

GREATER BOSTON PARENTS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS
OF LESBIANS AND GAYS (PFLAG)¹
STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF HB 1722
AN ACT RELATIVE TO GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION
AND HATE CRIMES

GREATER BOSTON PFLAG works to create inclusive, safe and welcoming communities, school classrooms and places of work. Greater Boston PFLAG supports passage of HB 1722, An Act Relative to Gender-based Discrimination and Hate Crimes, because we believe that everyone should be able to attend school, work and live without fear of discrimination or harm. We know that every day, transgender people are at risk of violence and harassment, or of losing their jobs or housing, simply because of who they are. In our experience, people who are transgender face widespread prejudice and need explicit protections in Massachusetts law to protect them from discrimination and violence that manifests itself in one or more of the following ways:

- Transgender and non-transgender students are often bullied and lose educational opportunities because they do not conform to stereotypes of how girls and boys should look or act.
- Transgender people are frequently harassed in the workplace and are often subject to discrimination, hostility and misunderstanding, resulting in unwarranted termination and prolonged periods of unemployment or underemployment.
- Because of their gender identity, transgender people are often subjected to threats of violence and experience disproportionate rates of violence, assault and murder.

Passage of HB 1722 would add gender identity and expression to existing non-discrimination laws involving employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, public education and hate crimes. We believe that this legislation is important because it makes a strong and explicit statement of public policy that discrimination and violence against transgender people will not be tolerated. HB1722 strengthens the Commonwealth's commitment to all people, including those of diverse gender identity and expression, to provide equal protection under the law and fair treatment in our communities, our schools and

¹ **GREATER BOSTON PFLAG** is a group of parents, families, friends, and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, who are committed to changing attitudes about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression and to creating an environment of understanding so that our GLBT family members and friends can live with dignity and respect. Greater Boston PFLAG works to accomplish its mission through SUPPORT to cope with an adverse society, EDUCATION to enlighten the public through our Safe Schools & Communities Project, and ADVOCACY to secure equal civil rights. For further information about Greater Boston PFLAG and its activities and programs, call 781-891-5966 or consult our web site www.gbpfllag.org.