

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Mary Anne McGrory and I am from Pocatello, originally from Georgia, and I am here to ask that you ADD THE WORDS. I know you are tired, but we, in the LGBT community, are tired as well.

Yesterday was the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, one of the deadliest of the Nazi sponsored extermination camps in Europe. In March, it will be the 50th anniversary of the historic March on Selma. I am somewhat incredulous that with the history of those events, and others, we are still debating, judging, and slowly doling out basic human and civil rights.

I am the mother of twins who were born 15, and a half, years ago here and were identified by the doctor as male. As they grew older, it became obvious that my son Ben loved what society considered "Girl" stuff. He was teased by some kids in elementary school but was able to handle it with a shrug of shoulders and toss of head. I was not able to handle it so easily when adults would bully him and many times was left wondering where people get the idea it is ok for them to bully and condemn a five year boy for wearing a pink Barbie track suit.

While shopping in a store in Pocatello, the smile capital of the world, ADULT followed my 11 year old son around calling him "Faggot". I want you to take a moment and visualize what I have just said. Because some strangers perceived my son to be gay, it was perfectly acceptable to them that they follow him around calling him faggot and, until Ben's friend ran and got her father, NO ONE DID ANYTHING.

After much soul searching and counseling, and a hospitalization for suicidal ideation, my son became my daughter and transitioned from

Ben to Breanna. Her self-esteem has risen and she is so much happier and no longer suicidal. Since this transition, I have been both lauded and condemned for my support of my child and of equal rights for all people.

By not adding the words, the State of Idaho has given a pat on the back to every student, teacher, coach, administrator, and random stranger who has called my child monstrous, perverted, deserving of bullying, and fag. By not adding the words, or even calling for a hearing, the State of Idaho has reinforced to the whole community that LGBTQI are indeed second class citizens and are deserving of the discriminatory practices that they alone are legally open to. I would imagine if we took out the reference to sexuality and gender and inserted any number of other groups who have had their rights limited in the past – African Americans, Japanese Americans, Native Americans, Irish, Catholics, Women, Quakers, Baptists, Jews, and even Mormons the bill would be passed in a heartbeat and the community would be united in the belief that all people have equal rights under the law in the United States. But, because of religiously supported homophobia and the constant reliance of stereotypes and scare tactics, discriminating against law abiding, tax paying citizens is somehow ok and justifiable.

I imagine in years to come the youth will look back on this time period and the debate that rages on LGBTQI equality and shake their heads and wonder what was the big deal about? Did people really care who other people love and how they live their life? I believe that the stereotypes of gays and transgender will be replaced with the understanding that LGBT is not a choice or lifestyle but rather a matter of genetics as is hair and eye color, height and right or left handedness. And, finally all people will be equal under the law.

I see those people, who today demand the right to discriminate, having to answer for their beliefs much as George Wallace, governor of Alabama during the Civil rights movement did after he stood and proclaimed, "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, and segregation forever." Or, as the Queen of England did when she posthumously pardoned Alan Turing for his conviction of gross indecency for simply being gay. (Alan Turing, code breaker of the German enigma code, who saved the world from the Nazis, committed suicide as a result of the chemical castration he was given to "cure his homosexuality.")

I would like to end with a philosophy that predates most organized religion and that can be found in almost every culture that has existed. A philosophy that if everyone followed, no matter your religious or spiritual beliefs, the world would be so much more a better place. A philosophy that I ask each and every one of you to consider when voting:

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

Or maybe we should change it to

Do unto others as you would have others do unto your own child.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mary Anne McGrory

Pocatello, Idaho

My name is Patricia Truman. I live in Boise. Mr. Chairman and Committee, I speak in support of HB 2.

I am 66 years old. More than half of those years I've lived in Idaho and felt fear because of my sexual orientation. As a single mother of two and as a teacher here, I was afraid I would lose my children and/or my job if my children's dad or my employer knew that I was a lesbian. Family and work have always been core values for me. To have **fear** so enmeshed with my love of family and my passion for work seems so wrong. I imagine that family and work mean very much to you, too, and perhaps you have experienced related fears for your own reasons. If so, then you and I are alike that way.

What can we do with our fear?

by the author of the ^{Bill of} Universal Human Rights

I tried being brave. I'm paraphrasing but this quote captures my experience:

"I looked fear in the face and did what I thought I **could not do**."

- I knew I'd have to hide. Still, I signed on for a teaching job here, because my decade of teaching grade-school students in **other** states gave me the gift of knowing that I was *meant* to help children learn and that I had the ability to do that very well, including how to help **children** feel and **be** brave when times were tough for them.
- I received this anonymous note suggesting that I resign from my teaching job because <quote> "the majority of parents are quite aware that you are a lesbian." <unquote>. This note frightened me. But I stayed up late correcting papers and planning lessons every night, grabbed my bags each morning, prepared my classroom, and as is said these days, I tried my best to "keep calm and carry on" for the sake of my students.
- During my sixth year of teaching at that school, my principal ordered a reluctant coworker to check my lesson plans every morning (which was clearly harassment, since that was my 16th year of teaching and there was no evidence that my lesson plans were lacking). Each morning I stood by quietly, and when my coworker was gone from my classroom, I untied the knot in my stomach and gathered up my heart and mind for another day of scholarship and adventure with my roomful of beloved 12-year-olds.

I did leave teaching at the end of that year. Ironically, **that** took being brave, too. And some said that my leaving was a big loss for many Boise children and families. But I simply needed some respite from the fear.

You have likely seen the slogan Idaho Is Too Great for Hate. Of **course** it is. I want to try out this slogan: Idaho Is Too Great for **Fear**. I'm much older now, my kids are grown, and I did not return to teaching. So I do have less fear. I still work, though, I rent a house now, and of course—I am still gay. I still have fear because of my sexual orientation. It's not because people haven't been kind to me. I know some people are kind and some are not. That's not the issue. Mr. Chairman and committee members, I still have fear because I am not protected equally under the law. If you pass this bill, if you add me, I will know that the State of Idaho will have my back.

I don't know if you or if anyone else here is fearful of me. And I don't know if you are fearful of what might happen if you pass a bill that will lead to my having the same **human** rights as others in Idaho.

But I **DO** know that an act of courage—facing fear—leads to personal dignity and strength.

Please. Be brave. Please do what might be really hard to do. Send House Bill 2 on with a Yes vote.

Mr. Chairman, member of this committee: My name is Susan Bolen . I liv, here in Boise. I stand before you today a proud, straight ally in support of House Bill 2, and asking you to Add the Words sexual orientation, gender identity to our Human rights law. I come as a co-worker, a neighbor, a friend and most of all a sister. I grew up in a small town in southeastern Idaho. Over 30 years ago, my older sister, who out of continuing fear of retribution has asked that I keep our town and her name confidential, lost her job and her home over the mere hint that she was a lesbian .Back then, she hadn't even come out to our family, much less our community. She was a respected member of the local Episcopal parish, a Lamaze coach helping hundreds of couples deliver healthy babies and begin healthy families. She was assistant director of a well -respected non- profit organization that again she has requested remain nameless. Everyone liked her. Everyone respected her. She was marvelous at her job and unequaled in her volunteering. Yet, just the hint, the whisper that she was gay was enough for her to be summarily fired. Following her dismissal, the community in which we lived became overtly hostile to her, to her family and to her children. She feared for their safety every time they left the house. Seeing no way to protect herself and her children in our town, she left her children with their father and moved as far away from them as she felt she needed to in order to ensure they would no longer be harassed because of her, and started a new life. She ended up in Wisconsin and re- built a life for herself. When she knew that it was okay for her to be just who she was and that she would be judged only on her ability to contribute to her workplace and her community, and when she knew she and her family would be safe, her children joined her. My niece graduated from the University of Wisconsin and has since used her many gifts to contribute to the economy of Maine, where she and her mother now live. Even now, 30 years later, my sister is afraid to come home. She is afraid to go out in public with her family for fear of harassment. Her son, who still

lives in our home town, rarely speaks of his mother to anyone other than trusted friends for the same reason. My family has suffered because our hometown is not safe for my sister.

I spend most Sundays across State Street worshipping at St. Michael's Episcopal Cathedral. I know that my sister is a beloved child of God and that He mourns, along with our family that she lives in fear in her own home town. I miss my sister. I ask that you help my sister feel safe.

Make it safe, make it okay for her to come home. Pass House Bill 2

Please Add the 4 Words. No more, No less.

Testimony on HB002

Chairman and members of the State Affairs committee; my name is Alicia Clegg and I'm here today to speak in support of HB2. I live in Boise but was born and raised in a big tight-knit Mormon family in Blackfoot; my dad Kay works out at the INEL and my mom, Melody, has gone from being a stay at home mom to teaching and directing the GED program at a technical college now that my four siblings and I are grown and out of the house.

We're all adults now and my family is still pretty tight-knight, but our relationships with each other have had to grow throughout the years; they had to grow when my sister Ruth married my brother-in-law Paul and to include my nieces and nephews (of which there are 5 now!). They had to grow as my siblings and I have moved to different towns and states for jobs and spouses and schools. They had to grow when I told my family that I'm gay and when my brother Ben brought his husband Dugan home to celebrate Christmas with us for the first time.

