
Ty BODDEN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 59TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Assembly Bill 447
Assembly Committee on Corrections
Wednesday, October 18, 2023

Thank you Chairman Schraa and members of the Corrections Committee for the opportunity to testify in favor of Assembly Bill 447, which pertains to the definition of "sex" for the purpose of placing prisoners and conducting strip searches. I would also like to express my gratitude to Senator Jesse James for co-authoring this legislation with me.

This proposal came to my attention through interactions with constituents and Department of Corrections employees. I have engaged in discussions about this legislation with constituents in my district who have serious concerns about individuals conducting strip searches on those of a different biological sex. This legislation offers a clear definition of "sex." According to the legislation, "sex" refers to an individual's sex at birth, specifically as male or female, as determined by distinct reproductive roles as indicated by sex and reproductive organ anatomy, chromosomal makeup, and endogenous hormone profiles. According to this legislation, a person conducting a strip search on someone must be of the same sex, unless exigent circumstances require otherwise.

Current Wisconsin law mandates that inmates be housed with those of the same sex in prison, jail, or a county house of correction. Moreover, the current administrative code stipulates that strip searches or body content seizures must be performed by someone of the "same sex."

As of July 21, 2023, there were 161 transgender women in Wisconsin Department of Corrections prisons. Among these 161 transgender individuals, 81 have been convicted of at least one count of sexual assault or sexual abuse. This information was obtained through a public records request and has been reported in the media.

Despite the clear intent and application of the law, the term "sex" is not technically defined. This loophole has allowed for situations where biological men are housed with biological women, and biologically male officers are strip searching biologically female inmates, all because the men identify as the opposite sex, technically not violating any rules. I empathize with our inmates, particularly female inmates, as this situation has placed many women in uncomfortable scenarios with no recourse. As a former DOC worker working with inmates, I have come to understand that while they may have made mistakes, they are still deserving of respect and dignity, and I have no issue introducing this legislation on their behalf.

Passing this legislation will represent a positive step toward safeguarding the privacy and dignity of individual inmates.

Once again, thank you for your time and consideration of this legislation.



October 18th, 2023

Representative Schraa, Chair
Representative Bodden, Vice-Chair
Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections

Testimony on Assembly Bill 447

Relating to: definition of "sex" for the purpose of placing prisoners and conducting strip searches

There is a glaring loophole currently in Wisconsin's laws and administrative code regarding inmate housing and body content search and seizures. At the moment, those in prisons, jails, and county houses of correction must be housed with those of the same sex, and any strip searches must be conducted by someone of the "same sex".

When these provisions were originally drafted, it was clear what these terms were referencing – someone's biological sex. However, as certain groups have moved to redefine what sex and gender mean, these "new" definitions have allowed inappropriate scenarios where biological men are being housed with and strip searching women. These scenarios are incredibly uncomfortable for the women living with and being searched by these men and have little to no avenues of recourse.

As an example, there is a transgender inmate currently living in Taycheedah Correctional Institution who has a history of violent crimes against women. In this case, the inmate raped his own 10-year-old daughter. Astonishingly, there are still another 161 men identifying as women still trying to get into female prisons in our state, and over half of them – 81 to be exact – have similar histories of sexual assault or abuse. This issue has moved far beyond affirming someone's own self-perception and is now bordering on a crisis for the safety and security of our female prisoners who deserve to be protected while serving out their sentences.

Assembly Bill 447 would define "sex" as a person's sex at birth, being either male or female, according to distinct reproductive roles as manifested by sex and reproductive organ anatomy, chromosomal makeup, and endogenous hormone profiles. This distinction would address this glaring technicality in our corrections system and ensure the privacy of our incarcerated men and women.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesse James".

Senator Jesse James
23rd Senate District



AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

Wisconsin

October 18, 2023

Chair Schraa, Vice-Chair Bodden, and Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Assembly Bill 447.

This bill would result in significant harm to transgender, non-binary, and intersex Wisconsinites who are incarcerated in prison, jail, or a county house of correction by forcing them to be placed in facilities that do not match their gender and opening them up to an increased likelihood of experiencing sexual or physical abuse and worse mental health outcomes.¹

The definition of “sex” contained in AB-447 creates a bright line rule for determining appropriate housing classifications for incarcerated individuals, instead of allowing for a case-by-case determination required by the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Standards for placement of residents in prisons and jails.²

In addition to violating PREA,³ the bill would also cause direct harm to trans Wisconsinites incarcerated in DOC and county facilities. Not only are transgender people statistically more likely to be involved with the justice system and to be held in jail or prison, but they are also more likely to face physical or sexual abuse while incarcerated.⁴ In fact, the Bureau of Justice Statistics at the U.S. Department of Justice found that transgender people are nearly ten times more likely to be sexually assaulted than the general prison population, with an estimated 40% of transgender people in state and federal prisons reporting a sexual assault in the previous year.⁵

¹ See Ledesma, E. & Ford, C., “Health Implications of Housing Assignments for Incarcerated Transgender Women,” *American Journal of Public Health* (2020), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7144448/>.

² See <https://www.prearesourcecenter.org/standard/115-42>.

³ See 34 U.S.C.A § 30308(a).

⁴ See James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M, “The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey,” National Center for Transgender Equality (2016), <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>; <https://www.vera.org/news/gender-and-justice-in-america/transgender-people-at-higher-risk-for-justice-system-involvement>.

⁵ NATIONAL CENTER FOR TRANSGENDER EQUALITY, LGBTQ PEOPLE BEHIND BARS: A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES FACING TRANSGENDER PRISONERS AND THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS 13 (2018), available at <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/resources/TransgenderPeopleBehindBars.pdf>.

Transgender women who are housed in male facilities are at particularly high risk. For example, a California study found that transgender women who were presumptively housed with men were thirteen times more likely to be sexually assaulted than cisgender men incarcerated in the same facilities.⁶ According to a 2015 survey, almost a quarter of incarcerated trans people reported being physically assaulted by other people in custody or staff.⁷

Wisconsin prisons and jails have the obligation to protect people who are incarcerated from sexual violence, whether that violence is perpetrated by corrections staff or by other incarcerated people. If they fail to do so, they risk running afoul of the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits cruel and unusual punishment.⁸ This bill would force corrections staff to set aside that obligation and, in many circumstances, affirmatively place individuals in harm's way. The U.S. Department of Justice has interpreted the Eighth Amendment to require that transgender, gender nonconforming, nonbinary, and intersex people who are incarcerated be housed in facilities that align with their gender identities where necessary to provide reasonable safety.⁹ Further, the Equal Protection Clause in the Fourteenth Amendment prohibits treating transgender people differently than cisgender people without a compelling state justification, and courts have applied this rule in the context of housing in prisons and jails.¹⁰

All trans Wisconsinites, including those incarcerated in our prisons and jails, deserve the right to exist, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be protected from violence. The ACLU of Wisconsin strongly urges you to oppose AB-447.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M., "The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey," National Center for Transgender Equality (2016), <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>.

⁸ *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 837 (1994) (Prison officials may be liable for sexual assault by another incarcerated person where "the official knows of and disregards an excessive risk to inmate health or safety").

⁹ *Diamond v. Ward*, 20-cv-00453, at *9 (M.D. Ga. Apr. 22, 2021) (Doc. No. 65).

¹⁰ *Hampton v. Baldwin*, 2018 WL 5830730, at *11 (S.D. Ill. Nov. 7, 2018) (applying heightened scrutiny where the majority of transgender people are housed based on genitalia or sex assigned at birth); *Monroe v. Jeffries*, 19-cv-1060, at 18-19 (C.D. Ill. Apr. 9, 2020) (Doc. No. 41); *see also Doe v. Mass. Dep't of Corr.*, 2018 WL 2994403, at *9 (D. Mass. June 14, 2018) (applying heightened scrutiny to classifications based on transgender status); *Tay v. Dennison*, 2020 WL 2100761, at *2 (S.D. Ill. May 1, 2020) (finding transgender incarcerated women are similarly situated with incarcerated cisgender women).



WISCONSIN FAMILY ACTION
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**TESTIMONY ON ASSEMBLY BILL 447
PUBLIC HEARING – COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2023
JACK HOOGENDYK, LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY DIRECTOR
WISCONSIN FAMILY ACTION**

Thank you, Chairman Schraa and committee members, for the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 447. I am Jack Hoogendyk, legislative policy director for Wisconsin Family Action. We work to defend and preserve life, family, marriage and religious freedom. Wisconsin Family Action supports this bill to clarify the definition of “sex” for the purpose of placing prisoners and conducting strip searches

It is our understanding that under current law, there is ambiguity regarding the definition of sex. Currently, guards who perform strip searches may be subjected to performing a strip search on someone of the same “gender” who is actually of the opposite biological sex.

Mr. Chairman, we do not believe it is appropriate for a prison guard to perform a strip search on an inmate who is of the opposite biological sex. It presents some potentially serious consequences.

