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**Sent:** Wednesday, November 23, 2011 11:31 AM  
**To:** Mike  
**Subject:** Giving thanks

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## Giving thanks

**Dear Mike,**

We have much to be thankful for this week!

Today, Governor Deval Patrick will sign the Transgender Equal Rights Bill, which, at long last, adds essential protections for the Commonwealth's transgender community in jobs, housing, schools, and credit, as well as in situations where people face hate-based violence. The law will take effect on July 1, 2012.

We are thankful for the leadership shown on his bill by Gov. [Patrick](#), House Speaker [Robert DeLeo](#), and Senate President [Therese Murray](#). If you haven't already, please take a moment to thank them, along with our legislative champions: State Representatives [Carl Sciortino](#) and [Byron Rushing](#) and State Senators [Ben Downing](#) and [Sonia Chang-Díaz](#). Additionally, we're grateful for the leadership shown by Joint Judiciary Chairs State Representative [Eugene O'Flaherty](#) and State Senator [Cynthia Stone Creem](#), and for all of the lawmakers who voted in favor of the bill. (Click [here](#) for the House roll call on the bill.)

Last, we are particularly grateful 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.



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**In case you missed it...**

Our [blog post](#) on Blue Mass Group detailing the work of our legislative champions.

Standard Times political columnist Alexis Hauk [on the need for public](#)

A public ceremony with the governor marking passage of the bill will take place after the New Year.

Additionally, last week also saw passage of pension reform legislation that will allow the state to seek a ruling from the IRS permitting same-sex married state employees who were ineligible for the State Employee Retirement System at the time they enrolled because the *Goodridge* decision legalizing same-sex marriage had not yet taken effect, to have an opportunity to pursue enrollment now. This was a straightforward question of fairness, and we are thankful that the impacted families are one step closer to full equality under the Massachusetts laws.

From all of us at MassEquality, we wish you a Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,



**Kara S. Suffredini, Esq.**  
*Executive Director*



[accommodations](#)  
[protections](#) for transgender residents.

Massachusetts ACLU  
Legislative Counsel Gavi  
Wolfe's Boston.com [blog](#)  
[post](#) on the bill.

GLAD Transgender Rights  
Project Director Jennifer  
Levi's [blog post](#) on the bill.

### **About MassEquality**

*MassEquality works to ensure 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.*

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