As a gay Idahoan I have different everyday experiences than my straight siblings do. I have the same concerns when I go to work everyday that my sister or my brother do; I worry about doing a good job. I worry about being able to lead my team effectively. I worry about keeping on top of e-mails and contributing in meetings and delivering service that keeps our clients happy. Unlike my sister or my brother, though, I also worry about my haircut speaking louder than my ideas. I worry that wearing a tie will overshadow my experience in my field. I worry that using the wrong pronoun for a romantic partner in a conversation with a team member or with my boss will distract from the job that I'm trying to get done. When I've chosen to keep myself in the closet at work I've worried about keeping my stories straight and have felt guilty when lying about my personal life in casual conversation. When I've chosen to be out at work I've worried that my orientation will matter more to my employer than the job that I do.

When, really, all that I want to devote mental energy to is whether the way I'm going about the job we're working on for, say, the Bonneville County Clerk's office will allow them to quickly and easily find information in their database.

I'm testifying today because I know that what keeps my family together and allows our relationships to grow is also what will keep our state strong. My family knows that what matters most at the end of the day is not that one of my brothers is a Libertarian and my dad is a Republican and I'm a Democrat. It's not that my parents and I attend different churches now. It's not that my sister teaches music and directs her school musical every year while my brother would rather get teeth pulled than hear one of those Into the Woods songs again. What matters most is how we treat each other. We're able to share time together because we treat each other with love; because we listen, because we respect each other and acknowledge the hardships that we've each experienced.

Many Idahoans, including myself, are gay or transgender individuals and many Idahoans are not. What matters is most is how we treat each other, and passing HB2 is about ensuring that each Idahoan has the freedom to go about their lives in peace; it acknowledges that our communities and our workplaces aren't as strong when we're focused not on the task at hand but on whether we agree with how someone identifies.

Alicia Clegg
6214 W Northview St
Boise, ID 83704
a.clegg.id@gmail.com

Testimony submitted by The Rev. Deborah M. Graham
to the House State Affairs Committee on HB 2.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am a 2nd generation Idaho citizen born in Boise in 1955. I currently live in Boise and have lived in Moscow, Blackfoot, Pocatello, Nampa and Garden City. I am an Episcopal priest who serves churches in Payette and Weiser. I have also served churches in Nampa and Meridian. I know Idaho. I love Idaho.

Mr. Chairman, I was raised a devout Christian. When my sexuality became conscious, I was horrified. I felt I had to choose between God and being myself, between God and being gay. I chose God and sank into severe depression and emotional pain. I hated myself. I wanted to die, I wanted to kill myself. At one point I had a gun in my hand, ready to put it to my head and pull the trigger. But somehow, by God's grace, I found the strength to put the gun down and return it to its owner, who had ironically given it to protect me from a man was breaking into single women's apartments in Pocatello, where I lived at that time

I went through three years of great emotional suffering. Finally, through theology classes from the Catholic Diocese, I was Catholic at that time, and much prayer I was able to hear God speaking in my heart and mind that my sexuality was OK, and God would be with me through the difficulties I would face.

Now I have the knowledge and experience to make a defense for who I am and who I fall in love with based on psychology, biology, Biblical studies, theology and ethics. But Mr. Chairman, no one should have to make such a defense.

I have listened to parishioners living in Nampa, a father and a young mother in Caldwell tell me of young teens who have killed themselves because of the harm others do them for being gay and also the effect these tragic deaths have on their own families. Other parishioners have transgender family members for whom they are quite concerned about their safety and well being.

And they do have reason for concern. A well documented study by the Williams Institute, University of California School of Law, documents the fact that LGBT people experience discrimination in Idaho. Briefly, here is one of the findings of the study

"A 2003 survey of more than 2,000 Idahoans found that 16% of transgender respondents, 12% of gay and bisexual men, and 8% of gay and bisexual women were expressly told by their employer that they had been fired from a job, not promoted, or had not received compensation or a raise because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. More than half of the LGBT respondents felt that they had to hide or deny their sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace." End quote Making others hide who they are is an act of emotional and spiritual violence.

Jesus, who is my Beloved Lord and Savior, teaches that "in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you" Mt. 7:12. On this people of faith across religious and denominational traditions agree. Treating people as though deserve to be

discriminated against, based on deeply held religious beliefs, violates this Golden Rule, this sacred teaching. It also violates the deeply held values of liberty and justice for all.

Jesus taught that not only are we to love our neighbor as ourselves, but we are to love our enemies (Mt. 5:44) and do good to those who hate us. Luke 6:7 The Scriptures also teach us to love the stranger as ourselves. Lev. 19:34, Deut. 10:19

Clearly love of the other, of all people, is highest expression of love and service to God, the Apex of religious life.

I John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." We all have heard and perhaps felt a lot of fear in this room during this hearing, fear from both sides of this issue. Clearly we are not yet perfected in love. Yet I must say that those of us who have been listening respectfully, attentively to people on all sides of this proposed bill are doing true acts of love and respect for their fellow Idaho citizens.

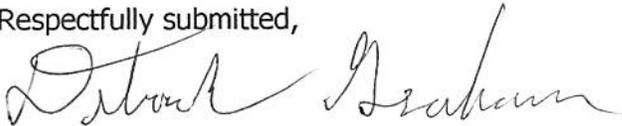
As MLK said, "The law cannot make a man love me." End quote. The law however, can and does recreate safe spaces where we can have the conversations with one another to come to know and understand each other, heal our fears, and together find the way to fulfill the words of the prophet Micah that

"Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the Lord Almighty has spoken." Micah 4:4 NIV

For these reasons and more, Mr. Chairman and committee members, my fellow Idahoans, consider well the testimony given here and approve HB 2. Thank you so much listening to me and the others who are testifying before you.

I now stand for questions

Respectfully submitted,



The Rev. Deborah Graham
1867 W Belmont St
Boise, Idaho, 83706

Mr/Madam Chair, members of the committee

My name is Emily Sieracki Van Hise. I am a resident of East Boise and the Canon Pastor of St. Michael's Episcopal Cathedral just across the street from this state house.

I am here to urge you to vote YES on House Bill 002 – to add the words Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity to our existing Human Rights Act.

I speak to you as a citizen of this state and as a priest of the Episcopal Church.

At my baptism, my parents committed to raising me within the Christian Faith. They committed to continue in the teaching of the Bible and to participate in the worship and the fellowship of the church. They also acknowledged that when they fell into sin they could repent and be forgiven. They committed to seek and serve Christ in all persons, to love their neighbors as them selves. They promised to strive for justice and peace and to respect the dignity of every human being.

They fulfilled their promises commitment.

When I was of age I made these same promises myself.

To seek and serve Christ in All Persons. To respect the dignity of EVERY HUMAN BEING.

-pause-

Every single Episcopalian makes these promises over and over each time another person is baptized, confirmed or received into the church – and several times a year at holy day services.

In the Episcopal Church, as in other Christian denominations, we have had our share of disagreement. We have struggled to maintain unity.

But never. Never, have we waived on this Baptismal Covenant which, along with the Apostles and Nicene Creeds, creates a stable base for our faith. Never have we argued or disagreed on any of these commitments.

Today, we've heard opponents of this bill state that we do not need to ADD The Words to our human rights act. But no one has said that we do not need the Human Rights Act itself.

Of course we cannot legislate kindness and love. But we can pass legislation that tells the citizens of our state, on no uncertain terms, that we in Idaho will not stand for treating Any of OUR Citizens or VISitors with anything less than the dignity and respect Christ showed to each and every person he encountered.

If there have been few reported incidents of violence and discrimination in our state it is only out of fear that incidents are not reported. And that the majority of us are allowed to live our lives without having to confront the bigotry and violence that one minority imposes on another, simply because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The addition of these four words to our Existing Human Rights Act will not legislate the values any church or parent teaches their children – unless those values are based on violence and isolation which hurt other citizens.

The addition of these four words to our existing Human Rights Act will simply make it safer for our children and all vulnerable people to call on their neighbors and law enforcement for help when they are afraid or abused. It will enable more Idahoans to make an honest living, find comfortable housing and ^{92 fear towards} free them from the fear, shame and isolation that lead to self destructive behaviors, including suicide.

In this legislative session, you have the opportunity to demonstrate that Idahoans recognize and will stand up for the dignity and well being of every human being.

Thank you, and I urge you to vote "YES" on House Bill 2, to add the words Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity to our existing Human Rights Act.

ANDREW F. VAN HISE
BOISE, ID
28 JAN 2015

PS 1/2

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I imagine you're pretty tired so I'll keep my comments brief and to the point. My name is Andrew Van Hise and I've been a resident of Idaho for about four—maybe five months now. In August, my wife and I married and we moved here to Boise to follow my wife's employment and her ministry. The first thing I want to say is how much we love it here. I know you all hear this a lot, but with hardly an exception, each person we've met here in Idaho has been warm, welcoming and respectful. And I'm appreciative that even in as divisive and passionate a discussion as this, participants on both sides of the debate have been respectful of one another.

