

## Testimony Supporting House Bill 6352: The Dignity at Work Act to the House Labor Committee

### **Dear House Labor Committee,**

My name is Angela Bartlett, and I'm a member of Dignity at Work. Thank you in advance for reading my letter. I found the Dignity at Work website, the bill, and the individuals who partake in the cause while I was in the throes of being bullied in October 2020. "There has to be a law against the way he's treating you," friends and family would say about my former Chief Information Security Officer and boss. "He can't do that to you" was told to me by my dwindling support system. You see, a state government hired me as the second person on their IT security team. Funny enough, on day one, while the CISO took me to lunch, I was told I might not have a job in a few months. The fear tactics, odd slights at my abilities, and put-downs continued from there. That isn't the first workplace I've been bullied. *Therefore, I am in support of the Dignity at Work Act.*

As an IT auditor, I like to think in terms of risk vs. reward. When controls are put in place to prevent a threat from happening, it is a better solution than controls that detect a threat happened – after the fact. I hope that this bill passes so bullying behavior in the workplace stops before it starts, through a law and penalties if need be. I encourage you to consider that after the COVID pandemic, we try to have more empathy for coworkers and humanity; now that we've looked into each other's homes through zoom, heard children and pets in the background, and went through a pandemic with each other. The workplace does not have physical boundaries any longer as remote work is the new normal. Bullying is reaching into the heart of the home and compromising more individuals for which we can account. Remote working/cyberbullying while working is also why I feel it necessary to stop all forms of bullying in Rhode Island and the US. Behaviors can be improved.

Most individuals I've met through Dignity at Work won't get to reap the benefits of their labor in this group. You see, if it were for most of us, it would have passed 20 years ago to protect us against the bullying already endured. Only God can heal and restore [me].

This bill is for your children. Your grandchildren. Your friend's children. Your nieces. Your neighbor's kids, those children entering public and private workforces.

We are asking - at the least - with this law - companies will have an incentive to face the elephant in the room. We aren't asking to throw workplace bullies in the jail system or call them criminals.

We want to bring ethics back to the forefront. To put bullying at the level of consideration that gender harassment, age discrimination, and LGBT rights are. And maybe workplaces and employees will take those things more seriously as well.

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My concern is that if children and teens hear their parents and adults complain about the environment in which workplaces are offering, they will steer clear of degrees in those fields and those workplaces. I support entrepreneurship, however not sure if our economic system supports small businesses as much as we'd like to think. We seem to need large employers. Organizations need help with some employees to help the greater good—especially help with those individuals using improper bullying tactics.

I would be humbled and grateful if the collection of these letters and testimonies helps you support Dignity at Work. Hopefully, it's not too much to share. Dignity while working.

Thank you so much.

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