- What happens when a female guard has to perform a strip search on a transgender female, (a biological male who has declared himself to be a female, and who is still carrying his male anatomy)?
- Conversely, what happens when a transgender female guard, (a biological male who declares himself to be female but who still has male anatomy) is performing a strip search on a biological female inmate?

We should not put a female guard or the female inmate in this situation. Not only can this be embarrassing to the guard or to the inmate; it could be dangerous. The potential for an attempted sexual assault is high. Additionally, this policy could easily put the state in the position of defending its policy against a lawsuit by a guard or an inmate who has been sexually assaulted.

We need to follow commonsense and the science. The simple solution to this problem is to use basic biology as the determining factor in who performs a strip search. Male guards should search biological male inmates; female guards should search biological females. This bill adds language to clarify the definition of sex. Under this bill a person’s sex is determined by the physical reproductive organs that a person is born with and chromosomal makeup.

We urge the Committee on Corrections, in the best interest of our state employees and those who are subject to strip search, to approve this commonsense, science-based legislation.

Thank you, Chairman Schraa.



WISCONSIN COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES

COURAGE. JUSTICE. HOLY IMAGINATION.

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections
From: Rev. Breanna Illéné, Director of Ecumenical Innovation and Justice Initiatives,
Wisconsin Council of Churches
Date: October 17, 2023
Re: Testimony in opposition to Assembly Bill 447

The Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) is a network of Christian churches and faith-based organizations committed to working together across our many differences to promote collective good. We connect 21 Christian traditions, which have within them approximately 2,000 congregations and over one million church members. Exercising holy imagination, we help one another make courageous choices that lead toward peacemaking, social and economic justice for Wisconsin's most vulnerable residents, the vitality of the church, and the well-being of our neighbors.

As a Council, we have adopted a statement on Nonviolence that reminds us that "Faithfulness to its mission requires the Church to speak out against violence, minister to its victims, and work tirelessly to reduce the level of violence in society." We come here today to decry the violence in AB 447.

Transgender individuals are unnecessarily under attack, and this legislation is just one of many items currently before our state legislature that cause undue harm to a marginalized community. The isolation and demonizing that this bill promotes are spiritually harmful, empowering hate speech and hateful action. Transgender individuals are children of God who deserve a dignified existence.

Loving our neighbor is a basic ethical presupposition common to many faiths including our Christian scripture. It calls for unreserved respect for and identification with our neighbor, as a fellow human being created in the image of God. No one is excluded.

One of our longtime member organizations shared this reflection about this bill: "JustDane opposes AB 447 for the potential risk to health and safety it poses to individuals who are incarcerated in the State of WI. Transgender individuals are at increased risk of violence within the institutions - this bill removes the ability to place someone based on their gender identity and what poses the safest placement for the individual. As an organization with 25 years of experience in reentry work and that works with transgender individuals returning home after incarceration we understand the additional risk and trauma that people face while incarcerated. The WI Department of Corrections uses the phrase "persons in our care" to describe the individuals incarcerated in our prisons. We would ask that our state live up to that phrase and reject AB 447 in the care of persons in our prisons." The Wisconsin Council of Churches fully agrees with Just Dane.

Our faith teaches that God is relentless in pursuit of well-being for the world and its inhabitants. We seek the common good. As Christians, we are called to facilitate communities of well-being, and public policy that does not harm. In this spirit of love and accountability, we reject AB 447 on its merits, and we ask this body to do the same.

Thank you for your time.



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Governor Tony Evers / Secretary Kevin A. Carr

To: Chairman Schraa, Assembly Committee on Corrections

From: Anna Neal, Legislative Advisor, Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Date: October 18, 2023

RE: Information Only

- *Assembly Bill 447 Relating to: definition of "sex" for the purpose of placing prisoners and conducting strip searches.*
- *Assembly Bill 462 Relating to: creating an immersive work opportunity program for persons incarcerated in the state prisons.*

AB 447: In 2003, Congress enacted the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), which set a zero-tolerance standard for sexual abuse and sexual harassment of those criminally confined to a federal, state or local facility. National standards took effect in 2012, establishing clear requirements to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual abuse and sexual harassment in confinement. In addition, PREA has national standards regarding the placement and strip searching of transgender individuals in a confined setting. This bill is in conflict with those standards.

Under this bill, DOC would be prohibited from placing, keeping together, or knowingly permit to be kept together persons in our care of different sexes (as defined in the bill) except to participate together in treatment or in educational, vocational, religious or athletic activities or to eat together, under supervision. As written, the bill would require DOC to be in violation of PREA standard 115.42, which created the following language:

(c) In deciding whether to assign a transgender or intersex inmate to a facility for male or female inmates, and in making other housing and programming assignments, the agency shall consider on a case-by-case basis whether a placement would ensure the inmate's health and safety, and whether the placement would present management or security problems.

(d) Placement and programming assignments for each transgender or intersex inmate shall be reassessed at least twice each year to review any threats to safety experienced by the inmate.

(e) A transgender or intersex inmate's own views with respect to his or her own safety shall be given serious consideration.

(f) Transgender and intersex inmates shall be given the opportunity to shower separately from other inmates.

(g) The agency shall not place lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex inmates in dedicated facilities, units, or wings solely on the basis of such identification or status, unless such placement is in a dedicated facility, unit, or wing established in connection with a consent decree, legal settlement, or legal judgment for the purpose of protecting such inmates.

Interpretive guidance issued by the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) on 3/24/2016 further states, “Any written policy or actual practice that assigns transgender or intersex inmates to gender-specific facilities, housing units, or programs based solely on their external genital anatomy violates the standard. A PREA-compliant policy must require an individualized assessment...The policy must allow for housing by gender identity when appropriate.”

The PREA standards also govern cross-gender viewing and searches. The federal Department of Justice updated its PREA guidance as of May 2023 to address how transgender staff and non-binary staff be classified for the purposes of complying with cross-gender viewing and search prohibitions established in PREA Standard 115.15. In the guidance, they stated:

The PREA Standards do not provide specific guidance regarding the classification of transgender and nonbinary staff; however, it is important to note that the PREA Standards do not prohibit facilities from classifying transgender employees consistent with their gender identity with regard to all aspects of their employment, including those related to PREA Standard 115.15. For example, it does not violate the PREA standards for a staff member who is a transgender man to conduct strip searches of male inmates.

If for a reason other than the PREA Standards, a facility does not classify a transgender employee consistent with their gender identity, facilities should make an individualized determination based on the gender identity of the staff member and not solely based on the staff member’s sex assigned at birth, the gender designation of the facility or housing unit to which the staff member is assigned, the related and required job duties of the specific staff member, the limits to cross-gender viewing and searches in PREA Standard 115.15, and the goal of the PREA Standards to prevent trauma and sexual abuse. This determination should be made at the request of, and in conjunction with, the transgender or non-binary staff member. Agencies should be aware that the determination of assignment in the facility may change at the request of and in conjunction with the employee as part of an ongoing adjustment process or as the staff member gains experience living consistently with their gender identity.

AB 462: The Department of Corrections (DOC) has been a vocal advocate for increasing resources and programs to assist the persons in our care with finding and maintaining meaningful employment. Under the Evers’ Administration, we have been able to increase the number of DWD Job Centers within our facilities,

expand Windows to Work in partnership with the Workforce Development Boards, and increase postsecondary educational opportunities with the expansion of Pell Grants.

While we support the concept behind this bill, we feel it is duplicative of our current work release program as well as 2017 Wisconsin Act 89 which created the following language:

302.27 (2) Inmates who are confined or detained under sub. (1) may be granted the privilege of leaving the facility during necessary and reasonable hours to engage in employment-related activities including seeking employment, engaging in employment training, working at employment, performing community service work, or attendance at an educational institution, or for any other activity designated in the contract under sub. (1). The sheriff, superintendent of the house of correction, or tribal chief of police, in conjunction with the department, shall determine inmate eligibility to participate in such activities and may terminate participation or return an inmate to state facilities, or both, at any time.

Eligible persons in our care, with the permission of the Sheriff, can serve up to their last 12 months of confinement at the jail in the county they plan to release to. They may also be granted Huber privileges. We have several agreements with counties in place that implement the provisions of Act 89.

The bill language is not clear if the intent is to expand our current work release program to individuals classified at medium or minimum custody. DOC has 4 custody classifications for persons in our care: maximum, medium, minimum, and minimum community. Currently, a person must be classified at minimum community to be eligible for work release. We have significant security concerns should these types of work opportunities be expanded to individuals at our medium facilities.

The bill would provide eligibility to persons in our care who are within 6 months of release. Our current work release opportunities go far beyond 6 months. Current code/policy does not specify a cut-off timeframe; however, we have many individuals on work release who still have several years left to serve and they are able to pay child support, restitution, other court fees and save for release while still serving their confinement time.

The bill includes a list of additional factors to be considered when providing this opportunity to persons in our care. For example, if someone has a strong work history they should be favored; if someone has a technical diploma they should be favored; and mental health or substance use disorder problems should disfavor someone. Additionally, individuals with mental health challenges or substance use disorders can still successfully hold a job and will likely need to once released. This provision could be viewed as discriminating against those with mental health or substance use disorder diagnoses, which may result in challenges from the ACLU, Disability Rights Wisconsin or other advocacy organizations.