The perspective I want to bring here to this conversation is one of a businessman who has been on Wall Street his entire career, and is now deciding whether to move his small investment business to Boise. Either I lease office space, hire a staff, contract with service providers here, and create Idaho jobs, or I commute to New York, Seattle or the Bay Area. My business is small compared to some larger enterprises that might consider moving to this state, but I imagine my concerns are shared by decision makers at some larger companies. And what I care about, beyond questions of market and resources, is that in Idaho commerce is fluid and free of excess regulation and social bias. I understand the fears expressed in the earlier testimony of a couple of business owners—in fact, one of the greatest expenses for investment firms is regulatory compliance. But HB02 is not an increase in my regulatory burden; it ~~doesn't tell me, for instance, that I must hire 3 gay people for every 20 employees.~~ Rather, the codified civil rights protections of Idaho law are reassurance that the Idaho firms with which I do business hire the best people for the job without regard to religion, national origin, or sexual orientation or gender identity; and my own clients can have the same confidence that my employment decisions and my investment advice are centered around their best interests and not my social opinions.

In earlier testimony we heard that “you can't legislate kindness.” This bill does not pretend do that. But in its protections it puts forward respect for the human dignity of others as a foundation for commercial interaction. And it's on this foundation that I can train and mentor my employees and expect from them the

ANDREW F. VANHUSE P8
BOISE, ID 212
28 JAN 2015

best they can give. And similarly, on this foundation I can build a commercial relationship with my clients and business counterparties.

It's not in my experience to be able to speak to the anguish of discrimination, and I'll leave it to others to argue the moral and ethical issues. The concern I'm voicing today is purely mercenary.

An in that voice, I can say, "By passing HB02 you send the message that in Idaho, the business of business is, quite simply, business."

Testimony in support of HB 2, offered by William Rath
January 28, 2015

I want to thank the legislature for convening this committee hearing to consider bill HB 2, to add the words "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to the Idaho Human Rights Act. Originally, I'd hoped to testify in a very different vein, but I am deeply concerned about the nature of much of the testimony that has been offered in opposition to the Bill thus far.

By way of background, I am a retired philosophy professor, who has long specialized in the philosophy of religion. I have travelled extensively both in the U.S. and abroad to learn more about the nature of religious belief and the wide variety of forms and faiths through which religion is practiced. In that pursuit, I have come to two particular understandings that are a foundation of my own faith: First, that all people are created equal before God (a belief embodied in most major religions); secondly, that the greatest danger in religious practice exists where a few presume to speak as if they are the only legitimate interpreters of God's word. Many of those who have testified before the Committee in opposition to HB 2 seem to be invoking that kind of authority, which, I can attest personally, stands in direct violation of my right to pursue my own religious beliefs as I see fit, and in contradiction to the First Amendment...that states Congress shall make no laws privileging one form of religion, or religious belief, over another. Precisely what many who oppose HB 2 seem to be asking the legislature to do.

Further, a number of those testifying on the basis of their Christian beliefs speak as if they are representing all Christians, whereas even a casual review of the literature shows that studies indicate the *majority* of Christians stand in support of the fundamental rights of those who are lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, or trans-sexual to enjoy the same freedoms and protections as the rest of us. Significantly, the younger the population, the greater the numbers of those professed Christians who support the LGBT community.

America, as we all know, was founded on the the principle of religious freedom, where no religion establishment can be favored over another...which is the clear intent of the First Amendment. As a result of such Constitutional protections, I believe we enjoy the freest society in the world... including the right to free speech. While I happily support the rights of those opposing HB 2 to speak their minds, I will resist to the end of my days their claims to some kind of higher religious authority, that runs counter to the beliefs of a majority of Christians...as well as those of many other faiths.

I ask you please not to let a few trample the First Amendment rights of the majority...a majority who believe it is time to extend equal protection under Idaho's laws to all of us.

Thank you again for making this process possible. Whatever the results, It strikes me as the finest example possible of democracy at work

W. R. Rath

Testimony in Favor of HB2
Judy Cross
1517 N. 22nd, Boise, ID 83702
26-28, January 2015

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you so much for this opportunity, and for your commitment to hearing everyone's voice. I can't tell you how very much I appreciate you for this promise!!

My name is Judy Cross and I live and work in Boise and I'm here to testify in favor of HB2. I've raised my family here and I love Idaho, having now been here longer than any other place in my life. I am a deacon in my church. I am a nurse; in fact, I was the first Clinical Nurse Specialist in Idaho. I'm also President of the Board of Directors of The Interfaith Alliance of Idaho, with members from diverse, progressive and traditional faith groups and people of conscience (including multiple denominations of mainstream Christians, Unitarian Universalists, Buddhists, Muslims, Humanists, and many more in the Treasure Valley and around the state). I represent The Interfaith Alliance of Idaho, but I'm also here representing myself and telling my story:

I distinctly and very sadly remember a time when I was homophobic, when I was teaching nursing and had two lesbian students. Out of totally unfounded fear of what I didn't understand at the time, I watched them very closely when they cared for female patients. I was involved in a faculty-wide discrimination against those 2 young women. My fear blinded me to their humanity and I have regretted that ever since, wishing I knew who they are and could find them to make amends.

Then, I married Robert, my soulmate (one of the most caring, generous, hard working, persons of integrity I have ever known). Ten years later, he realized he was gay. That realization brought him such peace, because he finally had answers to the many questions he had lived with since childhood. He knew he was different as a child; he just didn't have the words to describe it. We were best friends and I was the only girl he ever dated. Our friendship went much deeper than any sexual relationship. (I speak of him in the past tense because he passed away a few years ago.)

Robert was an Episcopal priest: very dedicated, very talented, and loved by all who knew him. He vowed not to stay in the closet, because he knew that being authentic was paramount for honest relationships. Being gay was NOT a choice.....it was part of how God made him. After serving in many leadership positions, including being assistant to the Bishop of the Diocese, another priest brought charges against us because Robert was gay. And I want to emphasize here that "being gay" is not just about sexual attraction, but about relationship and loving and a different way of being in the world.

Through the course of dealing with the charges, through no issues of performance, his ability to function as a priest, was suspended for many months. We lost our home and went through a year of hell, which I won't elaborate on right now for the sake of time. Thankfully, the Episcopal church has since grown in understanding, as you heard from Bishop Thom.

However, I was told at work that they wanted me to find a job somewhere else, like in San Francisco, where "people like me" might be more accepted than in

Idaho. They had to look out for their image, and as a staff member of Nursing Administration, I was stripped of all ability to interact with the public and was not allowed to be a spokesperson for my specialty at the hospital.

Not only did we lose our home, but our children were harassed and bullied at school and as adults, they still deal with those scars; and they are all straight!!!

The threat to jobs, as in my case, no longer officially exists in Boise, thankfully due to the Nondiscrimination Ordinance, but it still occurs in many areas of Idaho. The impact is not just on individuals, like my family experienced, but the ripple effect of discrimination is insidious and infects the culture with fear, negativity and mistrust.

Many gay and transgender persons have been so hurt by their churches of origin, and preachers who foster an atmosphere of degradation and intolerance, that they have lost their faith and run away from the churches they loved.

I have not lost my faith, though it faltered for a while. Discrimination is NOT a component or value of my faith; and I belong to a church and denomination that embraces "Christ's All Inclusive Love" for all. Our members at Liberating Spirit Metropolitan Community Church include many gay and transgender people and family members, who are "recovering" from the abuse they experienced in church. We believe that Jesus did not discriminate.

The current situation which promotes religious discrimination against our gay and transgender sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, parents and children, and forces religious extremism on our society. And please remember in your hearts that almost all straight people have someone who is gay or transgender in their family tree. Please consider our families.

Many gay and transgender persons, as well as those perceived to be such, live with the fear that their jobs are in danger, their homes insecure, and are denied services ONLY because of their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

In my profession, where I work with medical specialists for high risk patients, my administrator has lamented several times that she cannot recruit some nationally renowned specialists to Idaho, who love to visit here, but refuse to consider moving here because they have partners, and will not jeopardize themselves in this state.

This is a very important time for **you**, our honorably elected officials. **YOU** have the awesome opportunity to make a positive difference for **YOUR** gay and transgender constituents, as well as set the tone of care and safety for **ALL** Idahoans. Please consider how important it is to promote freedom from discrimination, rather than codify the freedom to discriminate and deny a group of people protection to make a living, live securely, and obtain basic services.

I urge you to find the compassion you all have for your constituents in this great State of Idaho, and send House Bill 2 with a due pass to the floor. I am a person of faith and I believe **YOU** are here for this important mission now.....for such a time as this!!

Thank you so much for your time, your attention, our compassion, and your integrity in adding the four words.....no more, no less!

I stand for questions.



Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest

Testimony in support of House Bill 2
House State Affairs Committee – January 26, 2015
Hannah Brass Greer, Legislative Director

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, good morning. My name is Hannah Brass Greer and I'm the Legislative Director for Planned Parenthood. I'm here in support of House Bill 2.

I would first like to sincerely thank you for holding this hearing today and for listening carefully to the testimony and stories you have and will hear from Idahoans from across the state. Before I give my prepared remarks, I'd like to clear up some of the questions and concerns that have been raised in the last few days.

