

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SJ-35

RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
CONCERNING DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX UNDER THE

Title: EQUAL PROTECTION CLAUSE.

Vote Date: 2/28/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/7/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

There is a growing concern over the erosion of rights pertaining to gender-affirming care, abortion, and generally sex-based protections due to changes on the national and federal level. Connecticut has taken strides to pass laws to protect these issues through legislation, however, some worry that these laws could be easily overturned through legislation. This resolution would seek to propose an amendment to the Connecticut Constitution to enshrine these protections that Connecticut has already held and give them additional protections.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Representative Jullian Gilchrest, Co-Chair, The Reproductive Rights Caucus:

Representative Gilchrest testified to the continuing support protecting existing access to reproductive healthcare and against future threats to individual rights. Approximately 11.7 million women and girls have been denied access to contraceptive care due to the recent freeze in foreign aid for family planning. Black pregnant and birthing people are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes and Indigenous Americans are approximately twice as likely. According to the Journal of Adolescent Health, gender-affirming

hormone therapy resulted in lower rates of depression, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts among older transgender and nonbinary teens.

Lori McAdam, Alderwoman, City of New Britain:

As a mother of 4 daughters and a community member, this bill is necessary to support the nation's founder's expectation of separation of church and state. The bill ensures that people are treated equally and allows people full control over their own bodies. We must protect and stand up for the LGBTQ+ community.

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, The American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut:

As an organization, the ACLU-CT believe everyone can make their own decisions about reproductive healthcare, pregnancy, and parenting that are best for them. We are dedicated to ensuring that LGBTQ+ people live openly and freely with full rights. Connecticut's state statues contain protections but those may be repealed by a simple majority vote. Amending the Connecticut constitution is more arduous, ensuring stronger safeguards against discrimination.

Chelsea Donaldson, Supervising Attorney, Connecticut Veterans Legal Center:

CVLC provides free legal assistance to low-income veterans and are part of a medical-legal partnership with the Veterans Healthcare Administration. Many veterans suffer from military sexual trauma because of their sexual preference or gender identity. The current administration's agenda is to remove the gender-affirming services from VA HealthCare. Included in the testimony are stories that represent the population of people who will be positively impacted by this proposed amendment to the Connecticut Constitution.

Liz Gustafson MSW, Connecticut State Director, Reproductive Equity Now:

In the three years since the elimination of the right to abortion under Roe V Wade, 19 states have taken action to restrict or entirely ban abortion inciting a public health, economic, social, and radical justice crisis across the country. Included in our testimony is our report on the real-time further eroding of rights beyond the reproductive rights in the explosion of anti-LGBTQ legislation. This amendment builds on the states existing protections and provides individuals with greater protections against gender inequality.

Gretchen Raffa, Chief Policy and Advocacy, Planned Parenthood:

Access to abortion was devastated by the overturning of Roe v Wade. As of December 2024, abortion bans are in effect in 20 states leaving 27 million women without access to abortion in their home states. People are dying and too many have been left without access to healthcare even in emergency circumstance that require life-saving abortion care. Many people in Connecticut still face barriers to accessing abortion care, gender-affirming care, and other essential reproductive health care due to barriers such as racism, economic inequality, immigration status, transphobia, the rising cost of healthcare, and abortion stigma.

Ann Reed, VP of Advocacy, League of Women Voters of Connecticut:

This amendment will enshrine protections within our constitution to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression as well and protecting our reproductive freedoms that are currently under attack in this country.

Janee Woods Weber, Executive Director, She Leads Justice:

Our country is witnessing a dangerous and calculated movement against civil liberties including reproductive healthcare, gender equity, and LGBTQ+ rights. She Leads Justice supports SJ

35 to improve our state's existing statutes in protecting a person's liberty and essential freedoms regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy status.

Rebecca Degnan, Owner, Prism Counseling and Support LLC in Killingworth:

As a former public-school educator and the parent of a transgender son, I bring a wealth of experience and knowledge about the LGBTQ+ community and the struggles they face daily. Our office is being inundated with requests for counseling, including many clients who have moved or considering moving to Connecticut due to the state being considered one of the safest in the country. As a parent I am fearful for my son and his access to medical care and for his general safety. We need to double down on our commitment by protecting them from discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation at the highest level possible.

