



April 18, 2023

Honorable Chair Sharon Carson
Senate Judiciary Committee
State House Room 100
107 N Main St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support for HB 315

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Sam Hawkins, and I am the Public Policy Assistant at NAMI NH, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI NH is a non-profit, grassroots organization whose mission is to improve the lives of all people impacted by mental illness and suicide through support, education and advocacy. On behalf of NAMI NH, I am here today to speak in support of HB 315, prohibiting provocation based on the defendant's religion, race, creed, sexual orientation, national origin, political beliefs or affiliation, sex, or gender identity.

The basis of our support centers on the intention of the bill as introduced, but we are also comfortable with the bill as amended by the House.

Sexual and gender minorities are almost three times as likely to be the victim of a violent crime¹. Though research into this topic is limited, largely due to accessibility of data and possible underreporting, the CDC has acknowledged the prevalence and impact of violence on LGBTQ health. Specifically focusing on youth, the CDC reports that lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are 140% more likely to skip at least one day of school a month out of fear for their safety, and that 10% of these students were threatened or injured with a weapon at school alone².

Violence, whether threatened or performed, has a significant impact on an individual's mental health. We believe this impact to be especially great if one does not feel that their safety is properly protected. LGBTQ+ individuals deserve to feel and be safe from harm within their communities. This bill would take an important step in providing these

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individuals with a sense of security and peace of mind in their communities, improving mental wellness.

For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to vote Ought to Pass for HB 315.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel C. Hawkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'S'.

Samuel C. Hawkins

¹*Victimization rates and traits of sexual and gender minorities in the United States: Results from the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017*, ScienceAdvances (2020), https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.aba6910?fbclid=IwAR01oLZW1XfpYIZIif_XRxOTzgBjmddp6ML9zTl6URfqFYCw6vL88CwguHc

²*LGBT Youth*, CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm>