



February 6, 2024

Honorable Chairman Rick Ladd
House Education Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 205-207
33 N State St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Support for HB 1162

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. 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 writing in support of HB 1162, relative to teaching discrimination in public schools and discrimination in public workplaces.

Mental illness and suicide are some of the greatest public health issues facing students and young professionals in the state of New Hampshire. Nationally, the link between discrimination and negative mental health outcomes, including suicide, is clear. According to the CDC, “Suicide and suicidal behavior are influenced by negative conditions in which people live, play, work, and learn,” and that these conditions “can include racism and discrimination in our society.”¹ Further, “Examples of groups experiencing suicide health disparities include veterans, people who live in rural areas, sexual and gender minorities, middle-aged adults, people of color, and tribal populations.”¹ Existing and ongoing research has shown that discrimination has a significant impact on mental health outcomes.

Schools and workplaces are distinct and important communities within our larger society. For most, the interactions we have in these communities are the most defining of our daily lives. We have a responsibility to ensure that every student and employee in the state of New Hampshire is safe from discrimination. This bill would protect the right of schools

¹Disparities in Suicide, CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/disparities-in-suicide.html>

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

and workplaces to teach on all subject matter, will reduce harm to large and important sections of our communities, and has the potential to save lives that discrimination may otherwise take.

For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to vote OTP for HB 1162.

Sincerely,

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

Samuel C. Hawkins

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