Matthew Blinstrubas, Executive Director, Equality Connecticut:

Support for LGBTQ+ in Connecticut goes back to 1991 when Governor Weicker signed into law barring discrimination of sexual orientation. Connecticut was the third state to legalize same sex marriage in 2008 and in 2011 passed historic expansions to our non-discrimination laws of gender identity and expression. This bill represents decades of progress and accomplishments in Connecticut.

Elizabeth Vozzola, West Hartford:

This bill is the right thing to do. After four years of researching, writing about and detaching moral development, there are still so many members of the LGBTQ+ community living in fear. Connecticut has always stood up for two core moral values: fairness and care. This bill represents just those values.

Middletown Pride, LGBTQIA+ Commission:

Commissioners, Biranna Skowea, Jennifer Billingsley, Dolly Haddad, Cayes Jarda, Katie Marrotte, Phillip Pessina, Beth Shapiro, and Laura Timmons advocate for the LGBTQIAS2+ community through year-round programming including peer to peer support groups, mental and sexual health education classes, legal clinics and social networking events. Included in the testimony are some personal experiences and the difference a strong, secure legal framework of protections makes.

Natasha Kuranko, Connecticut Citizen Action Group:

Equal protection under law has been a reality for years and yet there are those who live a different truth. This bill ensures that the rights we claim to protect hold up no matter who is standing before the law. Discrimination based on sex includes discrimination based on pregnancy, gender identity, sexual orientation, and access to healthcare. These are all interconnected realities of what is to be fully recognized as a person under the law.

Frances Stoffer, Chair, Northwest CT Community Foundation Women & Girls Fund:

There have been many injustices and discriminations against women and girls. Through our Executive Committee, we provide grants to support them. Period products were not covered by SNAP, so we created the Women's and Girls Period Product Project. Women should have the right to make decisions about their bodies independently and this is a human right. Decisions about reproduction and gender identity are personal and essential to both our physician and emotional health and should not be controlled by the government.

Cecil Wade, Board Member PFLG, Norwalk:

As the father of a 25-year-old transgender daughter, I know that there is a small supply of resources and having this amendment will go a long way in forbidding discrimination and protect the health and safety of my daughter and other members of our community.

Brian Donahue, Founder, Not Just Us:

Due to the federal election, there appears to be a building hostility of LGBTQTIA+ individuals. There is a movement to take away their legal rights and all the people this resolution would cover. This legislation will impact our brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers. We do not want our loved ones to be treated in a negative way.

Westover School, Middlebury:

The following submitted testimony in support of the bill.

VivianL - Student

Leah Peart - Student

Midori Uemura - Student

Eniamaris Cruz - Student

Xiaoyu Yang - Student

Mollie Kervick

Meredith Whitehouse

Stacy Tracy-Wanuck

Kendra Graf

And one Anonymous from Warren Connecticut

Ian Basilone, Reverend, Universal Life Church:

Discrimination is a violation of the common morality. Connecticut must uphold its historical role as a bastion of progress and tolerance. This amendment helps cement New England as a land of unique respect for the rights of individuals.

Aldon Hynes, Episcopal Hospital Chaplain:

We must strive for justice and peace among all people with respect of every human being.

Every patient has equal protection in receiving healthcare. Unfortunately, many are treated unfairly due to their sexual identity, gender orientation, or the types of care they seek. I see this daily in my work.

Deborah J Clifford, Reverend, Simsbury United Methodist Church:

As a constituent living in Simsbury raising my children, I value love and inclusion. I taught diversity and inclusion to hundreds of colleagues and fellow employees while at Travelers. Bolstering equal rights and supporting this legislation aligns with my life values and worldview.

Jodie Ambrosino, PhD, Clinical Psychologist, Shoreline Psychological

Abby Lipschutz, Psy, D, Clinical Psychologist, Shoreline Psychological:

With many years of experience as a mental health clinician, I have seen the life-enhancing effect healthcare has had on our transgender youth. The process takes time. These decisions are not made lightly but they can be lifesaving. Mental Health clinicians, patients, and their parents are the ones who make the best decisions for medical care for transgender youth.