We look forward to working with members of the legislature on any revisions that may be needed, and with our partner agencies anywhere our work may intersect.

AB 4147

I am Rev. Mallory Yanchus, one of the pastors at First United Methodist Church downtown Madison. I am testifying in opposition of AB4147. As a clergy person, I have committed my work and my life to sharing the love of God to all people. In Matthew 34-40, an expert in the law tried to trap Jesus into answering which commandment, or law, was the most important. Jesus replied "Love God, and love your neighbor". All other laws hang on these two.

These greatest commandments propel me every day in the work I do, to love God and to love my neighbors to the very best of my ability.

Forcing the definition of sex to "sex assigned at birth" for "prisoner placement" and strip searches creates a great deal of harm to trans individuals who do not identify with the sex assigned to them at birth. Forcing a trans woman into a men's prison and vice versa is putting that person in an incredibly vulnerable position for their physical and mental health and how others will treat them. Everyone, even those entering the prison system deserve dignity, respect. Persons entering the prison system deserve to be treated by the sex they are, to receive care and entry protocols by someone of the sex they are at that time.

To me, loving God and loving my neighbor is fighting for the dignity of every trans person who enters the prison system to be able to be in a prison that matches their presented sex, and to NOT be forced to strip searches by the opposite sex. Besides receiving the best medical care possible, there is no other clear reason to force someone to use their sex assigned at birth in the prison system.

Thank you,

Mallory Yanchus

Madison, WI 53703 (work)

Sun Prairie, WI 53590 (home)

My name is Amy Wall and I live in Sun Prairie, and by now, as you no doubt have guessed, I am transgender. Every transgender person has a unique story about how they came to realize their gender identity does not align with birth, or what was assigned in the delivery room by a doctor based on visual inspection. In the trans community, we call those "egg cracking stories". My story is interesting but not important to this testimony. Rest assured, at the age of 49, I was *pretty* sure of my identity to have begun transitioning with work, kids, and a mortgage..

Not surprisingly, I oppose AB447.

As you can see, I present feminine by wearing this dress from Torrid. But that detail isn't likely important as I'm sure people have been more invested in what's between my legs. What do I look like under this dress? Don't deny you thought about it. Well, for me, and with all transgender people, what's between our legs is NONE. OF. YOUR. BUSINESS.

This bill has a paragraph that attempts to put a classification on sex for prison placement and strip search. It says sex assigned at birth, which overrides everything that comes after it. It certainly would for me personally. Remember, this sex was determined and recorded by a doctor based on visual inspection alone.

Let me paint you a picture. Let's suppose for argument's sake, I've had a vaginoplasty operation (colloquially referred to as bottom surgery). So I have a vagina, no capability to produce testosterone as the testes have been removed. My body is flooded with estrogen. But through powers beyond my control, my birth certificate is not corrected.

So as I go to prison, birth certificate overrides all, so I get assigned to a male population. What's going to happen during the strip search, when my female parts are exposed. What about day-to-day prison life, having a female body and being surrounded by males? I've never been to prison, but I can assume that everyone will see you naked at some point.

So what's the point of this legislation? What are the sponsors hoping to accomplish?

I mean, to assign trans women to a male population, there must be overwhelming evidence that trans women are a danger to other women if they are placed in a women's prison? There are statistics to back this up?

They don't have that data. I know they don't. We are often called sexual predators just for being trans. I am not aware of any trans women who assaulted another woman in a women's space. Saying that trans women will assault women at first opportunity is the argument typically used with discriminatory legislation and it's the case here.

There's another reason for this bill, though: they want to bully us. They don't like transgender individuals so they want to find as many ways to hurt us as possible. Is that the point of this legislation? To punish us for our gender identity, that we never had control over? To make us go back in the closet?

I'm sorry, but it's far too late to put <me> back in the closet, so it's not going to happen. Please stop this garbage bill now. And I severely question the character of those who introduced it.

guy john halcón, M.S.

Regarding AB 447

October 18th, 2023

My name is guy, my pronouns are he/him/él, and I am a concerned resident of Dane County testifying today in opposition of Wisconsin Assembly Bill 447. I wish I was here to speak about the need to reexamine the purpose of our carceral system but instead I'm going to talk about how AB 447 would negatively impact trans* and other gender expansive Wisconsinites experiencing incarceration as well as those who are state employees working in carceral institutions.

I am very open about being a disabled, transgender Latino, and the experiences I've had inform a lot of my work. I moved to Madison just over three years ago for school; I started at the law school and have only a paper to submit in order to officially earn my Juris Doctor, I earned a Master's degree, and I am now a PhD student. My studies and work, though predominantly in health advocacy, student & patient rights, and educational leadership & policy, have helped me make better sense of how policies, systemic attitudes, and institutional inequities impact me and other trans* and gender expansive folks in all areas of our lives. More so, I've had the privilege of connecting with people and co-learning with others on how we can shift to liberation and wellness for those in our communities. My life experiences, learning, and connecting flesh out one of many oppositional testimonies against AB 447.

I've never experienced incarceration but earlier on in life I lived with people who worked in carceral institutions. I heard some very concerning things, but one thing I was told in late spring of 2020 has continued to sit heavy on my heart. At the time, my ID card read "x" under my sex marker and I was living as a man but didn't have access to gender affirming care and often was read as androgynous; I was participating in protests at the time and was warned by the person in my household who worked at a jail that I should be careful because of my appearance and the information on my ID card, a hispanic last name and an "X". This person made it very clear to me that I would be harassed by correctional officers and that a strip-search would be especially hard for me. This didn't stop me from going out, but to this day I think about that indirect acknowledgment from someone within the system that people in my community are treated poorly. This person was not supportive of me being trans, but even they were able to understand the violence that the system places on people like me. Trans* folks are more likely to be sexually assaulted by others while incarcerated, especially when housed within facilities that do not match their gender identity. Alarmingly, trans* folks are five times as likely to be sexually assaulted by staff. Instead of focusing on those numbers and thinking about the harm carceral institutions place on Wisconsinites, Assembly members are pushing AB 447 which would further exacerbate the violence that incarcerated trans* folks experience.

AB 447 would force trans women to be housed with men and force trans men to be housed with women, and would require trans* people to be strip searched by state employees of a different gender identity. Not only is this dehumanizing, but it places trans* folks experiencing incarceration at greater risk of harm. Those in favor of AB 447 likely will use cis women as a human shield for this hateful legislation, claiming that AB 447 is for the safety of cis women; not only is that absurd and ignorantly paints trans women as aggressors, but it also is sexist and ignores the many actual harms that incarcerated cis women are facing today such as shackling while pregnant. The truth behind this bill is that it does not support or protect any women, cis or trans.

Beyond the definition of sex in this bill being illogical, I can guarantee very few here have record of all listed sex characteristics mentioned within the text as documented at birth, there is no true way to implement AB 447 without both violating the rights of incarcerated individuals as well as those of state employees working within the carceral institutions. I would like to remind the Assembly of this really cool thing called Title VII which protects trans* people from employment discrimination; as a state employee, if I experience discrimination related to my gender identity I can file a lawsuit against the state. If AB 447 were to become law, a transgender correctional officer experiencing discrimination will be able to sue the state; and I want the Assembly to think about who, at the end of the day, pays for the expenses of these lawsuits. And how will the state make sure every single state employee performing strip searches is a particular 'sex'? It sounds a lot like even if information about an employee is accessible, the state would forcibly out any trans* employees or the environment would become so hostile that the employee could no longer complete their job. And as someone who has had a supervisor at a job years ago ask me about my genitals, I can say that no employee should be forced to be in a position in which their employer demands answers about their bodies. There is no logic to AB 447 unless your logic is the harm and humiliation of trans* people.

Finally, I want to say that I stand with folks impacted by the carceral system, especially incarcerated trans* folks. It's vulgar that instead of addressing the real issues that we face in this state, there are assembly members that have instead targeted a group of folks who are effectively unable to testify here today. I have the sickening feeling that there are some in support of AB 447 who would love to criminalize trans* people for merely being in public spaces; despite my studies, I don't know if I will ever fully understand how people can build such a strong obsession with a marginalized community's suffering. What I do understand, though, is that there are already way too many of our trans* siblings, especially our Black and Brown trans* siblings, who are at the mercy of a carceral system and I'll be damned if I sit in silence while our communities are hurting.

AB 447, along with all other proposed anti-trans bills this session, appear to be more about state representatives ignoring their responsibilities to the people of Wisconsin by instead focusing on attacking a very small number of us. I want to remind the Assembly that we're also Wisconsinites, we are all human just like you. Supporting, respecting, and loving trans* Wisconsinites is required in order to fully support, respect, and love Wisconsin. There's a section of the poem "Pensamiento Serpentino" by Luis Valdez that I would like the Assembly to consider:

"In Lak'ech / Tú eres mi otro yo. / You are my other me. / Si te hago daño a ti, / If I do harm to you, / Me hago daño a mi mismo. / I do harm to myself. / Si te amo y respeto, / If I love and respect you, / Me amo y respeto yo. / I love and respect myself."

