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Sent: Wednesday, November 16, 2011 4:48 PM

To: Mike

Subject: Senate Passes Trans Bill -- Governor To Sign Bill

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Senate Passes Trans Bill -- Governor To Sign Bill

Dear Mike,

In an historic move, the Massachusetts Legislature passed the Transgender Equal Rights Bill today, joining 15 other states and the District of Columbia in extending critical protections to transgender residents in employment, housing, education, credit, and hate crimes.

This is a major achievement in Massachusetts, where advocates have been working for decades to pass protections for transgender residents.

It would not have happened without YOUR support. You made phone calls to your lawmakers. You sent emails. You wrote letters to the editors of your local newspapers. And you supported us as we made this our top priority. I want to thank you for that. And I want to ask you to do one more thing.

Please take a moment to thank our legislative champions, because this bill would not have passed without them:

State Representatives [Carl Sciortino](#) and [Byron Rushing](#) and State Senators [Ben Downing](#) and [Sonia Chang-Díaz](#) led the efforts in the House and Senate to pass this bill. Support from House Speaker [Robert DeLeo](#), an early champion of the bill, and Senate President [Therese Murray](#) was essential to its passage, as was the



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About MassEquality

MassEquality works to ensure

leadership of Joint Judiciary Chairs State Representative [Eugene O'Flaherty](#) and State Senator [Cynthia Stone Creem](#). (The House roll call is available [here](#). The Senate took a voice vote.)

Governor [Deval Patrick](#), who has been a strong advocate for protections for the transgender community, has already publicly stated his intention to sign the bill into law. And Attorney General [Martha Coakley](#) testified in person before lawmakers in support of this bill and provided invaluable legal analysis about the bill.

Throughout the lengthy advocacy for this bill, many community and national partners played critical roles, and also deserve our thanks: the Massachusetts Chapters of the National Association of Social Workers, the National Organization for Women, and the American Civil Liberties Union; Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders; the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus; the Massachusetts LGBTQ Bar Association; Jane Doe, Inc.; the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; National Center for Transgender Equality; National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation; Human Rights Campaign; Equality Federation; Family Equality Council; Jobs With Justice the AFL-CIO; UNITE HERE; United Auto Workers; Communication Workers of America; Keshet; the Interfaith Coalition for Trans Equality; Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts; and the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Special thanks, of course, must be given to the many transgender people, their families, and allies who testified in favor of the bill and courageously shared their personal stories, without which the bill would never have advanced and passed.

Last, we all know that this bill is not perfect — it does not include essential protections within public accommodations which include restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations and other places where daily life is routinely conducted. But it extends much-needed civil rights and hate crimes protections to the state's 33,000 transgender residents, who experience high rates of employment discrimination

that every lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender person in Massachusetts is protected from cradle to grave—with equal rights and opportunities in school, in marriage and family life, at work and in retirement.

and hate crimes violence, and its passage will make an immediate impact on transgender residents' ability to support themselves and their families.

I want to close with this promise to the community: MassEquality stands with the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition and the other members of the Transgender Equal Rights Coalition in continuing to fight for comprehensive civil rights protections for the transgender community, and the organization will continue working to educate the legislature and the public on why public accommodations are critical until transgender people are fully protected under the law.

Sincerely,



Kara S. Suffredini, Esq.

Executive Director



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