

April 12, 2021

Representative Robert E. Craven, Sr. – Chair, House Judiciary Committee
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

Dear Representative Craven and members of the Committee:

For more than 25 years Youth Pride, Inc. (YPI) has provided a place where LGBTQ* young people can truly be themselves and find the support they need to succeed in school, work, and life. YPI also strives to make sure that those throughout our state who work with young folks, have the information and resources they need to treat all youth with respect and dignity. I write to you today, to respectfully urge your support of HB6171.

Passing this bill will protect people born with variations in their sex characteristics from medically unnecessary surgeries during infancy and ensure that life-altering choices about their bodies and, in some cases, gender identities are not forced upon them soon after they are born. People with these variations have always existed, and awareness is increasing about the diversity of human bodies. People whose bodies are different from what society expects should have the same bodily autonomy, dignity, and respect all other Rhode Islanders are afforded.

Unnecessary surgeries on infants with variations in their physical sex characteristics are often based on generalized, hypothetical assumptions about how the child will prefer their body to appear and function when they grow up. These assumptions are rooted in gender stereotypes, and original medical literature even promotes these surgeries out of a desire to avoid homosexuality and prevent the development of certain gender identities in individuals born with variations in their sex characteristics. Deferring surgical decisions until after age 12 allows time for the individual and their family, to consider whether surgery is right for them.

Again, I ask that you please support the passage of HB6171.

Sincerely,



Elana Rosenberg, Executive Director, Youth Pride, Inc.