1. The definition of sexual orientation has been clearly established in federal law as well as case law. Sexual orientation means heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality, whether actual or perceived. These definitions are universally accepted.
2. There was a lot of fear expressed about excess lawsuits and the cost and burden to employers and businesses. The process set up and followed by the Idaho Human Rights Commission is designed to not only protect the person filing the complaint, but also protect the business. In fact, the commission has a near 100% satisfaction rate among all the parties involved in the process.
3. I hope this was cleared up earlier, but nothing in this bill impacts the first amendment rights of clergy. They can continue to preach and teach as they wish and do not have to marry anyone they don't want to. Just as a Catholic priest could refuse to marry a Jewish couple and that would not subject them to a claim of religious discrimination, the Catholic priest could also refuse to marry a same sex couple and not be subject to a claim of discrimination based on sexual orientation.

With that, I would like to go onto a few general comments about why we support HB 2. Although I hope this misconception has been cleared up for all of you, many believe that it is already illegal to fire someone because they are gay or transgender. However, absent these protections, people in Idaho live in fear every day. Because of discrimination, and fear of discrimination, many gay and transgender employees hide their identities, are paid

less and have fewer employment opportunities than their non-LGBT counterparts. This can lead to devastating economic insecurity and puts them at increased risk for poor physical and mental health. I hope you all agree this is unacceptable.

Employees should be judged on their qualifications, experience and their job performance. Gay and transgender Idahoans should be treated fairly and equally under the law – they should have the opportunity to earn a living, have a place to live and be served by a business just like everyone else.

This bill can't tell people how to feel or believe nor does it attempt to, and updating the law won't end all unfair treatment overnight. However, updating the law will help ensure that all people who want to work hard and contribute to their communities are treated fairly and equally. Everyone deserves equal protection under the law. This bill doesn't give gay and transgender residents and employees special rights, but it does allow them to contribute to the economic health of Idaho, earn a living, and be able to provide for their families, just like everyone else.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 2. Thank you. I stand for questions.

Testimony in support of HB 0002: Updating the Idaho Human Rights Act to include “sexual orientation” and “gender identity.”

To be submitted

Idaho House State Affairs Committees—January 26, 2015

Mistie Tolman

Chairman Loertscher, committee members, good morning. My name is Mistie Tolman and I live in Meridian, in District 20 with my wife and four children. I’m sorry, my head is still spinning a little after the last couple of days. I didn’t come here expecting to hear the things I did. Maybe I was naïve, but I wasn’t expecting to sit through days of hearing myself, my friends, and the people I love being referred to as pedophiles, and criminals. Having our very character questioned. My friends, like Emi and Danielle, have been treated horribly, having things said that about them that are untrue and salacious, accusing them of horrible things just because they look different from me. It’s disheartening to say the least. The comments that have been made yesterday and today alone show the need for updating the Idaho Human Rights Act. That being said, I think it’s obvious that I’m here to testify in support of House Bill 2. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to tell about how updating the Idaho Human Rights Act would improve the lives of all Idahoans.

I’m here today as your sister, your mother, your daughter, your aunt, your cousin, your neighbor, your friend. You know us, you smile at us when we pass, you work with us, and you conduct business with us. Yet we are not extended the same freedoms under the statutes of the state of Idaho. Nobody should have to live in daily fear of being fired or losing their homes. Nobody should have to live in daily fear of being denied educational opportunities, or public accommodations.

I lived with that fear myself. I was terrified of being “found out” by my boss or even my coworkers—so much that I often withdrew from personal conversation whenever possible, working harder than ever to perform my duties so I could keep my job and provide for my children, but unable to fully engage or participate in my occupation, for fear of having to answer personal questions and getting fired.

I had no pictures of my family at work. I didn’t talk about my weekend if I could avoid it. If I was forced to answer a direct question, I would leave out my partner in my answer, or try to keep my pronouns straight, and then try to remember who I told what. Those normal, innocuous questions as a person tries to get to know you become, literally, in your head, a matter of having a livelihood or not. And at times I can imagine that I appeared disconnected and not invested. Our forefathers

believed that no artificial impediments should hold anyone with ambition back. That every American must have the right to achieve their American Dream, with no contrived man-made obstacles.

Yet that is the reality for thousands in Idaho. And nobody should have to live under that stress. It is too much to bear. The simple question before you today is whether gay and transgender Idahoans must continue to live as second-class citizens? Every day that we fail to act is one more day that gay and transgender Idahoans have to live under a system that legalizes and codifies the harm and fear that they have to live with each day.

There have been many testimonies today, and there are a few points that I feel compelled to address. First, it is very important that we remember that the Human Rights Act PROTECTS businesses as well as individuals. The Human Rights Commission investigates and mediates any claim of discrimination to make sure that a case of discrimination actually occurred and to protect businesses from false allegations.

Secondly, there has been a lot of talk these last couple of days about protecting the cake baker and the photographer. The point from the opposition has been about protecting people with sincerely held religiously beliefs. Unfortunately, as Rabbi Fink pointed out yesterday, we aren't hearing about the Jewish cab driver refusing to give a ride to a person eating a ham sandwich, or an LDS hairdresser refusing to do someone's hair who is drinking coffee. Why are we only ever talking about sincerely held religious beliefs when it comes to discriminating against the gay and lesbian community? As a gay person, it begins to feel like religion then is being used to treat ME poorly, like religion is then being used as a sword. The Idaho Human Rights Act has exemptions for religious institutions. It strikes that balance between protecting religious beliefs and protecting PEOPLE from losing their jobs, their housing, and being denied services.

Lastly, just because someone knows a gay or transgender person who has NOT been discriminated against, does not mean that the rest of us don't deal with that reality daily. I am glad for gay and transgender people who have not experienced discrimination. That, sadly, is not the experience that so many Idahoans have had. And even more live with that paralyzing FEAR every day. For THEM, this would mean so much. And it is for THEM that this bill would mean so much.

A strong majority of Idahoans believe that it should NOT be legal to fire someone just because of who they are or who they love. The latest polling shows that they believe that our government and our statutes should protect everyone. That everyone should be able to earn a living for their family, keep a roof over their heads, and live free from fear. I echo their voices that as elected

officials, you have an obligation to the safety of your citizens. And there is a big chunk of your citizens that do not feel safe in our beautiful state. My family could be kicked out of a restaurant or refused a ride in a cab. We could lose the jobs that put food on the table and provide for our children. Please. Update the Idaho Human Rights Act. Add me. Add my family to those who are protected. We are standing in front of you, asking for the help ONLY YOU can give us.

The legislature has a lot of very tough questions in front of it each session, but this is an issue that gives Idaho nothing to lose and so much to gain. It boils down to the golden rule, and I can't think of anything more family values than that. I urge you to vote yes to updating the Idaho Human Rights Act. Thank you. I stand for questions.

I am in support of HB2 moving out of committee and being approved, as written. Please find my written testimony below. I would like it added to the record since I may be unable to testify in person.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Charity Strong and I was born and raised in Idaho. I graduated from Boise State and started my family here. I work full-time to support my wife and two children and am the sole wage earner. Early on in my life, I learned how to use pronouns to protect myself and my family. Every day, in every interaction I have to make a split second decision of whether to come out or not. I have to decide whether it is safe based on the perceptions and strongly held beliefs of others. And not just safe for me, but safe for my family. Will the pronoun that I use to describe myself and my family impact my ability to earn a living, receive service at a business, or maintain housing?

I've faced discrimination and hateful words from individuals in the community and sometimes even my family. But I've been lucky too. I haven't suffered from violence or loss of employment like many others that I know. I live in Boise, in a primarily supportive community that has adopted an ordinance to protect me and my family. Why are we leaving the well-being of others across the state up to chance? Why would the majority leave to chance the opportunity for others to lose their jobs and housing, to be refused service based on knowledge or perception of otherness?

I have worked mostly for organizations that included sexual orientation and/or gender identity in their EEO statement. And that is due to the lesson I learned from my first professional job. I graduated from BSU and had my first child simultaneously. My spouse and I decided that I would be the wage earner and she would work in the home. I started my post-college career and was excited to contribute to my community. I was learning my new job, getting to know new people, and loving it. After my first month of employment, it was brought to my attention that I had made a colleague uncomfortable. I had no idea what that meant. It was further explained that disclosing my sexual orientation had created a hostile work environment.

The previous week I had a fairly harmless conversation with a colleague. It was a water cooler conversation. She asked me about my family. I told her that I had a six month old son and a spouse. She asked what "he" did and I explained that we made a family decision for "them" to stay home with the baby. She then commented about dead beat husbands and how it's really sad how we women have to support our men. I didn't want to perpetuate any sort of hateful rhetoric and disclosed that my spouse was in fact a woman. I politely closed the conversation and walked away.

I was reeling that such a harmless conversation could potentially harm my ability to support my family. Luckily, I did not lose my job. But it was on the table. My direct supervisor had to go to bat for me. She had to argue that my work performance should be considered above all else. She had to argue that the conversation did not impact the work environment. She had to argue! Not because I was a low performer, not because I was unreliable, but because I had a female spouse that was disclosed in a non-work related conversation. I was lucky, most are not.

