



May 31, 2023

The Honorable Lori D. Wilson
State Assembly
1021 O St., Suite 5150
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT -- Assembly Bill 957 (Wilson)

Dear Assembly Member Wilson:

The California Youth Empowerment Network (CAYEN) is pleased to support Assembly Bill 957 (Wilson), legislation which would require the court to strongly consider that affirming a minor's gender identity is in the best interest of the child if a nonconsenting parent objects to a name change to conform to the minor's gender identity.

The California Youth Empowerment Network (CAYEN) is a youth-led statewide network comprised of TAY Action Teams and CAYEN Board members which engages, empowers and represents Transitional Age Youth (TAY), ages 15-26, in mental health advocacy on issues that directly affect TAY. Since CAYEN's inception in 2006, CAYEN has taken many forms of action to empower TAY in their personal lives and spark progressive change in public policy.

Our transgender youth go on a long journey towards self-discovery. It can be extremely difficult to be one's authentic self under scrutiny of classmates, friends, and family members. A step someone would take towards reaffirming one's gender identity is by changing their name. However, sometimes the parent or guardian will actively oppose all attempts of gender reaffirming care causing undue harm to our transgender youth such as but not limited to anxiety, depression, and thoughts of suicide. Assembly Bill 957 would require the courts to consider reaffirming a youth's gender identity as it is in the youth's best interest when one parent does not consent to a child's name and gender marker change. This, in turn, will help to protect and improve the mental health of these transgender youth.

For these reasons, we support Assembly Bill 957. If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at dthirakul@mhac.org, or our Interim Director of Public Policy, Karen Vicari at kvicari@mhacofca.org.

In Community,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Thirakul', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Danny Thirakul
Public Policy Coordinator
California Youth Empowerment Network