

# *The First Baptist Church in America*

*The Birthplace of America's Religious Freedom*

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Greetings Respected Representatives,

April 3, 2025

I write urging your affirmation of House Resolution 6125: Expressing Support for the LGBTQIA+ Community, sponsored by Representatives Kislak, Noret, Felix, Hull, Cotter, Blazejewski, Ajello, Shallcross Smith, Morales, and Potter. In this moment, queer folks, particularly our trans siblings, are under assault by our government. As the Minister of the First Baptist Church in America, I know firsthand the challenges and palpable fears currently faced by members of the queer community. In my capacity as a pastor and preacher of the gospel, I am called to love and dignify every child of God. The current climate towards queer people fostered by our federal government is punitive and cruel. Civil rights are being rolled back in schools, athletics, the military, hospitals, passport agencies, and research institutions. Through this resolution, Rhode Island can demonstrate its solidarity with all people of our state.

The legacy of our state is one of freedom of conscience. Roger Williams gathered this state in the spirit of soul liberty and human dignity. This resolution continues and celebrates our legacy of recognizing the spectrum of human experience. Today, more than ever, our fellow Rhode Islanders need to know their local government is in their corner. I urge you to heartily endorse House Resolution 6125 and to affirm the equality of all our people.

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Jamie P. Washam,

Senior Minister of the First Baptist Church in America  
Commissioner for the Rhode Island State Council of Churches  
Resident of Lincoln, RI

*"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free." Gal. 5:1*