Anchor Health- Connecticut's leading LGBTQ Health Center:

The following submitted testimony in support:

Michael DeWolfe, Head of Communications & Events

Jennifer Suski, Nurse Practitioner

Aster Aguilar

Dr. Derek Fenwick, President, Connecticut Psychological Association (CPA):

Research shows that individuals denied access to essential healthcare, including abortion and gender-affirming care, experience increased rates of stress, anxiety, and long-term mental health challenges. As a Psychologist, I have witnessed firsthand the impact these barriers have on mental health. These restrictions disproportionately affect marginalized communities including women, transgender individuals, and nonbinary people. Lawmakers should have no say in personal medical decisions. Connecticut has the opportunity to enhance its existing constitutional protection.

Chrystal Shoup DAquila, Therapist LPC:

As a mental health practitioner in Connecticut, I see firsthand discrimination and fear on the residents of this state. Fear and discrimination take a mental and physical toll on individuals and society. This legislation will help those individuals feel safe. Making Connecticut safe will encourage individuals to move and spend their money within the state.

Rayme Shore, MD OB/GYN:

Connecticut can lead the nation in anti-discrimination laws with this bill. The bill will protect physicians who are practicing evidence-based medicine. OB/GYN's know how important gender affirming care is to transgender people, especially trans youth who have a high rate of depression and suicide. States that are restricting abortion access are seeing increased maternal mortality rates.

Jasper Hollander, Outreach Worker, Apex Community Care:

As a community health worker, I serve the vulnerable communities of Connecticut. As a transgender man, I would not be alive today without gender affirming care. The 14th amendment guarantees equal protection under the law.

Gordon Weiss, M.D. Yale School of Medicine:

As a child, adolescent, and adult psychiatrist in Connecticut for the past 25 years, I have been a consultant to the Yale Gender Program since the beginning. Through a multistep multidisciplinary approach, we have evaluated and treated many LGBTQ children, adolescents, and adults. The bill will help protect the basic human right to access lifesaving healthcare without interference or restrictions.

Christine Finck, MD. FACS:

As a female surgeon who works closely with our gender dysphoria population. The children obesity program is one that I lead. We tend to treat these children as intended victims in this political landscape. We need to treat each child as a unique journey and all children need to be heard and supported. Pretend sexual orientation does not exist is ignorant.

Kari Edelson, Pediatric Hospitalist, Connecticut Children's Medical Center:

As a physician taking care of children who have been rejected sometimes from their own families I can relate. I went through extreme pain and suffering, isolation, sadness, and thoughts of suicide rather than accept the person I was born to be. Receiving more support than imaginable, I am finally hopeful and proud of telling my story. We need to let these children and adults live their lives and make their own decisions.

Danielle Brochu, RN, Hartford Health Care:

Reproductive rights are severely limited in many other states and those effects are seen here in Connecticut. Women from other states have come thousands of miles to have access to reproductive health services. We can no longer count on long-standing legal precedent to protect our right to bodily autonomy or to form families with equal legal standing regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

Shoshana Zax, CNM, MSN, Women's Health CT:

As a certified Nurse-Midwife, I provide gynecologic care to any person in need. This includes cis-women, trans-men, trans-women, pregnant people, and anyone requiring gynecologic care. The bill will continue to make our state one where every human being is treated with care, dignity, and nondiscrimination. The bill also protects physicians who practice evidence-based medicine.

Stuart Weinzimer, MD, Yale University:

As a pediatric endocrinologist in Connecticut, I have witnessed the important necessity of compassionate, evidence-based, comprehensive care for transgender youth. We as medical and mental health providers have powerful and effective tools to mitigate psychological distress and foster physical and mental health. With parental consent, appropriate assessment, and follow up, adolescents can blossom and thrive. Decisions for trans youth should not be made by people without the requisite training. Leave medicine in the hands of medical providers.

Kendre Wiesel, Registered Nurse:

As a school nurse I am aware of the unique health and wellness of youths on the gender spectrum. It makes a difference for them to feel affirmed and seen every day. The bill protects access to the healthcare that is essential to the children I care for.

