

Testimony Concerning HB 1010
“Health Care Facilities – Discrimination (LGBTQ Senior Bill of Rights)”
Submitted to The House Health and Government Operations Committee
March 5, 2020

Position: Support

Dear Health and Government Operations Committee,

My name is Danielle Burton and I am a firm supporter of this bill. People in society are so intrigued by categorization. We have all seen the proverbial categories listed on job applications, standardized tests, hospital forms, and the like. Male? Female? Married? Check the box that applies to you. But what if those boxes do not apply to you? We have also heard questions that straddle the line between invasion of privacy and personal attack. Inquiries such as: “Are you Gay?” or “Are you a man or a woman?” Why do the answers to these questions matter? Why are we hellbent on determining the intimacy and sexual orientation of others? What makes us so entitled and ready to categorize someone based on the way we see fit? The answer is simple: it is a socially acceptable tactic used to separate “us” from “them”. It is done so that a trans individual cannot live in a particular neighborhood. It is done so that a gay individual cannot be legally married like his/her/their heterosexual peers. The more boxes we check the more reminders we have of ingrained, exclusionary practices against those who do not adhere to social norms. Lest we forget, normality is a social construct. We say “hello” when we answer the phone. “Goodbye” when we hang up. We stand facing the elevator doors until the floor of our choosing. These are examples of socially accepted, “normal” behaviors. So, should we make excuses for discrimination because “that’s just the way things have always been”? No. Norms, discrimination, and systemic prejudice are perpetuated by people. People like us. Why don’t we characterize ourselves as lemmings and ask ourselves why we are governed by antiquated rules? What makes us less capable of creating our own norms today? At our fingertips, we have an opportunity to change the narrative. We have the opportunity to dispel discriminatory practices against people who do not fit the mold of human-made conventional standards. It is now time to think outside of the box, to do away with the box, and this bill will help us do just that.

Thank you for your consideration.