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry,² the American Academy of Pediatrics,³ and the American Medical Association,⁴ strongly oppose efforts to restrict access to gender-affirming care. Blocking access to gender-affirming care “has been shown to increase youths’ risk for suicidal ideation and other negative mental health outcomes.”⁵ In a letter co-signed by over 1,000 child health and welfare organizations, experts noted that transgender youth already face a higher risk of violence, bullying, and harassment.⁶ Research has demonstrated that when transgender kids have access to gender-affirming services, competent care, and affirmation, their risk of depression, anxiety, and other negative mental health outcomes shrinks dramatically.⁷

Sections 16 through 22 of Senate Bill 10 are vital to protecting LGBTQ+ people. The bill makes various changes to the general statutes in order to make healthcare more inclusive for transgender and nonbinary people specifically. First, these sections allow birth certificates to be amended and reissued when the legal name of a parent changes. This particularly allows parents who have transitioned to be recognized by their name on their children’s birth certificates. Second, the bill requires the Department of Correction to change a person’s name within thirty

¹ See, e.g., HB 6213, An Act Prohibiting Student Athletes Who Were Born as Males from Participating in Women’s Interscholastic Athletic Events (2023); SB 468, An Act Concerning Civil Immunity for Interscholastic Athletic Organizations and the Sanctioning Bodies of Private Youth Organizations (2023); HB 6331, An Act Requiring Public School Educators to Recognize Each Student by the Biological Gender of Such Student (2023); HB 6197, An Act Requiring Student Athletes to Compete in Interscholastic Athletics That Corresponds with Their Biological Genders (2023).

² *AACP Statement Responding to Efforts to Ban Evidence-Based Care for Transgender and Gender Diverse Youth*, AM. ACADEMY OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY (Nov. 8, 2019), https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Latest_News/AACAP_Statement_Responding_to_Efforts-to_ban_Evidence-Based_Care_for_Transgender_and_Gender_Diverse.aspx.

³ Lee Savio Beers, *American Academy of Pediatrics Speaks Out Against Bills Harming Transgender Youth*, AM. ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS (Mar. 16, 2021), <https://www.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2021/american-academy-of-pediatrics-speaks-out-against-bills-harming-transgender-youth/>.

⁴ *State Advocacy Update*, AM. MED. ASS’N (Mar. 26, 2021), <https://www.ama-assn.org/health-care-advocacy/advocacy-update/march-26-2021-state-advocacy-update>.

⁵ *Supra* note 2.

⁶ *Major Health, Education, and Child Welfare Organizations Oppose Anti-LGBTQ State-Based Legislation*, HUM. RTS. CAMPAIGN (Mar. 5, 2021), <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/major-health-education-and-child-welfare-organizations-oppose-anti-lgbtq-state-based-legislation>.

⁷ *Id.*

days of a written request. Because of systemic inequity, LGBTQ+ people are overrepresented at every facet of the criminal legal system.⁸ We know that at least 5,000 transgender people are incarcerated in state prisons across the country, who face intersecting forms of oppression.⁹ Although the state has a long way to go to provide adequate care for transgender people incarcerated in Connecticut prisons,¹⁰ this bill makes a concrete step forward. Finally, the bill supports gender-affirming procedures and creates a working group for the Department of Social Services to create guidelines on gender-affirming care. We would recommend expanding this working group to include representation by healthcare providers that have experience serving people who are incarcerated, as well as justice-impacted people themselves. The ACLU-CT supports Senate Bill 10, and encourages this Committee to do the same.

⁸ Alexi Jones, *Visualizing the Unequal Treatment of LGBTQ People in the Criminal Justice System*, PRISON POLY INITIATIVE (Mar. 2, 2021), <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/03/02/lgbtq/>.

⁹ Tiana Herring & Emily Widra, *What the Survey of Prison Inmates Tells Us About Trans People in State Prison*, PRISON POLY INITIATIVE (Mar. 31, 2022), <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2022/03/31/transgender-incarceration/>.

¹⁰ See, e.g., *Clark v. Dep't of Correction*, ACLU-CT (accessed Mar. 9, 2023), <https://www.acluct.org/en/cases/clark-v-department-correction>.