Licensed Professional Counselor:

As a female with two difficult pregnancies and childbirth experiences, it was my decisions to carry them to term. It does not matter what I decided but that it was my choice, and this bill would protect the rights of all pregnant individuals against external threats. In my profession I work with LGBTQ+ individuals and my clients' basic rights and dignity are supported and upheld by protective legislation. Having attended numerous trainings and continuing education, I know how difficult a decision it is to pursue medical care. This decision should not be made or limited by politicians or people who have no experience or understand of what it is like to either be transgender or have a transgender child.

The following are just a few of the medical professionals who submitted testimony in support:

Kyler Allen Psy, D.

Kinsie Dunham, Doctor of Clinical Psychology

Sharon Thompson, PhD, West Hartford

Gayelan Tietje-Ulrich, APRN, FNP
Anonymous Anonymous MD, Connecticut pediatrician
Anonymous Anonymous Mental Health Professional

Kayla Iannetta, teacher, LGBTQ+ advocate:

As an activist with two Connecticut based nonprofits, I attend many events fighting alongside other individuals to increase LGBTQ+ visibility and safety. As an LGBTQ+ person growing up in Connecticut, I had the benefits of the safety, but that safety is under attack. LGBTQ+ history is not mandated in schools, so most do not know the discrimination in housing, jobs, community, families, and all aspects of this country. We have chipped away at injustice after injustice, but today but those are coming back. The violence, discriminatory acts, and the flood of executive orders have brought back those fears. Will our marriages be illegitimate, will we lose custody of our children, will we lose medical rights and are we safe in this country?

Robert Burger, Senior Associate Dean, Yale University:

As the parent of a 19-year-old son who is transgender, I can provide some perspective regarding the importance of access to medically appropriate healthcare for transgender youth. Opponents of this issue speak as if being transgender is a choice that it is some frivolous thing that a child just decides to change or turn off. They don't understand what is happening to them at first and are in distress. There is no political agenda or indoctrination just a scared child and parents trying to help. With proper care our son is a happy and healthy sophomore at Western Connecticut State.

Jessica Canavan, East Haven Pride:

As a queer woman who needed hormonal birth control to deal with heavy menstruation, if I had been denied the birth control, it would have jeopardized my health and life. As an advocate for gender affirming care due to these rights, I was able to have a happy and healthy comfortable existence. Connecticut people deserve these rights.

Tate J. Estell:

As a 26-year-old transgender person, I live in Connecticut where I can get my testosterone at the local pharmacy, be seen by a doctor who respects my identity, and can get the life-saving gender-affirming surgery I need. Those of us who are transgender are facing a Conservative agenda that intends to eradicate us from public life. Connecticut must remain a safe haven for transgender people.

Chrishan Fernando. PhD candidate, Yale University:

Ensuring transgender rights is one of the most pressing civil rights issues of our time. This is a time of heightened prejudice against marginalized communities especially concerning transgender rights. Attacks against transgender people is made under the promise that they are liars who wish to harm others. They are vulnerable people looking for support.

Brigid Callahan, Waterbury, Ct:

As a pansexual, genderqueer person who can get pregnant, these are just designations of the lives of people and realities of who they are. These lives and realities are under federal attack, and they want people like me to disappear. Without proper protections at the state level, it would be easier to destroy them at the federal level. One's own body is inviolable and should be subject one's own will.

Victoria Bergman , PFLAG, Stamford:

Connecticut has been a leader in advancing civil rights and this amendment will ensure our values of equality and dignity for all. Attacks on reproductive rights and LGBTQIA+ are increasing and we need to ensure these protections in our state constitution from discrimination in employment, housing, healthcare and public accommodations.

Stacy Whitman, Owner, Curious Cat Bookshop

As a business owner and cis woman in Connecticut, I believe everyone is entitled to access to the health care they need and should not be discriminated against. That includes access to sports and books.

