

Findings of the

NATIONAL TRANSGENDER DISCRIMINATION SURVEY

by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force



Massachusetts Results

There were 283 respondents from Massachusetts.

Workplace Discrimination

Rates of discrimination were alarming in Massachusetts, indicating widespread discrimination based on gender identity/expression:

- 76% reported experiencing harassment or mistreatment on the job
- 20% lost a job
- 17% were denied a promotion
- 39% were not hired

Harassment and Discrimination at School

- Those who expressed a transgender identity or gender non-conformity while in K-12 settings reported alarming rates of harassment (79%), physical assault (31%) and sexual assault (11%)
- Harassment was so severe that it led 11% to leave a school in K-12 settings or leave higher education

Economic Insecurity

Likely due to employment discrimination and discrimination in school, survey respondents experienced poverty at over three times the rate of the general population:

- 15% of respondents had a household income of \$10,000 or less, compared to 4% of the general population¹

Housing Discrimination and Instability

Survey respondents experienced blatant housing discrimination, as well as housing instability, much of which appears to stem from the challenges they face in employment.

- 6% were evicted
- 17% were denied a home/apartment
- 10% had become homeless because of their gender identity/expression
- 22% had to find temporary space to stay/sleep
- 18% had to move back in with family or friends
- 25% reported owning their home compared to 67% of the general population²

Harassment and Discrimination in Accommodations and Services

Survey respondents experienced discrimination in public accommodations and services, including from government agencies and police, because of their gender identity/expression.

- 58% were verbally harassed or disrespected in a place of public accommodation or service, including hotels, restaurants, buses, airports and government agencies
- 22% were denied equal treatment by a government agency or official
- 9% were denied equal treatment or harassed by judges or court officials
- 24% of those who have interacted with police reported harassment by officers
- 50% reported being uncomfortable seeking police assistance when needed



May 13, 2011

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem, Chair
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House Room 405
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty, Chair
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

RE: An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights (H502/S764)

Dear Senator Creem, Representative O'Flaherty and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am writing today to ask you to support the passage of H502/S764 "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights." Jane Doe Inc., the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, is a social change organization committed to addressing the root causes of sexual and domestic violence, and promoting justice, safety and healing for survivors. On behalf of our membership of 60 community-based sexual assault and domestic violence programs that provide direct services to victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence, we are proud to affirm our support for this legislation. This bill proposes to prohibit discrimination in employment, housing, education, credit lending, and public accommodations on the basis of a person's gender identity or expression. It also adds "gender identity or expression" to existing hate crimes statutes, which reflects the heightened level of violence experienced by transgender and gender non-confirming people.

Jane Doe Inc. supports this legislation because we believe that gender stereotypes and prejudices limit an individual's ability to live a full and productive life, free of violence and fear. The very foundation of the movement against violence against women is based on the understanding and experience of oppression as manifested in sexism, racism and homophobia and other forms of discrimination. Transgender people throughout the Commonwealth are often harmed by harassment, discrimination and violence. Widespread prejudices about how "real men" or "real women" should look or act often lead to harassment and unfair treatment in public accommodations, housing, credit transactions and can contribute to the commission of hate crimes.

This legislation is vital to our community and represents an important step toward equality for all citizens of the Commonwealth. I ask you to strongly oppose all forms of violence and to support civil rights for everyone by giving a favorable recommendation for passage of this legislation without delay.

Sincerely,

Mary R. Lauby, Executive Director



FELIX G. ARROYO
BOSTON CITY COUNCILOR
AT-LARGE

May 15, 2011

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House Room 405
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

Re: An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights

Dear Senator Creem, Representative O'Flaherty, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to ask you to support the passage of "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights" (H.502/S.764). This proposed law would prohibit discrimination in employment, housing, education, credit lending, and public accommodations on the basis of a person's gender identity or expression. It also adds "gender identity or expression" to existing hate crime statutes, reflecting the heightened level of violence experienced by transgender and gender non-conforming people.

