I ask that the *Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012* be passed in this legislative session.

I am Intersex. So is my son.

While he has not born the brunt of very much discrimination – merely been ejected from a Christian Primary School, not for anything he's done, but for who he is – my own experience has not been so happy. A 20-month legal fight to obtain a passport, was just part of it.

Discrimination is a very real issue in our lives, not merely a hypothetical. Most of it is apparently based on religious belief, though when you ask about the scriptural basis for persecuting those born with congenital anomalies – Disorders of Sexual Development is the currently accepted medical term – all you get is a screed on homosexuality, perversion, disease, and Freedom of Religious Belief. Sometimes accompanied by accusations of being a "Spawn of Satan".

It's difficult acccording such religious beliefs the respect they deserve, but I try to. When these peculiar beliefs are used as excuses though for denying medical care or other services, a line must be drawn. It is in society's best interests that such behaviour – not belief - be constrained by law. To state the obvious, sincere belief in the efficacy of human sacrifice and other such religious ceremonies is allowed, but the human sacrifices themselves have to be prohibited. Religious Freedom cannot be completely unconstrained when it infringes on the rights of others.

No doubt the committee will have received hundreds of submissions vehemently demanding the continued right to persecute my eleven year old son on the grounds of religious belief. This illustrates better than any words I could write the scope of the problem, and emphasises the need for this legislation to be put into effect at the earliest possible date.

The exact wording of the bill can no doubt be improved in many areas. Intersex people would be better served by explicit protection in a separate clause, for example. But "better" is the key phrase, what is there is already "good", and those who oppose this bill want the whole thing trashed, and in many instances would go a lot further than that in rolling back basic human rights for us if they could. They won't be satisfied regardless of what is done, until they no longer have to be troubled by our existence, and havve said so explicitly.

To pass this bill would send a message that bigotry cloaked in the trappings of religion is no longer acceptable. Not to pass it would encourage that though, and make existing problems that I personally have encountered even worse. I don't want that to be the kind of society my son grows up in.

Sincerely
Zoe E Brain