Jesse Campbell, EL Coordinator, Common Ground High School:

As the environmental Leadership Coordinator at common Ground Highschool, our commitment to environmental leadership extends to fostering equitable and inclusive communities. The environmental stewardship is inseparable from social justice and discrimination is any form. The amendment reinforces the values we instill in our students: fairness, respect, and the courage to stand up against injustice.

Craig Tyler Werenskjojd:

As a trans non-binary electrical engineer who moved from Florida to Connecticut three years ago, I simply want to be seen as a citizen, coworker, and neighbor. Political trends recently demonize trans people and draw attention to my otherwise mundane private life creating constant stress upon me and others like me. In Connecticut I am simply normal and another person.

Ember:

As a working technology professional and lifelong resident of Connecticut, I urge you to consider and disavow the discriminatory, hateful language in testimony in opposition of this amendment. As a transgender woman I support equal protection from discrimination on the basis of sex. Access to reproductive and gender affirming care is under attack nationwide. Trans people face levels of discrimination that often goes unreported and unnoticed. Everything from housing, health care, employment, are harder to obtain for a trans woman. As reported by the CDC 7 in 10 trans women faced some form of discrimination in the last 12 months. I believe that number is higher.

Michelle Souza, Progressive Women of Greater Hartford:

This bill will enshrine State Constitution protections for our reproductive freedoms, prevent discrimination based on sexual preference and guard individual rights to gender identity and expression and I can't believe we have to request these rights. With out this amendment there will be no protection from the indiscriminate actions of the current and perhaps future Federal Government or courts.

Lin Winfred Swanson:

As a twenty-seven-year-old trans woman who started my transition in Connecticut at the age of nineteen, I have seen commonsense progress be met with reactionary contempt culture war around trans people creating rhetoric that makes us the foil and places us in opposition to children's safety, woman's rights, and affordability of healthcare. Conservatives say we support the mutilation of children, infringe of women's rights, and that trans health threatens the

affordability of all healthcare and raises taxes that burdens the country. The vote to amend our state's constitution to protect trans people is just a single domino, but more domino's will fall.

Denise Abercrombie, Theater Teacher, E.O. Smith High School:

As a teacher in Connecticut for over 37 years, I urge the passing of this bill to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression as related to health care.

Anonymous, Parent & School Administrator:

As the parent of a transgender child and public-school administrator I see this bill as protections for my child as well as many of my students who need access to essential healthcare. Healthcare that is only provided after extensive evaluations of the whole child with a team of licensed, trained medical professionals. Parents of transgender children just want what is best for their child.

Robin Albin, Ridgefield, Ct.

Equal protection under the law is guaranteed to us by the 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution and by the Connecticut Constitution. This amendment is imperative because of the attacks on women, trans people, and the LGBTQIA+ people who access health care.

Anonymous, Teacher:

As a queer teacher in a Connecticut public school, I work with middle school students. Many of these students are discovering themselves and realizing they may be part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Because of existing legislation, I have felt safe being a queer resident. I worry that if these are taken away, my students will feel unsafe to be themselves. Middle grades are hard enough without realizing your state laws won't protect you from abuse, harassment, and discrimination based on your identity.

Over 500 also submitted testimony anonymously in support of the bill.

Over 1450 also submitted testimony in support of the bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Mona Colwell, Intercessors for America:

Why is it necessary to create additional language when people are already protected. The new language will do the following: eliminate the Constitutional right of babies, enshrine murder in the Constitution, deny the proven science of two genders and lead to many lawsuits in the future as discriminatory.

Sharon Byrne, Executive Director, Women's Liberation Front:

We support women's reproductive rights and the rights of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals and do not discrimination against women for pregnancy including initiating, continuing, or terminating. We do believe that gender identity sets up a collision between women's rights and men who seek to identify as a woman in order to invade their spaces. Assaults and a rape occurred in

school bathrooms in Virginia after boys were allowed into girl's restrooms. The teen perpetrator was found criminally responsible for two counts of sodomy. Protecting gender identity has shown harm to LGB particularly lesbians who are told their genital preferences are transphobic. Do not allow men who self-identify as a woman to transfer into the women's facilities like Tremaine Carrol in California.