I don't lead with my sexuality. I lead with kindness, and wit, and hard work, and honesty, and loyalty. I lead with these parts of myself that I learned growing up in Idaho, as the kid of a farm family with a love for Jesus. As a community of LGBT individuals, we identify with a myriad of faiths, political ideologies, ethnicities, marital and employment statuses, education completed, socio-economic statuses, and so on. The role of government is to represent the majority while protecting the minority and this has been upheld in many different areas over the past 300 years. I don't think I need to give a history lesson here.

Please support the ability for all individuals to maintain employment and housing and services free from fear based on perception or knowledge of sexual orientation or gender identity. This is not a question of religion, but rather of humanity. When we are all afforded the right to contribute to our communities in a positive manner we uphold the religious and spiritual beliefs of everyone. Please approve HB2 and add the words.

Thanks, Charity Strong

Mr Chairman and Committee Members

I have lived In Idaho for 28 years after serving 20 years in the Air Force including one year in Vietnam. My son, now 28 years old, was 6 months old when we moved her. One of my four daughters was born here.

My son Ryan is familiar with this State House. As a sixth grader at Lowell Elementary, he interviewed Governor Batt in his office here, What a state! He sang In the Rotunda for Christmas programs. After Boise High he graduated from Columbia University and is now a dissertation away from a PhD at Princeton. He loves Idaho and returns several times a year, but now as a gay man will not return to live in Idaho. Why? He could not be secure in his job and housing. **Without this bill, my son will not return to Idaho.** I love my son deeply. That hurts deeply.

And not only will my son not live in Idaho. Large and small businesses avoid the state. Apple whose CEO is openly gay is building a huge solar power and cloud storage site in Nevada near Reno. Why? At least partially because Nevada prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity as does Oregon and Washington.

Not advancing this bill includes another disincentive for government departments such as the Air Force from locating new weapons systems here, as the Department of Defense has been be at the forefront of equal rights for minorities, women, and gays.

Moving on to few red -herring arguments advanced by HB2 critics.

An issue that came up a couple times was A father having sex with a daughter in New Jersey. This is an example of a very sick dysfunctional family relationship and has nothing to do with discrimination in employment, housing, and accommodation based on gender identity or sexual orientation. **It is completely irrelevant to the bill before you.**

Then there is the Bathroom Panic issue based on very much discussion, including the case in Houston where, in fact, the bathroom provision In Houston Equal Rights Ordinance was removed before the ordinance was passed. You can look that up. Boise Police Chief Masterson stated that the police would investigate any complaints of crime in the Idaho's restrooms. He also said that discrimination is a community safety issue.

Then there is the alleged damage to small business issue, that is that florists, bakers, tee-shirt makers and photographers would be forced to serve GBLT people. Public businesses are subsidized by public taxes for roads, fire and police protection, power, water and sewer right of ways, etc. All

taxpayers subsidize the infrastructure that allows public businesses to operate. There is an obligation to serve the public if the business is open to the public.

Put it into perspective.

So far 7 businesses nationwide .006% of 27 million businesses have been challenged while upholding the rights of 3% to 5% of our citizens, or 45,000 to 60,000 in Idaho and 8 – 12 million nationwide. Ten cities and towns in Idaho have the same sexual preference and gender identification protection as proposed here. There has not been one small business closed in any of them due to an ordinance conflict.

In closing:

We are grappling with questions of identity and inequality, and how we treat each other, and people who are different than us. **We as Idahoans are strongest when we see the inherent dignity and equality of opportunity in every human being. That's what unifies us!**

My son's dreams, and hopes, are just as important, **just as beautiful**, just as worthy as mine and yours.

Allow me my dream that my son returns to his spiritual home! Pass the bill on to the full house.

Footnote: Former Governor Phil Batt in November 2013

“A homosexual who can't rent a room or get a job because of his orientation doesn't make any sense to anybody,” Batt said as he became the first recipient of the Idaho Human Rights Lifetime Achievement Award, “Why some of the politicians are not more sensitive than that — more sensible, I should say than that — beats me.”

Batt also said the lawmakers' refusal to amend the Human Rights Act in the 2013 session “accomplished absolutely nothing...except to be made to look like fools.”

My Name is Bruce DeLaney, I am an owner of a small business here in Boise and I am here to support House Bill 2.

I am not a native of Idaho, but my 2 children are. I moved to Boise 25 years ago. In that time I have seen Idaho change in many ways. It has become more diverse and accepting. But it still has not fully come to the point where all of its citizens are treated as equals under the discrimination laws

Over the past 2 days the committee has heard testimony from those who have suffered discrimination in housing and job opportunities because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

We have heard stories of bullying, harassment and discrimination. Some of these stories ended in the tragic suicides of those suffering from this bullying and harassment

We have also heard from owners of small businesses who are worried about potential lawsuits if House Bill 2 passes. I do not share these fears/concerns

Yesterday the committee heard from Mary Ann Jordan from the Boise City Council about the effects of the ordinance that Boise passed 2 years ago which includes sexual orientation and gender identity. Today we heard from Chief Masterson of the Boise Police about the positive effects of Boise's ordinance. How Boise is a safer place for the LGBT community because of the ordinance. And how no lawsuits or criminal charges have resulted from Boise's ordinance.

January 26, 2015

To: House State Affairs Committee

Rep. Thomas F. Loertscher
Rep. Gayle L. Batt
Rep. Ken Andrus
Rep. Lynn M. Luker
Rep. Brent J. Crane
Rep. Joe Palmer

Rep. Kathleen Sims
Rep. Vito Barbieri
Rep. James Holtzclaw
Rep. Shannon McMillan
Rep. Linden B. Bateman
Rep. Don Cheatham

Rep. Pete Nielsen
Rep. Elaine Smith
Rep. Paulette Jordan
Rep. John McCrostie
Rep. Melissa Wintrow

Re: Testimony in favor of House Bill 2

I want to thank the House State Affairs Committee for hearing House Bill 2. I want to share my perspective with you because I am a native Idahoan who has lived in every corner of the state. I spent the first part of my childhood in Osburn, sailing on Lake Coeur d'Alene, before moving to Preston in 1980. After graduation in 1991, I moved to Boise and Meridian and have lived here ever since. I am a Christian, married mother of 3, a registered nurse at St. Luke's, and a volunteer in my children's school.

When I was a young child, I did not know there were any differences between people. I didn't know the playing field wasn't level. I still remember the disillusioning day, after moving to Preston in the 2nd grade, when I realized not everyone shared my outlook. Slowly, I drifted away from my truth and learned to judge others. I was taught that gay people were 'bad people you should not associate with.' I did not know any gay people, but I was told what I should think before ever meeting a gay person.

When I moved to Boise, I became friends with a talented coworker. Rhett was my first gay friend. We had so much in common. Perhaps more than anyone else, Rhett showed me the goodness of all people. I decided to reject the misinformation I had been taught. Because of knowing Rhett, I was able to restore my outlook of being open and kind toward all people. Nothing I do in my life will mean more than how I have treated others. Since then, my life has been blessed by friendships with many people who are gay or transgender. They are caring people who would do anything for a stranger. They work hard and love Idaho.

A year ago, I heard Julie Zicha tell the story of her son, Ryan. You are familiar with the story. *(He had a good heart, earned mostly A's, was civically minded, and loved scouting. After moving to Pocatello in 10th grade, Ryan was verbally bullied and beaten up until his confidence was shattered. He had hope that life as an adult would be easier when he no longer had to face the high school bullies every day. However, the experience wasn't much different when he tried to find an apartment or job.)* Despite having supportive parents—despite having that safety net of being able to live at home when no one would rent him an apartment—he felt so unwelcome that he completed suicide. Last February, Pocatello lost a young woman, Maddie Beard. A few days ago, we lost another young man who was attending college in Idaho.

When I heard about Ryan and Maddie, I realized I needed to stand up for all of the friends I have known for the past 20 years by supporting efforts to amend the Idaho Human Rights Act. Last session, in between shifts at the hospital and caring for my triplets, I spent many days here to show my support, and I am committed to seeing this through.

I am here because I believe that no matter one's religion, God would never ask us to refuse safety, housing or employment to any group of people.

I am here because I hope my children can grow up feeling valued and safe, no matter if they are different.

I am here because I want all young people to know they can have a future here, with a job and a home, if they work hard.

No, you cannot legislate kindness. But our laws are a reflection of our values. By saying "we include you" it sets the expectation for how we should treat one another in Idaho, and as Chief Masterson said, it deters discrimination. We have heard a lot of fear regarding frivolous lawsuits. What makes anyone think that gay and trans Idahoans are more likely to file frivolous lawsuits than people with disabilities, or religious or racial minorities? If the Human Rights Act has not caused our state to be overrun with lawsuits by people already included, we have no reason to think it will now.

Some of the testimony has floated the idea that discrimination does not exist. It is difficult to measure discrimination against a particular group when it is not a protected class because it isn't tracked. However, I looked into housing discrimination by calling Zoe Ann Olson, Executive Director of the Intermountain Fair Housing Council, which serves all of Idaho.

Over the past year, the Intermountain Fair Housing Council received 3 calls or complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation, and 1 complaint based on gender identity.