To those who have considered this testimony in its entirety, thank you. And to all of the cisgender representatives who have continued to turn their glance away from our humanity, I hope none of you ever know what it feels like to be kept up at night worrying about what your exit strategy might be as people with power debate your ability to safely exist in spaces.

Please vote no on Assembly Bill 447.

Black and Pink Milwaukee's Statement on Assembly Bill 447

All strip searches are forms of state violence. We understand all settings within the prison industrial complex (PIC) to be sites of violence. And, we know that our transgender and intersex siblings are subjected to acute forms of harm while jailed or incarcerated. They write to Black and Pink Milwaukee regularly to report degrading insults by correctional officers, more frequent cell and strip searches, assaults, and the weaponization of PREA policies under homophobic and transphobic pretenses. *These forms of violence are further escalated for transgender and intersex persons who are also Black, Brown, or Indigenous.*

Assembly Bill 447 represents yet another attempt by Wisconsin's right wing to further instantiate into law their authoritarian worldview. It is a worldview that legitimates violence against people who do not conform to their idealized social hierarchies. Their retrograde understanding of sex and gender articulated in AB 447 and other proposed legislation represents the same logic motivating structural forms of violence that disproportionately ensnare transgender people within the PIC. This includes familial rejection, hostile educational settings, homelessness, restricted access to social support resources, heightened police surveillance and brutality, and the criminalization of acts of survival.

We look forward to the day when we are not forced to engage in debate over protocols for invasive acts of violence perpetrated by the state and can focus on providing transgender and intersex people with resources and opportunities they need to thrive.



Berendt, Amelia

From: Wyn Helming <wahelming@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 11:57 AM
To: Rep.Schraa; Rep.Bodden; Rep.Brandtjen; Brooks, Rob; Rep.Callahan; Rep.Hurd;
Rep.Maxey; Rep.Sapik; Rep.Tittl; Rep.Stubbs; Rep.Goyke; Rep.Cabrera; Rep.Madison;
Rep.Clancy
Subject: AB 447

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Wyn Helming, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for almost 24 years, 18 of them growing up in Hudson.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 447. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because of its dehumanisation of trans people. So many people already deny that trans people exist, and this will further that agenda.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Best,

Wyn Helming
Madison, WI resident

Berendt, Amelia

From: noteshere <noteshere@protonmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 10:38 AM
To: Rep.Schraa; Rep.Bodden; repbrandtjen@legis.wisconsin.gov; Brooks, Rob; Rep.Callahan; Rep.Hurd; Rep.Maxey; rep.o'conner@legis.wisconsin.gov; Rep.Tittl; Rep.Stubbs; Rep.Goyke; Rep.Cabrera; Rep.Madison; Rep.Clancy
Subject: Testimony against AB 447

AB447 is a tool of genocide and oppression.

As a non-binary adult, who was born in Madison and has been here on and off through out life, I can say I did not grow up around enough LGBTQ+ community members, access to gender affirming care, acceptance or safety.

Stop Trans Genocide.

I can confidently say, that this bill is deadly, rooted in hate, phobias, lack of information access, white supremacy and genocide.

As a gender- non conforming person that has been incarcerated three times, once for cannabis and twice for environmental protection advocacy, which intersects with racial, LGBTQ, disability and social justice, and as a human, witnessing the school/work to cage and torture minorities approach the state takes, I know that Trans, gender-non conforming people and other marginalized people are already dehumanized in cages and targeted for abuse.

I implore anyone considering that these are acceptable, or safe in any way, to explore the history of eugenics, tied to gender nonconforming erasure and genocide. Care not cages.

Dr. Nancy Ordover wrote American Eugenics: Race, Clear Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism.

Biologists, historians and folks fighting for safety and equity are sharing information widely, about history and science that proves our communities, children included, have been continuously indoctrinated with misinformation, lied to about history and science, restricted from life saving health care and treated like cattle for centuries.

The truth is that indigenous languages all over the world, have many different genders, diversity inclusion and respect.

This has been oppressed by colonization that is torturing people, languages, cultures and safety, while upholding a false and collapsing, made up binary, man, woman, good, bad, black, white, heaven, hell society.

Controlling other people's bodies, language and access to care and education is continued oppression, white supremacy, and genocide. How can genocide be "good"?

No pride in genocide.

Berendt, Amelia

From: Mack McKellips <mackmckellips1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 10:24 AM
To: Rep.Schraa; Rep.Bodden; Rep.Brandtjen; Brooks, Rob; Rep.Callahan; Rep.Hurd;
Rep.Maxey; Rep.O'Connor; Rep.Sapik; Rep.Tittl; Rep.Stubbs; Rep.Goyke; Rep.Cabrera;
Rep.Madison; Rep.Clancy
Subject: Please vote NO on Assembly Bill 447

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Matthew McKellips, and I am a resident of Dane County. I've lived in Wisconsin for 5 years and I am a social worker in training.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 447. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because I believe that incarcerated individuals deserve dignity and respect. This includes the transgender individuals that are incarcerated in the state of Wisconsin. I urge you to find the humanity in the individuals who you are sentencing to psychological harm and the risk of gender-based violence.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,

Matthew McKellips
Madison, WI 53704

Berendt, Amelia

From: Lizzie <elizabet.bruno@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 9:53 AM
To: Rep.Baldeh; testimony@fairwisconsin.com; Sen.Agard; Rep.Schraa; Rep.Bodden; Rep.Brandtjen; Brooks, Rob; Rep.Callahan; Rep.Hurd; Rep.Maxey; Rep.O'Connor; Rep.Sapik; Rep.Tittl; Rep.Stubbs; Rep.Goyke; Rep.Cabrera; Rep.Clancy; Rep.Madison
Subject: Oppose AB 447

To Representative Baldeh, Senator Agard and to all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to AB447 and SB438

My name is Elizabeth Bruno and I am a resident of Madison, WI.

These recent Wisconsin and nation wide attacks on transgendered people are unacceptable. It is clear that public safety is not the central issue in this legislation. While our government should be protecting citizens, even those who have been convicted of crime; this bill endangers the lives of incarcerated trans people.

All of these anti-trans legislative moves are contrary to real peoples life experiences and seek to eliminate and punish normal human variation. It is sick and heartbreaking and deeply dangerous to have legal structures driven by politics of fear and division.

Do not pass AB447. Stop the attack on trans lives and end genital mutilation of intersex infants.

Thank you for your time,
Elizabeth Bruno
4109 Drexel Ave,
Madison WI

Berendt, Amelia

From: Erin Skarivoda <erin.skarivoda@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 6:44 PM
To: Rep.O'Connor; Rep.Maxey; Rep.Hurd; Rep.Callahan; Brooks, Rob; Rep.Brandtjen;
Rep.Bodden; Rep.Schraa; Rep.Sapik; Rep.Tittl; Rep.Stubbs; Rep.Goyke; Rep.Cabrera;
Rep.Madison; Rep.Clancy
Subject: VOTE NO ON AB 477

Dear members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Erin Skarivoda, and I am a resident of Madison, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for my entire life: I was raised in De Pere, went to college in Eau Claire, and I now live in Madison.

I am writing to urge you to vote "NO" on Assembly Bill 447. As a lifelong Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Trans people are 10x more likely to be sexually assaulted by fellow incarcerated people and 5x more likely to be sexually assaulted by jail staff than cisgender people. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

In a 2011 survey by the National Center for Transgender Equality & the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force called "Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey," a survey of 6,500 incarcerated transgender folks, 7% were found to have been held solely due to anti-transgender bias of police officers.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,

Erin Skarivoda

1252 Spaight St, #2
Madison, WI 53703

Berendt, Amelia

From: Holly Marley-Henschen <periodistalibre@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 4:59 PM
Subject: Vote NO on AB447

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Holly Marley-Hesnchen and I'm a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 13 years. I'm a nonbinary business owner.

I'm writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 447. As a Wisconsinite, I'm opposed to this bill because I believe in the human rights of all human beings. Forcing people to be further traumatized by denying them their self-determined identity is more likely to lead to mental health issues and suicide. No one deserves this.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges and risk their safety and health.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,
Holly Marley-Henschen
Madison, 53704

--

Holly Marley-Henschen
they, them, theirs
brighterbrandmarketing.com

"The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return."
-Eden Abhez

October 17, 2023

Dear members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Markia Silverman-Rodriguez, and I am a resident of Madison, WI. I have lived in Wisconsin for 24 years and I am a geography graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on assembly bill 447.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently experience higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in Wisconsin prisons. Incarcerated transgender people are already 10 times more likely than prisoners who are not transgender to be sexually assaulted by fellow prisoners (Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund), and 5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted by jail staff (National Center for Trans Gender Equality). Housing people with the incorrect gender and forcing them to be strip-searched by jail staff of the incorrect gender will only exacerbate this violence.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,

Markia Silverman-Rodriguez
(she/her)
Madison, WI 53705

October 17, 2023

Dear members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Amelia Hansen, and I am a resident of Madison, Wisconsin. I've lived in Wisconsin for 24 years and I am a biology graduate student at UW-Madison.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on assembly bill 447.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently experience higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in Wisconsin prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,

Amelia Hansen

(she/her)

Madison, WI 53703

Berendt, Amelia

From: Penny Egan <penejr@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 3:05 PM
To: Rep.Clancy
Subject: Attn: Corrections Committee AB 447

Greetings,

AB 447 is an appallingly inhumane approach to the people in the state's care.