Suzy Smith, President, Prolife Council of Connecticut:

Our council urges legislatures to oppose the resolution as written because the wording based on pregnancy includes terminating a pregnancy and discriminates on the basis of sex. The language elevates abortion to a protected right constitutionally making it nearly impossible to pass any future pro-life regulations. The people of Connecticut deserve to debate and legislate matters of life and human dignity rather than having abortion untouchable by constitutional mandate.

Peter Wolfgang, President, Family Institute of Connecticut Action:

This amendment though not named, would create a right for abortion up to birth and for gender transitions for minors. Included in my testimony is Soleigh Dixon, and how unfair it was to force her to compete against a boy and the latest gender graphic.

Leslie Wolfgang, Director of Public Policy, Family Institute of Connecticut Action:

This amendment would expand abortion including viability outside of the womb. Former StemExpress technician Holly O'Donnell spoke about seeing a baby born alive after an abortion and instead of providing aid they moved forward with harvesting the brain. In my testimony I give many examples gender dysphoric youth and gender affirming care. I have also included Kathleen McDeavitt, J. Cohn & Stephen B. Levine Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy.

Kim Jones, Marshi Smith, Independent Council on Women's Sports:

Including "Gender identity in the equal protection clause of the state constitution would destroy the rights of women and harms young girls. We must protect female category based on sex to make sports fair and equal. These laws have created confusion and lead to discrimination of women and girls and is in direct conflict with federal law.

Christopher Kilker, MD

The unintended consequences of the bill will be that abortion rights will be enshrined, and viable newborns could be aborted at any moment during pregnancy. This can also be used for transsexual protections. This amendment could lead to opposition to transsexualism being held constitutionally and even criminally liable. Women's rights will be trampled and their right to privacy forever excluded. We need to approach the transsexual as a special status with compassion, understanding and love. Preserve the sanctity of life and remember the dignity and value of each transsexual member of society instead of using them as tools.

Sarah Eschbach MD:

Our Constitution protects the rights of all people. Changing the definitions of words, such as sex, to further an agenda is unconstitutional. The bill infringes on the rights of physicians to exercise personal ethical judgment. There needs to be protections for people to use their own moral and ethical values.

Teresa Foley, MD:

This bill is an extremist proposal with horrific intended and unintended results. It may also put the mission of our Catholic health and school systems in jeopardy by restricting both free speech and freedom of religion.

Steve Ward, MD:

SJ 35 is overly broad and "discriminate" is undefined and unclear who will determine intent. The bill does not outline what civil rights or political rights are in view and is far reaching. The government is not to practice medicine or interfere with the patient physician relationship. Under this a health care provider could be falsely accused of discrimination by simply discussing with a pregnant woman or those who wish to become pregnant the potential risks of interventions such as Plan-B, IVF, or abortion. It is not the government's role to restrict dialog on these important issues.

Stephen Lyon, Attorney:

I object to the vagueness and ambiguity of portions of the proposed amendment. There are many terms that are treated as self-explanatory, but these are not universally accepted definitions. The lack of clarity can lead to chaos in the long term. Establishing a blanket right to terminate a pregnancy creates a legal standard that is extreme. The gender identity portion is irresponsibly premature and motivated by recklessness. The blanket proposal provides no difference between a 2-year-old and an octogenarian. The proposal also endangers the progress when it comes to women's rights. One of the reasons we have male and female athletes is to give women an opportunity to participate as full members of society to compete against their peers of a similar biological makeup.

Jackie Homan, Greenwich Patriots:

This redefines "sex" in the Connecticut constitution. Adding abortion makes it impossible to put reasonable legal limits on abortion. Adding "gender identity and expression" would erase women's rights and blur the lines between the sexes. The proposed changes directly violate President Trump's Executive Order on Defending women from Gender Ideolog Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government.

Krystin Damato:

We the people demand that the will of the people be heard and as elected officials you are trustees, servants and agents of the people. We the People oppose SJ 35 as is our right.

Mark Taylor, Pastor, River Valley Christian Center:

Terminating a pregnancy is snuffing out the potential of human life. Gender identity and expression has been proven to be detrimental to a large percentage who pursue that in extremes.