This bill is important because transgender people throughout the Commonwealth are often harmed by harassment, discrimination, and violence. For example, Bay State employers routinely fire transgender people either before or after transitioning their gender, while many other transgender people in the state remain unemployed or underemployed as a result of discrimination, hostility, and misunderstanding about who they are. The difficulties that our transgender citizens face in the workplace also often lead to harassment and unfair treatment in public accommodations, housing, and credit transactions as well.

The City of Boston has been a leader in transgender equality for some time, passing similar legislation in 2002. I am proud to also have led the passage of a Boston City Council Resolution in support of "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights." Many businesses in the City of Boston and throughout the Commonwealth, including Bank of America, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, John Hancock Financial Services, and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, already provide equality for their transgender employees. Nationally, states and municipalities recognize the importance of ensuring full equality for their transgender citizens—thirteen states, Washington, D.C., and 133 cities already provide similar legal protections as those existing in "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights." It is time once again for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to take its rightful place as a beacon of liberty, justice and equality for all people.

I urge you to support this legislation which represents an important step towards equality for all citizens of the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Felix G. Arroyo
Boston City Council At-Large

BOSTON CITY HALL, ONE CITY HALL SQUARE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, 02201
617-635-4205 FAX: 617-635-4203 Felix.Arroyo@cityofboston.gov

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations



Multicultural Growth & Witness
1100 G Street NW, Suite 800 • Washington, DC 20005
ph (202) 393-2255 x10 • fax (202) 393-5494
uuawo@uaa.org • www.uua.org/mgw

Testimony on behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations in support of “An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights”

May 12, 2011

Senator Cynthia S. Creem
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
Room 405
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Eugene L. O’Flaherty
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
Room 136
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairwoman Creem, Chairman O’Flaherty, and members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary,

Many thanks for this opportunity to share testimony in support of an Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights. My name is Delfin Bautista, I write on behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) to ask for your favorable report of this important piece of legislation that seeks to protect the dignity and livelihood of all individuals, regardless of their gender identity and expression.

The UUA has a well established presence in Massachusetts with 140 congregations across the state. At the core of the UUA is the responsibility to lift up the worth and dignity of all people, especially those who are marginalized. As people of faith and people of good will, we have strived to fully embrace and celebrate trans-identified individuals in our congregations and communities.

Last November, as people across the world commemorated Transgender Day of Remembrance, to honor the countless individuals who have lost their lives to hate crimes, UUA President Rev. Peter Morales, our denominational head, issued a statement. He said, “I am reminded that in a society still clinging to rigid ideas about gender, our brothers and sisters who are gender non-conforming risk their very lives just to honor their authentic selves.”

As a religious tradition that strives to be in solidarity with the transgender community, we are mindful that our trans-congregants in Massachusetts have no recourse under state law if they are discriminated against due to their gender identity or expression. A recent study by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce highlights the disproportionate number of transgender individuals who experience discrimination and harassment; reporting that 63% of transgender individuals had experienced a serious act of discrimination that majorly impacted their life, and 23% had experienced a “catastrophic” level of discrimination. As just one example, 26% had lost a job and 50% were harassed on the job for being trans or gender non-conforming. The lack of recourse for undue discrimination and harassment in Massachusetts relegates transgender citizens to second-class citizenship, creating a life of struggle and hardship to prove one’s personhood, worth, and dignity.

However, like you, all who live beyond the binaries of gender are people, period. Transgender people are church-goers, employees, employers, tax-payers, students, voters, members of families, and heads of households. Many of our trans-congregants in Massachusetts are harassed, denied housing, unjustly fired, and victims of hate crimes—

why, simply because they are who they are and because they seek to live a life with authenticity and integrity. It is unjust that under current Massachusetts state law all does not truly mean all and that equality does not fully embrace all citizens.

