



January 16, 2024

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

RE: NAMI NH Opposition to SB 562

Dear Chair Carson 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 opposition to SB 562, relative to state recognition of biological sex.

As a result of stigma and discrimination, LGBTQ+ individuals, especially those who are transgender or gender-nonconforming, are often at an elevated risk for experiencing anxiety and depression. Lack of school belonging, internalized stigma, and emotional familial neglect contribute to suicidality for transgender youth.¹ Consistent with this, providing access to identity-affirming spaces is one of the most significant ways we can promote trans wellbeing. “Open representation,” the “presence of other LGBTQ people,” and “a welcoming environment” have been identified as some of the qualities that make a space affirming for LGBTQ youth. Yet in NH, only 18% of LGBTQ youth believe their community at large to be “very accepting.”²

SB 562 only serves to further eliminate affirming spaces for the trans community. Team sports and everyday environments like bathrooms and locker rooms could become places where an individual can no longer live fully in accordance with their identity. When the number of affirming environments decreases, anxiety and depression will likely increase.

Finally, introducing and considering bills like this is harmful, regardless of whether they become law. 80% of LGBTQ youth in New Hampshire reported that recent politics have

Find Help, Find Hope.

NAMI New Hampshire • 85 North State Street • Concord, NH 03301
InfoLine: 800-242-6264 • Tel. 603-225-5359 • Fax 603-228-8848 • info@naminh.org / www.NAMINH.org

negatively impacted their well-being.² This data makes it clear that not only the outcomes, but the very act of calling these individuals' rights into question, causes harm.

For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to vote Inexpedient to Legislate for SB 562.

Sincerely,

Samuel C. Hawkins

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Samuel C. Hawkins". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the printed name.

¹*Suicidality Among Transgender Youth: Elucidating the Role of Interpersonal Risk Factors* (Abstract), *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (2020)

²*2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Mental Health by State*, The Trevor Project (2022)