

# Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6913  
AN ACT CONCERNING LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION IN LONG-TERM CARE  
**Title:** FACILITIES.  
**Vote Date:** 3/4/2025  
**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable  
**PH Date:** 2/20/2025  
**File No.:**

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## SPONSORS OF BILL:

Aging Committee

## REASONS FOR BILL:

This legislation prohibits long-term care facilities or staff from discriminating against any resident based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or human immunodeficiency virus status. Various instances of LGBTQ+ discrimination in long-term care facilities have been reported to the members of the Aging Committee. While it is true that other protections exist in state statute already, these have not proven adequate to protect our aging LGBTQ+ citizens. This bill seeks to set clear standards for what constitutes discrimination in order to ensure everyone in long-term care facilities gets to live with dignity and respect.

## RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

**Office of the Comptroller, Mr. Sean Scanlon, Comptroller:** He supports this bill and its affirmation that every senior in our state deserves to age in an environment that represents their identity and safeguards their well-being.

**Dept. of Aging and Disability Services, Ms. Amy Porter, Commissioner:** All people have the right to age with dignity in a safe living environment free for discrimination, so they **support** this proposal. This would prohibit long-term care facilities or staff from discriminating against any resident based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or HIV status.

**Dept of Aging and Disability, Ms. Mairead Painter, Long-Term Care Ombudsman:** She is in **support** of this bill as it will ensure that all residents are treated with dignity, respect, and

equality. Her office has had cases related to discrimination, harassment and isolation faced by LGBTQ+ residents within skilled nursing facilities.

**Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Ms. Tanya Hughes, Executive Director:**

They offered testimony in **support** of this proposal. They point out that everyone deserves the opportunity to age and receive care in an environment free from discrimination.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**LeadingAge, Connecticut, Ms. Mag Morelli, President:** They **support** this bill and equal access and similar protections for older adults who are members of the LGBTQ+ community. They also point out that there are currently several state and federal regulations, laws and practice that protect the LGBTQ+ community from discrimination and which protect the privacy of an individual's HIV status in these settings. The Connecticut Fair Housing and Public Accommodations Law, the federal Fair Housing Act, the Connecticut Medicaid provider agreement, the nursing home bill of rights, and others also protect residents from violations.

**Senator Martha Marx, Connecticut State Senate:** She offers her **support** for the legislation. She believes it to be an essential move toward securing dignity, respect, and equality for all people.

**State Rep. 143<sup>rd</sup> District, Dominique Johnson**

**State Rep. 117<sup>th</sup> District, MJ Shannon**

**State Rep. 127<sup>th</sup> District, Marcus Brown**

**State Rep. 2<sup>nd</sup> District, Raghib Allie-Brennan**

**State Rep. 58<sup>th</sup> District, John Santanella**

Their testimony was in **support** of this bill and state that every person deserves to live their golden years with dignity, comfort, and respect. They hope to make continued progress toward greater inclusion in our elder and long-term care systems together.

**Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities, Mr. Matt Barrett, President and CEO:**

On the issue of creating a separate body of state law providing anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ residents in long-term care communities they recommend a careful review before taking final action on this bill. There is a large body of state and federal anti-discrimination provisions in the area of fair housing and public accommodation and Americans with Disability Act protections. How this bill aligns or differs from this body of state and federal law would be important to know before additional authorities are adopted.

**AARP, Connecticut, Ms. Natalie Shurtleff, Associate State Director, Advocacy and Community Outreach:**

They **support** this legislation that would prohibit discrimination by long-term care facilities or staff against any resident based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Prohibiting discrimination is an important step in ensuring that LGBTQ+ older adults feel welcome and comfortable in their homes.

**National Association of Social Workers, Dr. Gina Rosich:** One of the core values of the social work profession is treating others with dignity and respect. Older adulthood is a life

stage that brings many changes and vulnerabilities. For LGBTQ+ older adults being treated with dignity and respect includes respect for same-sex relationships by allowing couples to share rooms. They urge the committee to vote in favor of this act.

**Advocacy & Services for LGBTQ+ Elders, Mr. Aaron Tax**: Their testimony was in **support** of this bill. They say that it is needed to address the discrimination and the lack of access to care that LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected elders fear and face in long-term care facilities. While Connecticut's non-discrimination laws provide sexual orientation and gender identify non-discrimination protections, long-term care facilities and their staff are not always clear on how to provide respectful and appropriate care to LGBTQ+ residents. This bill will help ensure the LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected elders receive the support and protection they need in long term-care facilities.

**ACLU Connecticut, Ms. Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Council**: They **support** this bill that protects LGBTQ+ people from discrimination throughout all facets of life, including in long - term care. This bill enumerates our state's non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ seniors and people aging with HIV in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

**Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, Ms. Gretchen Raffa, Chief Policy and Advocacy Officer**: They sent their comments in **favor** of this proposal. They believe that all people should have access to quality, affordable and compassionate health care as a basic human right - regardless of who you are, where you live, your income, if you have health insurance or your immigration status.

**Connecticut's Justice & Opportunity Network, Mr. William Ollayos, Administrator**  
**New Britain Pride, Mr. John Board, Chairman**  
**Connecticut Trans Advocacy Coalition, Ms. Diana Lombardi, Former Executive Director**  
**Unitarian Universalist Society, Rev. Josh Pawelek, Minister**  
**Health Collective, Mr. David Grant, Executive Director**  
**New Haven Pride, Mr. Timothy Gabriele, Founding Member**  
**Equity Connecticut, Mr. Matthew Blinstrubas, Executive Director**

These people offered their **support** for this proposal, and they all shared anecdotal evidence of discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals and groups in the past and currently. This bill would provide long-term care providers and facilities with the guidance they need to create safe, affirming, and inclusive environments for all residents.

**Ms. Mairead Reilly**  
**Mr. Bilal Tajildeen**  
**Ms. Janet Peck and Ms. Carol Conklin**  
**Anonymous**  
**Mr. Isaac Tait**  
**Ms. Adrienne Billings-Smith**  
**Ms. Asha Samal**  
**Ms. Brianne Roberts**  
**Ms. Lili Chipman**  
**Ms. Jennifer Fabas**  
**Ms. Mary Gardner**

[Ms. Ashley Gulyas](#)  
[Ms. Leyte Jefferson](#)  
[Sar Kass](#)  
[Ms. Shane Kennedy](#)  
[Mr. Erick Olsen](#)  
[Ms. Addie Merians](#)  
[Ms. Michelle Noehren](#)  
[Ms. Meghan MacRae](#)  
[Ms. Jane Latus](#)  
[Mr. Matthew Kennedy](#)  
[Ms. Eileen O'Donnell](#)  
[Ms. Jillian Celentano](#)  
[Mr. Paul Brady](#)  
[Ms. Claire Walsh](#)  
[Mr. Michael Reynolds](#)  
[Ms. Kallen Smith](#)  
[Mr. Jacob Sliech](#)  
[Ms. Cayetana Navorro](#)  
[Ms. Sara Moeller](#)  
[Ms. Emil McCave](#)

These people all testified in **favor** of this bill. Many related their own personal stories and experiences concerning how they are impacted and have been by this issue over the years.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None submitted.

**Reported by:** Richard Ferrari, Assistant Clerk  
Alexander Mercier, Clerk

**Date:** 3/17/2025