

Dear Representative:

We are a group of LGBTQ-focused organizations in Rhode Island, writing to urge you to **oppose H6147A/S803**, a bill that adds **gender identity** and **gender expression** to the list of protected characteristics within current hate crime legislation and provides for enhanced sentencing if convicted of a hate crime.

We believe the Attorney General and the bill's sponsors are sincere in their beliefs that gender identity and expression should be included within hate crime legislation, and that enhanced penalties for hate crimes are appropriate and beneficial. **But as members of the LGBTQ+ community, as potential victims of these hate crimes, we respectfully, and strongly, disagree.**

You may be surprised that we would oppose inclusion of gender identity and expression within hate crimes legislation. However, there is no data to show hate crimes legislation decreases victimization, while there is reason to believe the enhanced criminal penalties could be used disproportionately against communities of color.

**Pursuing LGBTQ+ justice at the expense of racial justice is not acceptable and does not actually achieve LGBTQ+ justice.** They are inextricably linked. LGBTQ+ organizations and advocates will no longer support legislation that uses enhanced incarceration as a tool to fight anti-LGBTQ+ hate. Imposing increased penalties within an unjust criminal justice system has too great a potential consequence for communities of color.

We thank you for your support of the LGBTQ+ community in the past, and hope you will consider our wishes as you vote on the hate crimes bill. **We urge you to vote against this bill.**

Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

LGBTQ Action RI  
Project Weber/Renew  
PrYSM  
RI Pride  
Sojourner House  
TGI Network  
Trans Action Coalition  
Youth Pride