

April 2, 2025

Chair Shanley and Members of Committee on State Government and Elections:

I am writing in favor of the House resolution 6125 seeking a legislative reaffirmation of support for LGBTQ people in RI. I am a married lesbian with a partner of 36 years; we have two adult kids, one of them trans. I have been in the fight for LGBTQ rights for 40 years and have heard lots of homophobia and transphobia during those decades; I have been called disgusting, an abomination, a sinner, a groomer; I have been told I will destroy the fabric of society, ruin civilization as we know it, and destine my children to perpetual dysfunction. I've had homophobic pamphlets mailed to my home; I've had homophobic death threats left on my desk at work. With all of that, I have never been as horrified as I am now.

The national discourse dehumanizing and scapegoating LGBTQ people – particularly trans people – and the corresponding policy initiatives by the Trump administration have shattered the lives of many. The rhetoric and policies have created an environment of fear and hostility and made an already marginalized community unsafe in the public sphere. LGBTQ people already faced disproportionate violence, harassment, and discrimination. When our national government sends a message that they do not matter, that their rights are expendable, that they do not exist, the repercussions are deep.

As you know, RI has been a leader in the fight for LGBTQ equity and justice. In fact, on this Committee is Representative Edie Ajello, a hero in our fight for LGBTQ rights for almost 30 years. She became an LGBTQ ally and a leader for justice when it took courage to do so; I ask you all to follow her lead now.

As a state, we must push back against harmful rhetoric and policy and publicly commit to lead on issues of equality. I ask you to reaffirm this legislature's support for the LGBTQ community, especially in light of the ongoing assault on transgender people. This means reaffirming our policies that prevent discrimination in employment, accommodation, healthcare, and education, and reaffirming our right to exist, work, and thrive as our true selves. Your support will send the message that our state rejects the stigmatizing of LGBTQ people and instead values justice, fairness, and inclusion.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wendy Becker, PhD, LICSW