Vote No to this bill.

Penny Egan
53217

--

Berendt, Amelia

From: Caitlin Benedetto <caitlin.benedetto.90@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 2:53 PM
To: Rep.Schraa; Rep.Bodden; Rep.Brandtjen; Brooks, Rob; Rep.Callahan; Rep.Hurd;
Rep.Maxey; Rep.O'Connor; Rep.Sapik; Rep.Tittl; Rep.Stubbs; Rep.Goyke; Rep.Cabrera;
Rep.Madison; Rep.Clancy
Subject: Testimony regarding AB 447

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Caitlin Benedetto, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 8 years, and I have great love and respect for my community here in Madison, especially my transgender friends and neighbors. I am writing to urge you to vote no on Assembly Bill 447. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because of the harm that it will do to the transgender members of my community. If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state.

Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges. At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Please vote no on AB 447. Please protect the rights, safety, and dignity of transgender incarcerated people in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,
Caitlin Benedetto
Madison, 53703

Berendt, Amelia

From: Emile <emile.shartle@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 9:48 AM
Subject: Oppose AB 447

Emile Gunovich
4325 De Volis Pkwy
Madison, WI 53711
emile.gunovich@gmail.com
7407066551
October 17, 2023

Dear Representative Schraa and Bodden and the Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Corrections,

As a public health epidemiologist with over a decade of experience in promoting equitable access to health I am writing to urge you to **oppose Assembly Bill 447** which aims dehumanize gender expansive Wisconsinites by forcing incarcerated people to be strip searched and housed in prisons based on the sex assigned to them at birth rather than their gender.

Transgender people in prison are exposed to horrific rates of abuse by both staff and their fellow inmates, facing physical and sexual assault at much higher rates than their counterparts. As the 2022 U.S. Trans Survey found, transgender people are ten times as likely to be sexually assaulted by their fellow inmates and five times as likely to be sexually assaulted by staff. Transgender prisoners also face numerous other challenges behind bars, including denials of medical care and lengthy stays in solitary confinement.

Forcing trans individuals to be housed according to the sex assigned to them at birth is inhumane and dangerous. Incarcerated trans people should have a variety of safe housing options. AB 447 quite literally could be a death sentence for incarcerated trans Wisconsinites.

In conclusion, I urge you to stand up for LGBTQ+ Wisconsinites by **opposing violence like AB 447**.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I trust that you will prioritize the health and rights of **all** Wisconsinites.

Sincerely,
Emile Gunovich, MPH
4325 De Volis Pkwy
Madison, WI 53711

Berendt, Amelia

From: Thunder <tomcheckke15@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 2:06 AM
To: Rep.Bodden; Rep.Brandtjen; Rep.Cabrera; Rep.Callahan; Rep.Clancy; Rep.Goyke;
Rep.Hurd; Rep.Madison; Rep.Maxey; Rep.O'Connor; Brooks, Rob; Rep.Sapik; Rep.Schraa;
Rep.Stubbs; Rep.Tittl

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Thunder Tomcheck and I'm a queer and transgender Madison resident. I may not be available to give my testimony in-person on Wednesday but wanted to share my voice.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 447. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this because it would put trans people, like me, in danger. This bill is blatantly discriminating against trans and gender non-conforming inmates. Forcing them to be with the inmates that match the sex they were assigned at birth would put them in unsafe and cruel conditions. Segregating trans inmates is an even worse idea.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Please vote NO to AB 447.

Sincerely,

Thunder Tomcheck

Berendt, Amelia

From: Shannon O'Donnell <shannodonnell13@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 9:18 PM
To: Rep.Schraa; Rep.Bodden; Rep.Brandtjen; Brooks, Rob; Rep.Callahan; Rep.Hurd;
Rep.Maxey; Rep.O'Connor; Rep.Sapik; Rep.Tittl; Rep.Stubbs; Rep.Goyke; Rep.Cabrera;
Rep.Madison; Rep.Clancy
Subject: AB 447 Written Testimony
Attachments: VoteNO - AB447.pdf

Written testimony attached as PDF as well as included below:

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Shannon O'Donnell and I am a resident of Madison. I grew up in Central Wisconsin and I have been living and working in Wisconsin for over 3 years after graduating from college out of state.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 447. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because trans people deserve to have their humanity recognized and respected and I reject any system that attempts to further dehumanize people.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,

Shannon O'Donnell

Madison, 53704

Berendt, Amelia

From: V Welle <vicwelle@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 7:19 PM
To: Rep.Schraa; Rep.Bodden; Rep.Brandtjen; Brooks, Rob; Rep.Callahan; Rep.Hurd;
Rep.Maxey; Rep.O'Connor; Rep.Sapik; Rep.Tittl; Rep.Stubbs; Rep.Goyke; Rep.Cabrera;
Rep.Madison; Rep.Clancy
Subject: I oppose AB 447

Dear members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections, I am a resident of Wisconsin and a mental health worker. I am writing you to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 447.

In my work I have become very aware of the impact of trauma, and how trans people are disproportionately impacted due to assault and discrimination. This bill will lead to more trauma and abuse of trans people. Being transgender is not a crime, and all trans people, regardless of conviction history, deserve to be treated with basic human dignity.

Please do the right thing and oppose AB 447.

Sincerely,
Victoria Welle
River Falls, WI

Berendt, Amelia

From: Leah Rolando <leamariie12@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 6:15 PM
Subject: Please Vote NO on Assembly Bill 447

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Leah Rolando, and I am a resident of Madison, Dane County (53704). My partner and I just bought a house on the north side of Madison in August this year and are excited to get to know our neighbors and contribute to our community here. I came to Madison in 2016 to attend UW Madison for my Master's degree in Social Work. My partner works as a Recovery Coach and supervisor for certified peer specialists who support people experiencing substance use challenges. We both work for a nonprofit in Madison supporting people with mental health and substance use challenges who represent many identities and life experiences.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 447. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because of the harm it will cause if passed. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges. In various capacities, my partner and I have both cared for and supported trans friends and family who have been involved with the criminal justice system. We have heard horrendous stories of the mistreatment of trans loved ones in jails and prisons. This is an issue close to our hearts, and we cannot remain silent on it.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone. Again, if it is within your power, vote no on AB 447.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

--
Leah Rolando (she/her)
Madison, 53704

Berendt, Amelia

From: Tessa <tessaprice0@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 6:06 PM
To: tessaprice0@gmail.com
Subject: Please Vote Against Bill AB447

To the Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections:

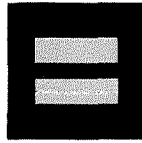
My name is Tessa Jade Price, I am a community organizer for Trans Advocacy Madison and trans woman, myself.

I urge you to vote no on assembly bill 447. This bill puts transgender people in grave danger. It seeks to establish an incoherent and exclusive definition of sex.

The bill attempts to use public facilities to hurt a vulnerable group of people. Please stand with us in an attempt to receive FAIR justice.

Regards,

Tessa Jade Price
Trans Advocacy Madison



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Committee on Corrections
417 North (GAR Hall)
2 E Main St,
Madison, WI 53703

October 18, 2023

Re: Human Rights Campaign Opposition of WI AB 447

Dear Chairman Schraa and Members of the Committee,

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) equality. By inspiring and engaging all Americans, HRC strives to end discrimination against LGBTQ+ citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all. On behalf of HRC's more than three million members and supporters, many of whom live in Wisconsin, we are deeply troubled by AB 447 and the harm its passage would incur on transgender people who have been incarcerated.

Studies suggest that nearly one in every six transgender Americans has been to prison. For Black transgender people, the number is one in two.¹ This disproportionate contact with the criminal justice system means that these inmates are especially vulnerable to harassment, discrimination, and violence behind bars. The statistics on the abuses faced by incarcerated transgender people are alarming: according to federal data, transgender people are nearly ten times more likely to be sexually assaulted than the general prison population.² They are also medically neglected and denied access to routine and gender-affirming healthcare while serving their sentences.³ Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that most transgender people are placed in facilities that do not match their gender identity, and that puts them in very real danger.

AB 447 intentionally undermines the rights, safety, and well-being of some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Under this bill, transgender inmates would be subjected to

¹ Transgender Incarcerated People in Crisis, LAMBDA LEGAL (2012), <https://www.lambdalegal.org/knowyour-rights/article/trans-incarceratedpeople>.