Lenore Snowden Opalak, MD, Fairfield:

As a retired Internal Medicine specialist and in my early years an OB/GYN resident in California, I had the duty of admitting women for 2nd term abortions. We residents were required to assist in the abortion. This may sound like a simple procedure, but it is traumatic and painful. The women admitted were in excruciating pain and no anesthesia was offered because this was a medical and not a surgical procedure. Usually, the babies were stillborn but sometimes there were breathing, moving infants. Late-term abortions amount to promotion of inhumanity towards each other.

Lynette Grande, Ct educator:

As a Connecticut taxpayer I take exception with allocating funds to exterminate the unborn and mutilate innocents. As a retired educator I testify in honor of all those children I nurtured and loved and for those I never met because of abortion.

Christin Cronan, Right to Life Ct:

There is no reason to change what already prohibits discrimination of anyone pertaining to their gender, sexual orientation, civil rights, and their chosen way of life. Every person born and unborn has the right to life under the Constitution.

Anne Manusky, National Director, CT Republican Assembly:

With members and friends totaling 550, we stand firm in our principles under the US Constitution as well as the Rights and responsibilities within the Connecticut Constitution. The preamble of the CT Constitution acknowledges with gratitude the good providence of God and the liberties, rights and privileges. There is only a man and a woman, and We stand for Life.

Norman Harold Patterson Jr, Director, Connecticut Foundation to Abolish Abortion:

The 14th Amendment grants any persons the right to life, liberty, or property without due process of law. The child in a womb is a person and science confirms that life begins at conception, so this denies them equal protection under the law.

Jessica Smith, Pharm.D, The White Rose Resistance:

The bill is broad, far reaching, and mind boggling. Opposition is the only logical response. Life is the first of the freedoms guaranteed protections by our government in our Declaration of Independence. The first person to voice "My body: my choice" was Jesus.

Bill O'Brien, Vice President, Connecticut Right to Life Corporation:

The bill is the worst I have seen in over 50 years of coming to the legislature. A bill about killing human beings and genital mutilation of children is anti-religion, anti-science, anti-life, anti-human, anti-child, and a threat to human rights.

Denise M. Burke, Senior Counsel, Alliance Defending Freedom:

The proposed language in this amendment will enshrine a limitless array of reproductive rights including abortion, contraception, sterilization, assisted reproduction, and surrogacy as well as cross-sex hormones, puberty blocker and the surgical removal of healthy reproduction organs. This impacts women and girls and children experiencing gender dysphoria. This forces state taxpayers to fund a limitless array of new reproductive rights and threatening both parental rights and the freedom of conscience of Connecticut healthcare professionals.

Brian Gedicks:

This bill is unnecessary in a state that already has legal protections in place for LGBTQ+ persons, gender-affirming care as well as reproductive rights. There is no indication that any of these rights are at risk in Connecticut. The bill is totally unnecessary and outright discrimination against, Connecticut Christians and their institutions based on their deep religious beliefs.

Abraham Hernandez, Executive Direction, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference:

Representing over 300 Hispanic Evangelical churches in Connecticut, we are committed to the welfare of our Latino families. This amendment would usher in a silence of the religious among us. This violates our state and federal constitutional rights to believe that only two sexes exist. The amendment also removes all protections for the unborn and legalizes infanticide. Do not remove conscience and religious exemptions for caregivers who do not want to participate in an abortion.

Alicia Duncanson:

After listening to Jamie Reed's heart wrenching testimony on the ill effects and irreversible damage done to these children because of hormone treatments, there must be other options instead of essentially sterilizing them as they are going through identity crises. We do not allow our children to smoke and discourage experimental drugs, so why is it ok to give them these life altering drugs and surgeries. I do not want my tax dollars spent this way.

Tresa Reed:

I oppose this extreme proposal to amend the constitution that creates a civil right to abortion up to birth even for minors without parental consent. Parents have the right to protect their children from the lifetime of mental health issues. The bill also prevents the state from restricting access to "gender affirming" care for minors. This is not a reversible choice and would endanger our children and may put the mission of our Catholic health and school system in jeopardy violating free speech and freedom of religion.

