



Hello, Chairman Lynn and committee members,

Thank you for your consideration of this written testimony. I am Jim Bomersbach, Ph.D., President and Legislative Committee Chair of the New Hampshire Psychological Association (NHPA). The New Hampshire Psychological Association (NHPA) represents hundreds of licensed psychologists in New Hampshire. NHPA also stands in opposition to HB1564, the removal of 'gender identity' from state statutes. The specific statutes referenced in this bill concern the prohibitions on discrimination in terms of employment, education, redress of criminal victimization, access to medical and mental health care, and redress by the State Government. There is a compelling need to retain the protections for transgender individuals, and we respectfully recommend that this bill be considered inexpedient to legislate.

First, it is important to establish that discrimination on the basis of gender identity is an actual problem that is addressed by the present statutes. In a survey of over 6,000 transgender individuals (National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011), more than half reported experiencing bias and discrimination, such as the loss of employment, bullying, or physical and sexual assault. It is reasonable to consider this to directly link to the high rates (up to 40% of participants) of suicidal ideation reported in the same survey. Psychological researchers have found similar rates of depression, stigma, and social isolation among those who identified as transgender. Other research (Du Bois, Yoder, Guy, and colleagues, 2018) has shown that specific state-level protections (like those under threat from this bill) led to individuals reporting better mental health outcomes, less consumption of alcohol, and greater engagement in health care services. To be absolutely clear, rolling back protections against discrimination increases the likelihood that transgender individuals will experience discrimination, that some will live poorer lives for it, and that some sadly will take their own lives who otherwise would not have.

Protections against discrimination of transgender individuals are supported by national organizations, such as the American Psychological Association, and state organizations such as NHPA. There has been reasonable argument put forth to justify rolling back these protections. There has been no evidence suggesting that discrimination against transgender individuals is overblown or manufactured. Your decisions on this bill and others like it will have a real and profound impact on the lives of individuals who you have pledged to represent. Furthermore, as

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a professional organization, NHPA supports holding mental health providers accountable when they limit or deny access to mental health services to transgender individuals. Again, research by psychologists show that this is a real and serious problem (Fumarco and Colleagues, 2024).

As mental health professionals, NHPA is hopeful that the members of this committee will recognize that this bill moves our state in the wrong direction and will cause meaningful harm to fellow New Hampshire residents if it becomes the law. We humbly ask for your vote to oppose this legislation and those like it.

Jim Bomersbach, PHD
NHPA President
Legislative Committee Chair