² Beck, A. J. (2014). *Sexual Victimization in Prisons and Jails Reported by Inmates, 2011–12: Supplemental Tables: Prevalence of Sexual Victimization Among Transgender Adult Inmates*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, available at https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/svpjri1112_st.pdf; Beck, A. J., Berzofsky, M., Caspar, R., & Krebs, C. (2013). *Sexual Victimization in Prisons and Jails Reported by Inmates, 2011–12*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/svpjri1112.pdf>

³ Coleman, et al. *Standards of Care for the Health of Transgender and Gender Diverse People, Version 8, Int'l Journal of Transgender Health* (2022). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2022.2100644>



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strip searches and housed in facilities that match their sex assigned at birth, without consideration of their gender identity. The decision to disregard a transgender person's gender identity is not only harmful and disrespectful, but ignores medical expertise and common sense. The federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) makes it clear that prisons and jails are to make housing placements for all transgender people who are incarcerated on a case-by-case basis, which includes assigning them to male or female facilities. Furthermore, PREA requires that a transgender person's opinion with respect to his or her own safety be given serious consideration.

It has been nearly three decades since the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that failing to protect transgender people in custody qualifies as cruel and unusual punishment under the Eighth Amendment.⁴ It is both unconscionable and unjust to force transgender Wisconsinites who are incarcerated into housing placements that do not match their gender identity, deliberately exposing them to a greater risk of sexual and physical violence.

As written, AB 447 does little more than jeopardize the lives and dignity of incarcerated transgender people, and we urge you to swiftly reject it.

Sincerely,

Courtney Avant
Legislative Counsel, HRC

⁴ *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825 (1994)



GSAFE
122 E. Olin Ave., Suite 100
Madison, WI 53713
Voice: (608) 661-4141
www.gsafewi.org

October 18, 2023

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Brian Juchems. I am the Co-Executive Director of GSAFE, a statewide organization that works with schools, students, and families to create safe and affirming environments for LGBTQ+ youth.

GSAFE stands opposed to Assembly Bill 447 and Senate Bill 438.

As an organization focused on creating just schools for trans and queer youth, we know there is often no justice found in school policies and disciplinary practices that disproportionately impact trans and queer youth, particularly those who are Black, Brown, Indigenous students of color. From dress code policies that target students who don't conform to gender role expectations, to policies that criminalize natural hair, from discipline practices that are harsher and more quickly and disproportionately applied against trans and queer youth of color to from zero tolerance policies that involve police in schools: there exists a pipeline that makes schools unsafe and pushes our youth out of the school system and into the juvenile justice system. Once justice involved as a youth, one is more likely to be justice involved as an adult.

These two bills criminalize and target trans and queer BIPOC folks for simply existing, and will result in harsher, less humane treatment of Wisconsinites who have already been traumatized by multiple systems. Transgender people who are incarcerated already face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other forms of abuse and challenges. These bills are inhumane and cruel, making an already unsafe place less safe for some members of our community. That includes our young people pushed into the system by discriminatory practices and policies.

All people deserve dignity. All people deserve to have their humanity seen and respected. These bills do the opposite of that, effectively advocating additional punishment that is unrelated to any crime an individual stands accused or convicted of. They would be state sanctioned violence against vulnerable transgender Wisconsinites.

GSAFE opposed these bills and expects you to vote no on AB 447 and SB 438.

Sincerely,

Brian Juchems
Co-Executive Director
Madison, WI

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to AB447 and SB438

My name is Bex Streit, and I work as the Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Program Coordinator at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center. I am also a Transgender man and resident of the city of Milwaukee for the past 10 years.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 447 and Senate Bill 438. As a Wisconsinite I am opposed to this bill because it would place an already incredibly vulnerable population in even more danger and work to further dehumanize Transgender people in an already harsh environment. Transgender people, like all people, deserve to be treated with decency despite their past actions.

If passed, these bills will cause immense harm to Transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the Transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,

Bex Streit

Milwaukee, WI 53212

Aaron Lopez
Regarding WI State Legislative Hearing
October 17th, 2023

To all members of the Assembly Committee on
Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on
Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

Hello,

My name is Aaron Lopez and I am a concerned Dane County resident and parent. I would like to state my formal opposition to Assembly Bill 447 (strip searches for trans prisoners).

The outdated understanding of sex and gender articulated in AB 447 and other proposed legislation is designed to further humiliate transgender people within the already horrific Wisconsin prison system. This bill is another attempt by Wisconsin's right wing politicians to legitimize social hierarchies of their choosing, and to distract their constituents from anti-worker agendas.

Please voice your strong opposition to these bills.

Sincerely,
Your Constituent,
Aaron Lopez
(they/them)

October 17, 2023

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Markia Silverman-Rodriguez, and I am a resident of Madison, WI. I have lived in Wisconsin for 24 years and I am a geography graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on assembly bill 447.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently experience higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in Wisconsin prisons. Incarcerated transgender people are already 10 times more likely than prisoners who are not transgender to be sexually assaulted by fellow prisoners (Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund), and 5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted by jail staff (National Center for Trans Gender Equality). Housing people with the incorrect gender and forcing them to be strip-searched by jail staff of the incorrect gender will only exacerbate this violence.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,

Markia Silverman-Rodriguez
(she/her)
Madison, WI 53705

October 17, 2023

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Amelia Hansen, and I am a resident of Madison, Wisconsin. I've lived in Wisconsin for 24 years and I am a biology graduate student at UW-Madison.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on assembly bill 447.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently experience higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in Wisconsin prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,

Amelia Hansen

(she/her)

Madison, WI 53703

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Eddie Crise and I am a resident of Chippewa Falls. I have lived in Wisconsin for twenty-seven years and I am the pastor at Trinity United Methodist Church in Chippewa Falls. I am married to Katie, a reading interventionist and we have two daughters, Mary Beth who is five years old, and Lucy, two.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 447. I believe it is not appropriate to house inmates based on sex determined at birth. Transgender people are an extremely vulnerable and marginalized community and that is especially true of transgender people in prison. This bill would lead to discrimination and real danger for transgender people in prison. Please oppose Assembly Bill 447

Sincerely,

Pastor Eddie Crise (he/him)
Chippewa Falls, 54729

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to **AB447** and **SB438**.

My name is Dianne Gleixner and I am a resident of Brookfield, WI. I have lived in southwest Wisconsin for 60 years, where my husband and I have raised 2 children, both now adults. One of my children is transgender and it truly saddens me that these bills are being discussed.

I plead with you to vote NO on AB447 and SB438. If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Every single one of these people deserves to be treated with dignity and respect as fellow human beings, and allowing them to identify with the gender they are.

Transgender people who are incarcerated in our state currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges. Please keep government out of the personal and private lives of Wisconsinites, and that includes the personal medical history of transgender people in our prison system.

Again, I urge you to vote NO!

Regards,

Dianne Gleixner, Brookfield, WI

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Randi Cartmill and I am a resident of Madison. I have lived in Wisconsin for 27 years and I have three children who were born and raised here.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 447. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because it would be cruel to our transgender neighbors, who are already a group that suffers from depression, anxiety and suicidality at much higher rates on average. If passed, this bill would cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,

Randi Cartmill

Madison, WI 53704

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Kristin Aasen-Gowan and I am a resident of Cambridge Wisconsin. I've lived in Wisconsin all my 53 years of life. I am the parent of 3 kids and a social worker in the health care system and now public schools.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on **AB447** and **SB438**.

I am opposed to this bill because it is dangerous.

There is so much misunderstanding of gender and transgender individuals and I believe you do not understand the danger these bills cause. I am just learning myself and I am sure if you took the time to listen to people in the trans community you would begin to know and change your thinking.

If passed this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in Wisconsin. Trans people currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault and many other challenges in our prison.

Housing needs to be based on gender- not sex.

We shall not dismiss their rights, as often trans people are in jails and prisons - not because they are hardened criminals- rather because they were defending themselves or the target of discrimination.

This is unethical and unjust.

Sincerely,

Kristin Gowan

Kristin Aasen-Gowan
Cambridge Wisconsin

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to AB447 and SB438. As a social worker, one of my Core Values is to see and uphold the dignity and worth of all people. Incarceration does not exclude anyone's inherent worthiness of being treated with dignity, especially people who are already marginalized in our society. These attempts to devalue and dehumanize transgender inmates seem to be just the most recent in a long line of attempts to legislate the erasure and eradication of our transgender siblings.

I urge you to be on the right side of history and vote against these transparent attempts at dehumanization. I also urge you to personally adapt the NASW Core Value of seeing and upholding the dignity and worth of all people as a guiding principle when making legislative decisions .

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Wetzel Gracyalny
Green Bay WI

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to **AB447** and **SB438**

My name is Miranda Day and I live in Madison. I, like many trans people over the past few years, fled Florida in search of a place where I could feel safe. I am a tech professional, exactly the kind of talent Madison and Wisconsin as a whole seeks to attract. Yet this proposal seeks to intimidate us, and makes it clear this state is not interested in protecting its people or keeping up with the times. We have seen the harm of disproportionate prison sentences for people of color, and this proposal is yet another attempt to imprison minorities for longer. The embarrassment of even writing this proposal, much less bringing it to the floor, is a stain that will sully your halls for as long as you allow it to linger. Out damned spot.