Dawn DeNardis:

This is an extremist proposal with horrific intended and unintended results. The amendment creates a civil license to abortion up to birth, prevents the state from restricting access to "gender affirming" care, and creates a civil license for biological boys to compete in girls only sports. It may also jeopardize the Catholic health and school system.

Sherri Havell:

A healthy formed child has a right to live as implemented under the 14th article of amendment to the constitution. The mental state of the mother who aborts her child may cause years of grief, unspoken guilt, shame, unforgiveness, and mental decline.

Patricia Russo:

While well intentioned, this amendment can and will cause harm to women and children. Women have fought for the right for same sex spaces and this amendment works against that. We need to pause gender affirming care rather than using untested protocols.

Joshua Kneidl:

I understand the desire to support individuals seeking to align their physical appearances with their gender identity there are potential negative consequences to gender affirming care. There are many potential side effects of hormones and surgeries as I have included in my testimony. Please consider the potential harms associated with adding gender ideology.

Anonymous, Anguished Mother:

We must all speak out against transgender concepts that are hurting our young people. We must not be the people who go down in history accepting or promoting experimental sex change operations on children and adolescents.

Alison Anonymous:

My daughter believed she was transgender via social media. Her changing body gave her distress until three years later when she decided she wasn't. If we had decided on using puberty blockers and all the others she would be living with the irreversible damage for the rest of her life.

Anonymous:

Included in my testimony is an episode entitled "The Adulthood of Children" with Representative Shawn Thierry, the first woman to serve the Texas House District. Rep. Thierry champions leadership and thoughtful policymaking particularly regarding gender transition procedures for minors. Rep. Thierry was instrumental in passing legislation that established a minimum age of 18 for gender transition procedures in Texas.

Gigi Larue:

The amendment through aiming to prevent discrimination of civil or political rights because of sex, is a violation of the separation of church and state. This forces a belief system onto the people in the state. Once gender & gender identity is added into the definition of sexual discrimination then women as a sex category will be erased. Women and girls will lose their private spaces, sports, scholarship awards and jobs to men. Do not codify gender and gender identity into this law.

The following Pastors and Churches have objected to the amendment as anti-biblical and against God:

Frank Termine, Pastor, Calvary Church

Mark Taylor, Senior Pastor, River Valley Christian Center

Josh Pateet, Pastor

Joan Spoerndle, Grace Baptist Church

Lisa Maloney:

The intention is likely to protect individuals from discrimination, but it poses a risk to the safety, well-being and rights of those who have been marginalized particularly women and the unborn. The amendment threatens to undo many advances women have made in sports, healthcare and legal protections. I believe all should be treated with respect and dignity. The studies on puberty blockers and gender-altering procedures on adolescents have raised serious concerns about their safety and efficacy. Studies found that puberty blockers in adolescents did not result in any improvement to mental health. I have included cases in my testimony.

Ashley A:

Protect women in sports like Payton McNabb and Riley Gaines. Biological men should not be playing in women's sports.

Anonymous Shannon:

Included in my testimony are Trans Ad Campaigns.

Martha Storrs Hafner, Advocates for Vermont and Prayer:

As a former educator and descendent of a well-known family of Connecticut who encourages good educational practices, I believe the Bible says God created the heavens and earth. Gender confusion is being injected into our young people as they try to figure out which of the 57 variations of sexual identity they are. I recommend Producer Robby Starbuck's "The War on Children" for your viewing. I have included in my testimony a link to the condensed transcript. Abstain from furthering the gender confusion and refrain from Constitutional changes that will prolong the confusion.

Mark Buchanan, MD:

As a graduate of Harvard College and Tufts University, I am board-certified in internal medicine. The effect on the care of gender dysphoric children and adults is extremely contentious. I this state because it often triggers discussions that are not informed by medical science. The amendment does not fight discrimination as I explain in my extensive testimony.

Gays Against Groomers:

The following submitted testimony.

Naomi Nye, Legislative Representative

Jennifer Yeager, State Regional Leader

Daniel Savu

Over 400 also submitted testimony in opposition to the bill.

Over 80 Submitted testimony anonymously in opposition to the bill.

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

Date: 03/04/2025