That case is before HUD right now. It involves a housing provider who allegedly harassed a transgender woman. She lived at her rental in Caldwell for over two years before she made her transition to female. When she began presenting as a woman, her neighbors were supportive. They knew she was a good neighbor. However, her landlord told her she had to move and took action to evict her.

The landlord harassed her by questioning her about her dress, continuing to call her by her previous male name, and telling her she should be ashamed of herself. The harassment took place in front of other tenants and office staff. Olson said the experience "hugely" affected her.

Olson was quick to point out there are good examples of housing providers who have been supportive of transgender tenants, including a case in Burley.

Olson says the number of complaints is low because tenants who have been discriminated against fear retaliation. They also fear their complaint won't go anywhere because they know

there is no law to protect them unless they live in housing funded by HUD or Rural Development.

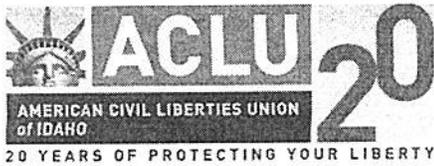
But the council's mission is not to file as many lawsuits as possible. They work with housing providers to try and get them to address the discrimination, and they educate housing providers so that there are fewer cases. The council did statewide outreach last year to housing providers to help them avoid discriminatory practices. Maybe that's why the number dropped to 4 last year, from the 16 complaints she told me about one year ago.

(If the provider does not cooperate, the only time Intermountain Fair Housing Council can actually file a lawsuit is if the housing involves federal funding [due to protections in HUD regulations]. Therefore, if there is no federal funding involved, there is nothing they can do.)

I hope this information helps you to see that there is a problem with discrimination in housing and there is a need for amending the Idaho Human Rights Act.

With your fair and compassionate leadership, I hope that Idaho's long-standing Human Rights Act finally can include my friends. Add young people like Ryan and Maddie. Add my friends. Thank you.

Katherine Brusse
1556 E. Lenz Lane
Boise, ID 83712
(208) 409-9086
katebrusse@yahoo.com



ACLU of Idaho
PO Box 1897
Boise, ID 83701
(208) 344-9750
www.acluidaho.org

SUPPORT HB2

Amending Idaho Human's Right Act to Include Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Mr. Chairman and members of the House State Affairs Committee, my name is Kathy Griesmyer and I'm the Public Policy Strategist for the American Civil Liberties Union or ACLU of Idaho. The ACLU of Idaho is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the civil rights of all Idahoans, including the fundamental rights to free speech, freedom to and from religion, privacy, and due process. I'm here today to testify in support of HB2 and to encourage each of you to vote yes in sending the legislation forward to the House floor with a 'Do Pass' recommendation.

Currently in Idaho, someone can be fired, denied housing, and refused a public service simply for being gay or transgender, just as it was during the nineteenth century in Idaho when religious discrimination was widely accepted and even prevented members of a certain faith from voting, serving on juries, or holding office. By adding gender identity and sexual orientation to Idaho's Human Rights Act, it will extend long-needed protections for all Idahoans who simply want to live without fear of discrimination or legal persecution. Explicit protections for gay and transgender community members, much like already existing protections based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin and disability, demonstrates a state commitment to stopping legal discrimination across the state.

In our recovering economy, including sexual orientation and gender identity in the Idaho Human Rights Act is good for business. Corporate America has already begun voluntarily implementing these types of protections, like many large businesses in Idaho including Micron Technology and Hewlett Packard, but a law is necessary to make sure everyone in our state is entitled to fair treatment. Gay and transgender Idahoans simply want to have the opportunities to go to work, be judged on their workplace performance, and provide for their family without fear of being discriminated against simply because of who they are or who they love.

By adding non-discrimination protections in areas of housing and public accommodations, this law will ensure that gay and transgender Idahoans are able to find housing for themselves and their families, as well as guarantees that public businesses are open to everyone, on the same terms. In order for Idaho families to truly flourish, they must not live in fear that they will be denied access to finding adequate shelter, nor that they will be turned away for service at public businesses like grocery stores and doctor's offices.

While this law offers the legal protections gay and transgender Idahoans deserve, it also strikes a balance by offering reasonable exemptions for religious organizations, small businesses and landlords. No provision in HB2 requires established religious organizations, including houses of worship, from hiring or prioritizing for employment those individuals who do not identify with their religious beliefs. Also, businesses under five employees and landlords who share a housing unit with their renter who may face a reasonable burden in accommodating the law are exempt from the provisions outlined in HB2.

Elected officials across the state have already implemented similar protections for their cities. To date, ten cities in Idaho, like Driggs, Pocatello, and Coeur d'Alene, have already passed non-discrimination ordinances that ensure gay and transgender individuals are no longer prevented from accessing employment, housing, and public services based on their gender identity and sexual orientation.

Not only are cities in Idaho passing these much needed laws, but 21 states across the country have updated their pertinent civil rights law to prevent discrimination against gay and transgender people. Both these city and state laws have also withstood constitutional legal challenges in the Supreme Court, with the Court repeatedly affirming the authority of states and localities to enact such laws as well as citing the state's compelling interest in eradicating discrimination.

In summary, the ACLU of Idaho stands in full support of updating Idaho's non-discrimination law to prevent discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. Gay and transgender Idahoans are our friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers. It's imperative that the State ensure that all Idahoans are hired or fired based on their workplace qualifications and performance, are able to secure housing for them and their families, and able to easily access services provided by businesses open to the public.

We ask that today you take the first step in ensuring fairness and equality, vote yes to amending the Idaho Human Rights Act. With that, I stand for questions.

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

House Bill 2 sounds equal, but if passed will add more government sponsored religious persecution to an America that has already begun legalizing religious persecution - in defiance of our most fundamental human rights as reflected in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Please do not let this bill out of committee – it is unworthy of deliberation in an American State.

1 How is it possible that the words that sound equal are in reality totalitarian, un-American words? I'll tell you about a lot of little birds that sat together peacefully on a wire. Then a twenty pound turkey did so-called equally, sat on the wire and stretched it to a shape unusable by any bird but himself. Just because he's different? No. His mathematical properties produced a destructive result upon the wire. The wire we're talking about here today is freedom. Americanism. Freedom.

2 The proposed protected classes, Committee Members, also have different mathematical properties from the classes of people listed in the existing anti-discrimination law. ~~Before anybody calls "bigot!" and turns off their mind, please listen to this.~~ It is a scientific and mathematical fact that different actions do not produce equal results in the world. In fact, class by skin color is not comparable to class by sexual acts and gender presentations, because skin color is not an action at all. Anti-discrimination law is meant to allow individuals to be judged by their character and actions rather than by a physical attribute that does not impact the world, does not impact a job or a rental house as actions do.

~~Classification~~ Classification by skin color is not comparable to the classification by belief and actions that belong to sexual orientation and gender identity, because those beliefs and actions do impact the world. Actions are subject to moral evaluation, and I can tell that all in this room who are opposed to me agree with this statement because so many have said, "Discrimination is always wrong!" – a moral evaluation of action. A discriminating statement, in fact. One should always be discriminating in one's financial investments, and in one's friends and in one's moral evaluations.

3 Sexual orientation and gender identity do not compare to ~~skin color~~ any of the previously listed protected classes. Except for creed. Religion. This is also built on a belief system and is also accompanied by a defined set of behaviors. The definition of a Christian, by the way, is no more a person who attends church on Sundays than the definition of gay is to gather with friends to talk about sex. This is why the First Amendment specifically protects the free exercise of religion.

Sexual orientation, gender identity and creed are all belief systems carrying with them defined behaviors. The difference is, people are not accustomed to thinking of the belief that homosexuality is good as a statement of faith, as a religion, even though they know some strongly believe it while some strongly don't. The traditional religious of America, you see, gladly embrace the First Amendment restriction from using government to coerce others to say our beliefs are true. Speaking for Christians, our doctrine wants true belief – forced confessions don't even count, and we don't want to use government for that. But

this First Amendment restriction happily protects us from religions that have no problem using the biggest gun they can find, the government, to coerce conversion. The LGBT movement IS such a coercive belief system. We can tell because it has already used the law in so many states to abridge free speech by legally changing the definition of the word “marriage.” Changing the meaning of the words coming out of a man’s mouth is removing his ability to communicate in an Orwellian “newspeak” vein. It is removing people’s ability to understand the world fully, which is why we would unilaterally reject a bill proposing that cows and horses now both be call horses – no matter how much the two have in common. Likewise every person – regardless of religion or lack of it – has a basic human right to notice that the components and results of marriage are different from those of gay relationships, and to SAY one is not the other without punishment by government. Every person has a right to say it as an employer, as a coworker, as a business owner. No one has the right to shut them up by crying “discrimination” and bringing the force of government down on them.

The coercive track record of the LGBT movement is one difference from other creeds protected by anti-discrimination law.

Another crucial difference in its impact on the world is the type of arenas it invades. Where an employer would have no occasion to say to a client, “Jesus is Lord,” when he didn’t believe it just for the benefit of an employee – a transgendered man expects his employer and coworkers to introduce him as a woman and refer to him as a she – whether or not they believe it. For the Christian, this is a lie, and he is fundamentally free not to participate in it. Government can protect that freedom or oppress him. But if it oppresses him, it is in violation of the highest law of our land.