- Miranda Day
she/her

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to AB447 and SB438. As a Unitarian Universalist Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because it goes against one of the guiding principles of my faith, the inherent worth and dignity of every person. This proposed legislation does not respect the dignity of trans individuals who would be forced into segregation or into housing with the incorrect gender while incarcerated.

I also believe that the primary goal of our criminal justice system should be to reduce recidivism and that the best way to do so is to treat incarcerated people with respect while giving them access to services and resources that set them up for success after incarceration. If these bills are enacted, we would be even farther from this ideal for trans people specifically as they would not be treated with respect while they are incarcerated and will not have access to a full range of services if they are in segregation.

I urge you to consider the harm that these bills will do and vote no.

Sincerely,
Erin Hawes of Madison, WI

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to **AB447**

My name is Laurie Swimm and I live in Madison, Wisconsin and have lived in Wisconsin for over 39 years.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on AB447. As a long-time Wisconsite I am opposed to this bill because it criminalizes being transgender. Individuals who are brave enough to publicly identify as such already face high rates of abuse and discrimination from others who don't understand who they are.

Transgender individuals in general, but also those who are incarcerated, need to be respected as being full members of the human race. Incarcerated transgender people already experience increased bias and incidents of assault. This bill would reinforce a narrow binary view of "sex" that would expose transgender individuals to even more sexual assault and abuse in our prison system. Transgender individuals do not deserve to be treated as less than the full human beings they are and should not be singled out as needing to identify as a different "sex" than they view themselves.

Our state needs to govern all of its citizens as equal human beings, and respect the dignity and humanity of every individual. Please oppose this bill.

Thank you.

Dear members of the assembly committee on corrections,

My name is Krista Eastman and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for most of my life.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on Assembly Bill 447. I am opposed to this bill because of the harm it will do to transgender people. I am disgusted by this body's willingness to go out of their way to discriminate against a community that is dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

We should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone, not throwing certain people under the bus out of willful ignorance and political bloodsport.

Sincerely,
Krista Eastman
Madison, WI 53715

To Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections:

My name is Jeanne Rickert. I live in Madison, I have lived in Wisconsin for 66 of my 69 years, primarily in Milwaukee, but grew up in Ozaukee County.

I am opposed to AB 447. There are so many ways you marginalize transgender people, it is death by a thousand needles. Data shows transgender people are the most persecuted when incarcerated, the most marginalized already. This just adds to that. It also gives the wrong message to young people who are watching what you are doing and see themselves canceled again and again by your punitive laws. I see no way this protects the community at large or those that are incarcerated. It puts transgender people at great risk in this system.

There is so much good you could be doing and instead, you are all trying to hop on the bandwagon of persecuting people that do not do you or us any harm.

Again I am opposed to this bill.

Sincerely Jeanne Rickert Madison WI

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to **AB447** and **SB438**

I am writing to urge you to vote no on these bills.

**Michaela Scherer
PO Box 662
Adams, WI 53910**

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to AB447 and SB438!

Becky Stuntebeck, Middleton WI

There can be no doubt that our criminal justice system routinely fails to serve justice equally or equitably across different identities and demographics. Singling out people who do not identify as the gender they were assigned at birth who have been incarcerated through the changes proposed in these bills would only serve to take our state even further away from establishing a system that remotely resembles true justice.

Incarcerated transgender people endure higher risks of abuse, sexual assault, and other traumas in our prisons. These bills offer no benefits to incarcerated folks of any identity and will perpetuate harm to transgender folks. It is distressing that targeting transgender folks has become a political weapon in our state.

We the people of Wisconsin honor and respect the dignity and humanity of all folks, and most vehemently oppose the passage of AB447 and SB438.

-Becky Stuntebeck
Pronouns: she/her/hers

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Gillian Blake, and I am a resident of Stoughton, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 53 years and additionally I have a transgender child.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on Assembly Bill 447. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because it is unfair, barbaric, and endangers the lives of incarcerated people who are transgender.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,
Gillian Blake
Stoughton, WI 53589

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to **AB447** and **SB438**

My name is Julia Richards and I live in Madison, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for most of my life and vote in every election.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 447. As a Wisconsinite I oppose this bill because it discriminates against and dehumanizes transgender people. The Wisconsin prison system is already in dire need of reform for its inhumane conditions, and this bill will only make things worse for an already vulnerable population. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse and sexual assault in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

Please stop attacking transgender people and instead focus on the reforms needed to our overcrowded and inhuman prisons.

Sincerely,
Julia Richards
Madison, WI 53704

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Brianna Buhr and I am a resident of Dane County. I've lived in Wisconsin for almost my whole life, over 30 years. I am in grad school, studying to be a therapist and I currently work at a local community center with youth.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on assembly bill 447. As a future therapist and member of the Wisconsin community, I am opposed to this bill because I am a member of the transgender community and people who I love who have been incarcerated. This bill dehumanizes them and that is not right.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently already face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when my community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we need to make it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone. Please vote no on bill 447.

Sincerely,

Brianna Buhr
Madison, WI 53711

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to AB447 and Senate Bill438

Vicki Lee Springman
Fitchburg, WI

In my beliefs and opinion, The State of Wisconsin does not have the right to make decisions that affect the the lives of citizens of Wisconsin based on their personal identity. It is not a crime to be Trans!

To Representative Baldeh, Senator Agard and to all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to ~~AB447~~ and SB438

My name is Elizabeth Bruno and I am a resident of Madison, WI.

These recent Wisconsin and nation wide attacks on transgendered people are unacceptable. It is clear that public safety is not the central issue in this legislation. While our government should be protecting citizens, even those who have been convicted of crime; this bill endangers the lives of incarcerated trans people.

All of these anti-trans legislative moves are contrary to real peoples life experiences and seek to eliminate and punish normal human variation. It is sick and heartbreaking and deeply dangerous to have legal structures driven by politics of fear and division.

Do not pass AB447. Stop the attack on trans lives and end genital mutilation of intersex infants.

Thank you for your time,
Elizabeth Bruno
4109 Drexel Ave,
Madison WI

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to AB447 and Senate Bill438

These Bills are an outrageous and calculated assault on the transgender community in the state of Wisconsin. It is imperative that we recognize and uphold the rights of transgender individuals, as they are entitled to the same rights and respect as anyone else. Any efforts to discriminate against or marginalize them go against the very foundations of ethical principles. These Bills not only fail to pass the Golden Rule test, but they also serve no purpose other than to perpetuate cruelty and inflict unnecessary harm upon this vulnerable segment of our population.

Scott Springman, MD
5721 Summerhill Ct.
Fitchburg, WI 53711

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Jill Nagler and I'm a resident of Madison, WI, and lifelong resident of Wisconsin.

I write you in staunch opposition of AAB447.

This bill is violent and dehumanizing.

Sex is not equivalent to gender and punishing people based on "assigned sex" is not only unconstitutional but also unethical and immoral.

Incarcerated trans people are already discriminated against in prison, this bill only serves to harm trans people even more.

Incarcerated people do not deserve to be punished anymore than they already are, and trans and intersex folks don't deserve to be further ostracized, no one does.

Stop criminalizing transgender people for existing.

We are literally just trying to live our lives just like you.

I implore you to oppose this bill and all others that are cruel and unconstitutional.

Please act with humility and compassion and end this assault on trans people in Wisconsin.

Shelley and Olwen Hansen-Blake
333 W. Mifflin St.
Unit 6030
Madison, WI 53703

October 18, 2023

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections. My wife Olwen and I are writing in opposition to **AB447** and **SB438**. We have lived in Madison, WI for over 30 years, and I was born in Wisconsin.

We have family members and friends who are transgender and non-binary. We are opposed to these bills because they don't recognize the accurate sexual identity of incarcerated individuals. If passed, this bill will cause great harm to incarcerated transgender people in our state. They are known to face higher rates of abuse, assault, sexual assault, and self-harm than other groups in prisons. This harm comes from both other prisoners and corrections staff. Housing people with others of the incorrect gender will only increase these risks.

At a time when the transgender community is facing unprecedented rates of assault, ridicule, homicide, suicide, and hate crimes, we should make it clear that the State of Wisconsin respects the dignity and rights of all its citizens. It is the duty of the Department of Corrections and the State Legislature to protect every citizen of the State, including incarcerated persons.

Again, we strongly **oppose AB447 and SB458**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shelley and Olwen Hansen-Blake

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to **AB447** and **SB438**

Breanna Mekuly, Appleton, WI

My name is Rosalind Woodward, I am a resident of Madison. I have lived in Wisconsin since 1980 and am a retired health care provider.

I am writing to urge you to **vote no on Assembly bill 447**. I am opposed to this bill because I have been care-giver to people with gender dysphoria, and have felt the anguish this condition causes. To prevent this now available solution is both unkind and inhumane.

At a time when the transgender community is already coping with an unprecedented amount of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of **all** of its people.

