

RELEASE: HOUSE REPUBLICANS DISPARAGE LGBTQ+ PEOPLE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

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New Hampshire House of Representatives Concord, New Hampshire House Democratic Office

PRESS RELEASE

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HOUSE REPUBLICANS DISPARAGE LGBTQ+ PEOPLE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE – Today, the House Criminal Justice committee heard and attempted to vote on HB 238, a bill that would ban the “Gay Panic Defense” used to justify the murder of LGBTQ+ people. Before the vote could be taken, the Committee Chair abruptly adjourned the meeting in response to derogatory comments made by Rep. Dick Marston (R- Manchester). **Sponsor of HB 238, Chair of the LGBTQ Democratic Legislative Caucus and Vice Chair of the New Hampshire Stonewall Democrats, Rep. Josh Query (D-Manchester)** released the following statement:

“Today, the House Criminal Justice Committee heard and attempted a vote to kill HB 238, a bill that would ban the “Gay Panic Defense,” a measure used to justify the murder of LGBTQ+ individuals across the nation. This bill would prevent someone from using a person’s gender identity, actual or perceived gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation as an excuse for murder while still retaining existing self-defense statute and recognizing due process. The committee heard this bill simultaneously in combination with a bill on subject matter involving drug dealers. It is deeply disappointing that LGBTQ+ people in New Hampshire were not afforded the respect of a clear hearing on this legislation that aims to make the Granite State safer for all people. It is unfortunately not uncommon that the LGBTQ+ community is intentionally equated with unprotected classes and in this case was unfairly related to a conversation on drug dealers. LGBTQ+ people in New Hampshire deserve dignity and protection in statute and in the legislative process, just as much as all Granite Staters do.”

“I am incredibly disheartened by the use of derogatory and harmful language and body language by Republican members of the Criminal Justice committee. Rep. Marston’s referring to LGBTQ+ people as “sexual deviants” and other committee members laughing during testimony from LGBTQ+ people is unacceptable behavior by members of the House. New Hampshire has one of the largest populations of LGBTQ+ people in the United States and elected representatives harboring and displaying such hatred for their own constituencies is deeply disturbing.”

Rachel Brady Cole