Let’s take a tough scenario: overnight accommodations. Believe it or not, while there is a NEED for them, there is no fundamental human right to overnight accommodations. We recognize this by allowing a hotel owner to deny accommodations to those unwilling to trade for money. A facility owner might beyond that have any number of house rules: no paid sex, no alcohol. A theater owner as another example might even say, “Don’t bring your own snacks.” Far more sacred than any of these house rules – far more sacred even than money – is a business owner’s basic human right to refrain from violating his religion by allowing anything that is his to contribute to sin. Not his property, not his skills, not his time, not his speech, not his labor. All these are his and do not belong to a man who might want to use a facility to sin. Who might want to use a photographer to help him celebrate sin. Who might want to coerce a baker to help him lie about his sin.

When we live together and exercise our right to swing our arms without hitting one another’s noses, we might suffer discomforts. Discomfort is not allowed to infringe First Amendment rights. Comfort is not a fundamental human right. Emotional security might be a need, but is not a fundamental human right. Having sex might be a need, but it isn’t a basic human right. The reason the government cannot protect these things is because there is no such thing as providing them equally to all members of society.

What we want to do is protect what CAN be equally protected for all members of society. One believes this, one believes that, they disagree, they all go away safely – unless the government picks a side and puts the other in jail. One does THIS with his property, his skills, his time – one does that. Okay. Unless the government picks a side and fines one so hugely that he's out of business.

True equality by law here would recognize opposing religions – belief systems – and refuse to establish either one by law. Leave off the one that snaps the wire of freedom, or take all three creeds out. We are more free if we suffer by a few individuals or organizations or businesses than if government sponsors religious persecution.

America's experience so far says you must write that into antidiscrimination law. Not just for official religious organizations and ordained ministers, but for religious people whose business practices are part of their religious free exercise. It's not in this bill. Don't let this proposal of religious persecution out of committee.

J. Allison E. Smith

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to be with you here today.

My name is Francisco Salinas and I am a proud Boisean and Idahoan. I love this state and I love this city. I am here tonight speaking only for myself and I am in support of House Bill 2. In my work – I am privileged to work at Boise State University where I serve as the Director for Student Diversity and Inclusion. I have also worked at the University of Idaho where I was the Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs. I have also had the privilege of holding positions at Washington State University, Spokane Community College, Skagit Valley College and Yakima Valley Community College. In all, I have worked in higher education for 20 years now, working specifically in either growing or serving traditionally under-represented and/or under-served populations.

One of my favorite aspects of my work at my last five institutions has been to be able to host the annual MLK celebrations on these respective campuses. I have gotten to meet and spend time with some of the most important civil rights leaders in American History. This year, our keynote speaker for the celebration was Dr. CT Vivian. He was a Presidential Medal of Freedom winner in 2013, and he was the man that Dr. King called “the greatest preacher who ever lived.” He was a strategist working directly with Dr. King when he was the President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

In hosting Dr. Vivian I was able to share a meal with him and show him around our campus telling him a little bit about what makes us so special and some of what’s going on right now in our community. I told him of the “Add the Words” effort. When I told him that Idaho’s human rights legislation did not include the words “sexual orientation” or “gender identity” he said, “well, why not?” When I shared with him the story of the heroic multi-year effort to bring this to it’s current position he said (and he kept calling me “Doc”), “it’s about time Doc!” I agree, it IS about time.

Dr. Vivian is a man that has been beaten and jailed while using the strategy of non-violent direct action to confront a brutal kind of injustice. It was the heroic sacrifice of him and others that made the civil rights movement the most important non-violent revolution in American History. That revolutionary movement is not over. It lives here, in Idaho today. It lives in the revolutionary notion that discrimination because of nothing more than who you are, is fundamentally UN-AMERICAN. In America, the laws that protect us from discrimination based on nothing more than one aspect of our identity must include those aspects of identity upon which people are actually victimized or else they are not only pointless and philosophically hypocritical, but they ironically reinforce that very discrimination which they are ostensibly meant to eradicate.

Dr. Vivian shared many powerful ideas while he was in Boise over the last few days. Fundamentally, his message was of the primacy of love for all of humanity. One of the things that he said that will always stay with me was “Power without love is abusive, but Love without Power is sentimental and anemic”. He shared this as an example of one of the important ways that Dr. King’s message challenged the status quo. The citizens of this great state have entrusted you with legislative power. Please inform the exercise of your legislative power with a love for justice; with a love for truth and with a love for the people of Idaho for whom the protection of anti-discrimination legislation is ultimately intended after-all; those whom are at risk.

Dear committee members The preservation of our way of life as provided in the constitution must be preserved. Add the words will destroy free exercise of religion and free speech

Do not support HB2 vote no not good for Idaho

Thanks for all you do each day for our precious and fragile Idaho

Brent Satterthwaite
Sent from my iPhone

I want to thank you in advance for voting yes on HB 2.

As a high school teacher here in Boise, I spend all of my work day (and many hours outside of it) with the young people of our community. I see first hand their intellect, compassion, grit, and kindness-- they are capable people who, by and large, believe without question that they will go out into the world, find their place in it, and leave an indelible mark upon it. Many of them will.

I remain deeply concerned, however, about those students whose gender identity or sexual orientation continues to put them at risk for state-sanctioned discrimination and mistreatment here in Boise, Idaho. I think less about the mark they will leave on our community once they leave the walls of our school, and more about the mark(s) our community may leave upon them if our state's anti-discrimination laws continues to reflect the belief that they are less valuable, less worthy of protection than their peers.

As you vote on HB2, please remember that these young people are counting on you to make their home state a safe place in which to grow up, and a desirable place to stay once they are grown.

Best,

--

Echo Savage
10th Grade and DP English Instructor
Extended Essay Coordinator
Sage International School of Boise
www.sageinternationalschool.org

Please don't cave into the Homosexual lobby. Don't add the words!!! Keep Idaho a haven (as much as we can) for our Kids and grandkids. Caving would only lead to more caving and debauchery.

Don Schanz
Idaho Falls, ID
(208) 529-6684

Testimony to House State Affairs Committee

1-27-2015

Subject: HB2 to add the words "sexual orientation and gender identity" to the Idaho human Rights Act.
I urge you to vote NO on this bill.

When our moral conscious is illegal:

The question as to the definition of sexual orientation is a very good question and one I don't believe anyone can answer except to recognize the obvious. Where did all this confusion come from? We have walked away from God and thus our own common sense.

Freedom is based on a belief that we as a people can self govern, that our conscious is our moral guide. More than laws and statutes and city ordinances, our moral conscious should be our guide.

Laws and ordinances that require individuals and business owners to ignore their moral conscious is a direct attack against the very idea of freedom. We want business owners, and all us of for that matter, to be true to our moral conscious? To keep our word when we agree to something, to be honest and trustworthy? We cannot pass enough laws and ordinances to govern a population who live and act as if they are not guided by their own moral conscious.

These types of laws and city ordinances say to individuals and business owners – your moral conscious is not valid and cannot be used as a guide while participating in commerce and in our economy. Many people believe as I do that the issue of homosexuality, and sexuality in general, is a moral issue. That there is a natural design and moral order to human sexuality. The idea that our sexual behavior is unrelated to our moral character, but is instead something we have no choice in (as is the case with the color of our skin) is simply not believed by many. In fact this idea is a relatively recent one and is itself a moral position statement based on what one has come to believe.

Adding these words to our states Human Rights act is the state formally saying that sexual orientation and gender identity is not only valid - but that it is now morally equivalent to peoples natural gender, or the color of their skin and their religion.

When a photographer, a baker, a musician or any number of others decline to lend their personal talents to endorse an activity or behavior they feel is not in line with their moral conscious they should not be punished or compelled by government and/or our legal system to do so. Nor should employers feel threatened or pressured by our government to hire individuals because they indicate they belong to this new protected class of persons. Such actions on the part of our government violates the religious freedom of all Americans and undermines the very thing that makes freedom work, the internal moral guide and conscious of a free people.

You know, we should love everyone and no one should be discriminated against. I believe comparing this issue with the real discrimination that has been a part of our past is not valid - or honest. Human behavior is not comparable to the color of one's skin in any way. What we are talking about here is forcing people – business owners – to publicly validate and support something they believe is wrong. This proposal, to add these word to the Idaho Human Rights Act will, as has happed already in other states, cause the moral conscious to become illegal. Is this really what we intend to do?

Thank you and God bless

John Seale

Caldwell Idaho

January 26, 2015

To: House State Affairs Committee

Re: Testimony in favor of House Bill 2

As someone who grew up in one of the most conservative parts of the state and was pretty much 'out' in high school, I think this action is more about the future. There are so many gay kids killing themselves because they don't see any hope for their futures. It's not just about that kid, but also that kid's sister, brother, cousin, Mom, grandfather, etc. No one should have to experience that kind of loss.

Adding the Words would go a long way toward telling these kids that it really does get better. If the state had passed such a law when I was a kid, it would have made me feel like life could get better. I do sometimes wonder how I ever made it through all the hateful looks and whisperings I experienced in high school. I think I was angry a lot, but I was also lucky enough to have a brother who was incredibly supportive.