If passed this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people in this state, especially those who are incarcerated and already face an increased rate of abuse and other challenges within the prison system.

Please vote with compassion for your fellow Life-journey travelers.

Yours sincerely,
Rosalind Woodward
Madison, WI 53711

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Peter Beeson. I am a resident of Madison, Wisconsin, where I've lived for the past five years. As an ordained Christian clergyman, I am writing to urge you to vote no on assembly bill 447. As a Wisconsinite, and a Christian I oppose this bill. It lacks nuance, ignores the reality that some people are intersex, or born with ambiguous genitalia, and will add additional trauma to people who are transgender.

While the Bible never mentions people who are transgender, and while holding transgender as an identity is a new concept, the Bible frequently talks about welcoming the orphans, widows, eunuchs, and strangers, and that it is essential to treat people of all walks of life with basic respect and dignity. Eunuchs are the closest frame of reference to our modern understanding of gender, whether they became eunuchs because of castration done when they were captured during war, because of differences at birth, or because of the way they acted outside of the gender lines, eunuchs were frequently despised and rejected from ancient society. However God repeatedly lifts up the eunuch, both in the story of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts, and in Isaiah. As a Christian, our God is a god of compassion, who sent his son to die, so people might know the way to the Father.

If passed, this bill will cause trauma to transgender prisoners, including leading to increased sexual assault, by housing vulnerable transgender women in male prisons, and opening women up to violence and harassment by having transgender men in their prisons. Please vote no on this legislation, and any similar legislation that attempts to criminalize being transgender.

We, as Wisconsinites, need to be clear that while we may disagree on many things, we respect everyone's basic human dignity.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Peter Beeson
Madison, WI 53703

The Rev. Peter Beeson
Lead Pastor, St. John's Lutheran Church

To the Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections:

My name is Tessa Jade Price, I am a community organizer for Trans Advocacy Madison and trans woman, myself.

I urge you to vote no on assembly bill 447. This bill puts transgender people in grave danger. It seeks to establish an incoherent and exclusive definition of sex.

The bill attempts to use public facilities to hurt a vulnerable group of people. Please stand with us in an attempt to receive FAIR justice.

Regards,

Tessa Jade Price
Trans Advocacy Madison

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to **AB447** and **SB438**
Erin Crawley, Madison, WI

Dear Members of the Assembly committee on Corrections:

My name is Erin Crawley and I have lived in Madison, WI since 1983-1994 and then returned in 2000 and have lived here since. My husband and I have raised our kids here, they've gone to public school, we raised them to pay attention to local and wider political issues, to vote, to be kind and generous individuals. All my life I've known members of my family and friends who are gay, who are trans (whether that's what it was called at the time or not), who are straight, who choose not to have their gender identified. They are not criminals for who they choose to be or who they simply are. For the most part, I have been proud to live in Wisconsin, but such a cynical and cruel bill is shameful and a violation of basic human rights.

I'm writing to urge you to vote no on Assembly Bill 447. As a Wisconsinite I am opposed to this bill because criminalizes a person's very being. I think this is inhumane and cruel, and a complete disregard for an individual's right to exist as who they are. It is also a callous and calculated attempt to divert attention, resources, time, and tax dollars away from real issues and problems that face our community.

If passed this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented rates of violence, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,

Erin Crawley, Madison, 53704
October 18, 2023

From: **Nina Sevier**

Date: Wed, Oct 18, 2023 at 6:15 AM

Subject: Opposition to AB447 and SB438

To: Sen.Roys@legis.wisconsin.gov <Sen.Roys@legis.wisconsin.gov>, Rep.Stubbs@legis.wisconsin.gov <Rep.Stubbs@legis.wisconsin.gov>

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to **AB447** and **SB438**

Thank you,
Nina, Madison

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to **AB447** and **SB438**.

My name is Serena Sato, and I am a resident of Dane County, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 20 years and have raised two children.

I'm writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 447 and SB438. As a Wisconsinite, I'm opposed to this bill because it is discriminatory and harmful. There is no reason to criminalize transgender people and this amounts to sexual violence against them.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people who are incarcerated in our state.

At a time when transgender people are already being attacked, we should be clear that our state respects the dignity and rights of all people.

Thank you,
Serena Sato
Madison, WI

10/18/23

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Lorrie and I'm a resident of Stoughton, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 23 years and have worked in local nonprofits and have seen first hand the devastating impacts of systemic racism and white supremacy on our community, specifically Wisconsin residents who are Black, brown, LGBTQIA+, disabled, and poor.

The school to prison pipeline is alive and well for these residents, especially in Wisconsin, as many studies show. It is additionally well documented that queer and transgendered residents are many times more likely to be arrested and imprisoned in our state than their cisgendered counterparts. The deck is already stacked against transgender folx. These anti-trans bills are targeting folx who are already targets. It's shameful.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on assembly bill 447. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill. If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many more other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of all people.

Please vote no to AB447 and SB438

Sincerely,

Lorrie Hurckes
Stoughton, WI

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to **AB447** and **SB438**.

Lisa Daubert, Appleton, WI 54915

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to AB447 and SB438. I consider these proposed laws a violation of human rights, especially given the lack of protection for incarcerated individuals against assault. I look forward to seeing this proposed legislation dismissed as inhumane and unnecessarily cruel.

Best,
Amelia Speight
City of Madison, 53714

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to **AB447** and **SB438**

My name is Leah and I live in Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 5 years and attend UW-Madison as a PhD student. I am writing to urge you to vote no on assembly bill 447. As a Wisconsin resident, I am opposed to this bill because it will put trans people at risk of harm.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Trans people who are incarcerated generally face bigger rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the trans community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our state respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,
Leah
Madison, 53703

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and all members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, Clerks and Staff:

I am writing in opposition to **AB447** and **SB438**

My name is Lauren and I live in Madison, WI.

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

My name is Lauren and I am a resident of Madison, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 5 years and am a graduate student.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on Assembly Bill 447. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because it treats people unfairly and unjustly. Transgender people deserve the same rights as anyone else.

If passed, this bill will cause immense harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. Transgender people who are incarcerated currently face higher rates of abuse, sexual assault, and many other challenges in our prisons. Housing people with the incorrect gender will only exacerbate these challenges.

At a time when the transgender community is already dealing with unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination, we should be making it clear that our State respects the dignity and humanity of everyone.

Sincerely,
Lauren
Madison, WI

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections,

I have lived in Wisconsin since I was a small child, and as an aunt of someone who is trans, I am ashamed of actions my state legislature has taken against trans citizens in Wisconsin. I write today to urge you to VOTE NO ON ASSEMBLY BILL 447. There are many injustices that need to be addressed in our prison system and this would only add to the list. If passed, this bill will create great harm to transgender people incarcerated in our state. It will add to the already existing harms and challenges faced by trans people in our prison system. Please DO NOT add the the unprecedented amounts of violence and discrimination that the transgender community is already dealing with!

I hope you will listen to your conscience and your heart and VOTE NO on AB447.

Sincerely,
Mary Sykes
Madison, WI 53704

Dear friends in Wisconsin's esteemed state government,

I ask that you treat transpersons in Wisconsin as full citizens with the right to self-determination. I ask that you allow Wisconsinites the right to identify who they are as they choose and to protect those rights whenever others may trample on them. Above all, I ask that YOU not use my funding and vote to oppress Wisconsinites like my own son, who achieved his education here, has volunteered here for a number of social well-being causes here, and works, pays taxes, and serves as a valued and valuable member of our community. Please do not use your fellow Wisconsinites to score points for hatred, disrespect, and public opposition to American individuality and freedom.

Sincerely,
ML Cogar

To: Members of Assembly Committee on Corrections

I am Rev. Mallory Yanchus, one of the pastors at First United Methodist Church downtown Madison. I am testifying in opposition of AB447. As a clergy person, I have committed my work and my life to sharing the love of God to all people. In Matthew 34-40, an expert in the law tried to trap Jesus into answering which commandment, or law, was the most important. Jesus replied "Love God, and love your neighbor". All other laws hang on these two.

These greatest commandments propel me every day in the work I do, to love God and to love my neighbors to the very best of my ability.

Forcing the definition of sex to "sex assigned at birth" for "prisoner placement" and strip searches creates a great deal of harm to trans individuals who do not identify with the sex assigned to them at birth. Forcing a trans woman into a men's prison and vice versa is putting that person in an incredibly vulnerable position for their physical and mental health and how others will treat them. Everyone, even those entering the prison system deserve dignity, respect. Persons entering the prison system deserve to be treated by the sex they are, to receive care and entry protocols by someone of the sex they are at that time.

To me, loving God and loving my neighbor is fighting for the dignity of every trans person who enters the prison system to be able to be in a prison that matches their presented sex, and to NOT be forced to strip searches by the opposite sex. Besides receiving the best medical care possible, there is no other clear reason to force someone to use their sex assigned at birth in the prison system.

Thank you,

Mallory Yanchus

Madison, WI 53703 (work)

Sun Prairie, WI 53590 (home)