

April 4, 2025

Dear Chair Shanley and Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee:

My name is Denise Crooks and I live in Cranston, RI and I am writing to you in support of House Resolution H6125. The Rhode Island legislature has stood with the LGBTQIA community for years though its enactment of non-discrimination laws, passage of marriage equality, support for the Rhode Island Uniform Parentage Act, and a law mandating gender inclusive restrooms in buildings of public accommodation. Passing this resolution now will reaffirm the legislature's commitment to supporting our communities at a time when the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA people have been under attack by the federal government.

I am a member of the LGBTQIA community. I am also a social worker who provides therapy primarily to transgender and non-binary Rhode Islanders. Following the recent executive orders by the Trump administration which ban transgender people from being in the military, having passports that accurately reflect their identities and attempt to limit access to trans healthcare, I see the impact on my patients every day. There is an increase in depression, anxiety, suicidality, and suicide attempts. As I work to instill hope in my patients and support them in warding off despair, I encourage them to look at organizations and institutions that are standing with the LGBTQIA communities. I would like to be able to continue to point towards the Rhode Island legislature as one of these. So while it may seem hyperbolic, I believe the passage of the resolution at this moment in time may be literally life-saving.

I am appreciative of living in a state that has been at the forefront of advancing and ensuring equal rights and dignity for LGBTQIA people. I urge the committee to vote to pass H6125. And if it passes I look forward to telling my patients about the Rhode Island House's support for them.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Denise Crooks, MPH, LICSW

Cranston, RI