House Bill 2 is not about acceptance; it's about parity. You don't have to like who I am, but you do have to respect that I have the same rights that you have.

Please vote yes on House Bill 2. It is the fair thing to do.

Suzanne Sermon
3393 S Riva Ridge Way
Boise, ID 83709

Jenna Schlegel-Preheim

3219 W. Taft St. Boise, ID 83703

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Committee, for taking the time to read these words.

I am asking you with my whole heart, to please pass HB2.

I am in the Masters of Social Work program at Boise State University. After writing and erasing many drafts of this testimony, I think it only comes to this: that all humans, ALL humans, deserve respect and dignity. All people are worthy of love and belonging. You have the opportunity to make a positive difference to your family members, your and our children and grandchildren, the people of Idaho, and indeed the whole world, by simply ensuring legal protection (and therefore, respect and dignity) to all Idahoans.

We each have our own journey of how we have come to view issues of inclusion related to the LGBT community. It is often a challenge to sort out strong feelings and emotions. People of this state will continue struggling, continue trying to make sense of the implications of these issues, continue dialoging with each other and themselves to better understand. In the meantime, please make sure that at the very least, all the people of Idaho are safe and have human rights.

Please, pass HB2.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jenna Schlegel-Preheim". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jenna Schlegel-Preheim

Hi, my name is Mitch Silvester. I have lived in Idaho my entire life. For the past 14 years I have worked as a Fire Fighter for the Bureau of Land Management, and I currently hold a position as an Engine Captain in Twin Falls. I have been out and open with everyone for my entire career. I work hard, do a good job, and have been very patient with those who don't quite understand me. Over the years, being a gay firefighter, in a rural area, has presented quite a few challenges. There have been several people with an attitude towards my sexuality that has been unprofessional. In those situations, I have been able to talk to the individuals, find some common ground, diffuse the tension, and get along while we carry out our mission. I have earned the respect of most of my supervisors, colleagues, subordinates, as well as people that I work with from different agencies and organizations. I do know that there are a couple of people that don't like me, but I figured if I maintained a high level of integrity and professionalism, there wouldn't be any risk of discrimination.

Three months ago I applied for a promotion to a "mid level" fire supervisor. My qualifications and experience are more than sufficient, and there have been no problems relating to my performance or conduct. I feel like I am a quality candidate and have a pretty good shot at getting the job.

Long story short, I didn't get the job, and I was prepared for that reality. I sought out feedback, for my own self-improvement. I was told that my resume was excellent, my interview was awesome, but reference checks had brought me down. I was surprised to hear this. I started calling the people I had listed as references trying to figure out what issues I have and how I can improve. My previous supervisor had not been contacted. Another previous supervisor, whom I had worked for 12 years, had not been contacted. As I went down the list, only one person had been contacted. It was my current supervisor, whom I had worked for 6 months, and he had given a good reference.

Upon further investigation, I found out that a manager had manipulated the reference checks to keep me from competing for the job. I was shocked! I had been discriminated against for being gay.

Although the situation is devastating, I am a Federal employee, who is protected from discrimination against sexual orientation. There is recourse, and for that I am very grateful.

The sad thing about it is if discrimination is happening at the BLM within the Federal Government, it's happening everywhere. There are firefighters all over this state that put their lives on the line every day, and they are not afforded the same protections as me. Nobody should be denied employment because of who they date. We need to pass legislation protecting sexual orientation and gender identity.

Thank you,

Mitch Silvester, Twin Falls Idaho

I am writing to make sure you know that as a voter in ada county, Idaho I support the house bill number 2 – “add the words”. Please take this into consideration when you cast your vote.

Regards,
Stacy Slattery

Dear Representative,

I value very much my right to my faith and believe that if you allow this bill to pass my religious freedom will be trampled on. I think the the Gay and lesbian community are adequately protected it is time to protect the majority the right to practice their religion without them bring to bear their practice on my clergy. If they want to marry let them form their own church, don't require mine to lower it's standards to theirs. I urge you to vote no on HB 2. Thank you for your service and the concern you have for us all.

Douglas J Smith, Col Retired USAR, DDS

Doug Smithsmiledhc@aol.com

To the people on the panel who will have the responsibility of voting on new legislation to reflect the cultural norms of the day in the Treasure Valley. My name is Joseph Smith (**Not Mormon**) and I along with my wife and four kids moved to the city of Nampa two years ago from Fremont, CA (The Bay Area). We lived in the Mecca of civil rights for LGBT, and we know what this group wants in terms of recognition and acceptance. I myself am a black man and I last night (1-27-15) listened to the emotional outcry by those pleading for this bill to pass on the basis of civil rights. As a black man I understand the immutable claim very much. I cannot, nor would I ever, if had the ability to, to change the color of my skin. It is written into my DNA. When I got married to my wife (who is white) I passed down my melanin genes to my biological kids who are now considered also to be black despite being mixed. But one thing that is not immutable and did not come with my biological skin tone is my behavior. I on a daily basis choose how to behave; therefore I am accountable for my actions. My skin tone has no behavior connected to it, therefore it is Amoral. So what I see happening here is many LGBT supporters are saying they want to have sexual behavior (not all, just LGBT sexual behavior) to be included as a protected civil right, the same way my immutable skin color is protected. Of course by doing this you take the moral responsibility away and make the behavior amoral. Truthfully, no person practicing traditional marriage has a right to protect any form of heterosexual deviance. If I violate my marriage covenant and sleep with another woman, or women or even a man, I am committing adultery/infidelity. This is a moral wrong and many (whether I know them or not) would be compelled to call me out accurately for doing the wrong thing. Infidelity is sexual behavior and it is wrong. Most people agree this is wrong, but according to this legislation, can those who feel

that they should be protected by the state from being called morally wrong for a private decision to cheat on their spouse? What if some people don't believe they were born to be monogamous, shouldn't this legislation protect those who feel this could also be an immutable cause? Just because it is not a socially acceptable behavior to most, doesn't mean the minority of those who practice such behaviors should not be protected from being called a sinner, or morally wrong for practicing what they do?

Point is sexual behavior is not immutable, it is moral and will always be because it has rules of engagement. You have to get consent to have sex with another, correct? As a black man I don't need consent from anybody to be black, you either accept people have darker skin tone or you don't. What is often confused as being born gay or straight, both are lies. You are born with the ability to use self-control. Before I was married, I had a monogamy problem, and I lacked self-control because it was fun to do so, but incompatible with Jesus Christ and the Bible. Whenever I engaged in fornication, the guilt of sin reigned in my whole body, depression followed and a need to repent and not do it again. It was called conviction and I knew something had to change. Now I could have found a group to condone what I was doing was ok, and cut off my conscience, but I took the road less traveled and abandoned this life I had fun doing. I enjoy fidelity with my wife, being a father to my kids, and grateful of being forgiven for violated God's adultery commandments. Now I know many of you reject this Bible stuff and feel we need to move past it to protect all people. I reject this idea of taking moral responsibility away from people who are self absorbed. Many say this law will save lives by the state giving worth to LBGT people in their struggle for equality. This is false; the state cannot give worth to anyone, because they

don't hold the blue prints on mankind. Human worth should never depend on such weakness. I see a strong brokenness and self inflicted turmoil in many searching for love and appreciation in things that really don't define any of us. Your average person is not defined by their heterosexuality, nor their skin color, but by the content of their character. I see this mentioned, but overlooked by the demand to be acknowledged by how they have sexual relations for worth.

Also mentioned was the worry that loss of employment will come if they come out of the closet. With this I see paranoia and more self-absorption over how one gets their worth from another person. Yet I have seen married couples lose their jobs for committing adultery and yet nobody files a civil rights lawsuit for the person losing their job on infidelity, a recognized immoral act, universally condemned by all cultures. Yet it is a sexual behavior prominent in our culture, just not socially acceptable.

I also see two arguments that never intersect, straight on going parallels. The proponents of the law see this as a civil right like skin color and opponents of this law see this as the state promoting a moral wrong like infidelity, as a civil right. This is really noticeable for transgender. Opponents reject transgender ideals because it is self deceptive. Therefore there is an overt violation of trust because they see person in denial of what they are versus what they want to be. This is a serious conflict of trust because that person in that state of mind can't even trust who they are. Proponents just give into who they want to be rather than celebrate their great worth with how they are already designed, this unfortunately enables the depravity and furthers empowers their worthlessness.

My final message is to the clergy who condone or even involved in LGBT relations. You ought to know better, love doesn't override judgment for sin. If it did, Jesus atonement for sin or crime would have been in vain. The Bible you claim to believe in gave you the blueprint for marriage and right relations to have to deal with lack of self control and not one of those instructions condoned homosexual relations and you know it. Besides, the goal is to preach the gospel, the good news that the criminal or the sinner can be pardoned from all their wrong deeds and be given a clean slate, justified as if they had never sinned, so when they die, they will be cleared from the punishment of an eternal prison called hell to pay for all the crimes they committed on earth and go to heaven. That is the message I did not hear from the clergy, which is why Jesus came and why we were told to make disciples. We were not told to condone what is sexually immoral as a civil right.

Joseph L. Smith