On behalf of Unitarian Universalist congregations and fellowships in Massachusetts, I ask that you as lawmakers ensure that ALL people in Massachusetts are treated and protected as full persons. I ask that you follow the leads of 13 other states and the District of Columbia to expand Massachusetts' non-discrimination statute and hate-crimes law so that all residents may live their lives free of discrimination, harassment, and violence.

As senators and representatives you represent transgender children, adults, couples, and families in your districts. Do not relegate your own constituents to the silence of the margins. Instead, lift up their whole lives as sacred. Stand with them in love and justice to ensure that their inherent worth and dignity is embraced and celebrated with equity and compassion.

Please support the Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights.

Thank you for your time and for this opportunity to offer the UUA's support for this important and much needed piece of legislation.

In faith,



Delfin W. Bautista
LGBT Ministries Program Coordinator
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONS

May 16, 2011

Senator Cynthia S. Creem
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House, Room 405
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem,

I'm writing to you today to testify in support of An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights and urge you to help pass this important bill.

I am one of a very fortunate few. Until I was hired at the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston last October, I never thought I would be able to be my full, authentic self at my place of employment. It is deeply fulfilling to be working in the service of my faith in my new job, but it's even more fulfilling to have my identity as a transgender person not only tolerated but valued by my colleagues.

Unlike the large majority of my transgender siblings in Massachusetts, I live without fear of harassment and discrimination in my job. My daily gratitude for this is sharpened by the fact that trans people in Massachusetts have no recourse under state law if we are discriminated against due to our gender identity or expression.

And trans folks experience incredible discrimination—a recent report from the National Center for Transgender Equality and the Gay and Lesbian Task Force surveyed 6,450 trans people and found that 63% had experienced a serious act of discrimination that majorly impacted their life, and 23% had experienced a “catastrophic” level of discrimination. As just one example, 26% had lost a job and 50% were harassed on the job for being trans or gender non-conforming.*

There isn't a single trans friend of mine who isn't affected by the lack of tolerance and understanding of trans and gender variant individuals by the majority. For so many of us, the smallest things that most people take for granted are a struggle: getting competent health care, finding safe housing, even feeling comfortable and safe in public bathrooms.

As a trans person myself and as a person of faith, I'm asking you to do the right thing and help pass An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights. With the passing of this bill, Massachusetts can take a vital step forward in ensuring that trans people in this state can live healthy, productive lives, free of fear.

Sincerely,


Alex Kapitan

LGBT Ministries
Multicultural Growth & Witness

Unitarian Universalist Association
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

* Grant, Mottet, Tanis, Harrison, Herman, & Keisling. (2011). *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*. Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Testimony of Rabbi Elias Lieberman
Falmouth Jewish Congregation
7 Hatchville Road
East Falmouth, MA 02536
Submitted to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary in support of
“An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights”
May 18, 2011

TO: Sen. Creem, Rep. Flaherty, Chairs, & Honorable members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary

I write as both a clergy person and as a person of faith to express my strong support for “An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights”. I have served as a congregational rabbi for twenty-seven years and in the course of that time have had numerous occasions to come to know people whose gender identity does not fall into stereotypical definitions. I have come to know the very real pain and discrimination to which they are subjected because of their transgender identity.

I have also been privileged to come to know members of Cape Cod’s transgender community and to advocate on their behalf. I have learned much from them and have been tremendously moved by their stories of struggle, pain and courage as they face, on a daily basis, the kind of discrimination that no one deserves to experience.

I represent a faith tradition that is explicit in its insistence that every human being is made in God’s image. It follows that every person is entitled to be treated with dignity. Most especially, with respect to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, this means that every person is entitled to the protection of law against the kind of invidious discrimination routinely visited upon transgender people. These are not strangers to us...they are our neighbors, our children, our relatives, our employees...and your constituents.

It is my heartfelt belief, gained through personal interaction with transgender people, that the granting of the legal protections to them can only strengthen the social fabric of our state. I urge you to move forward this long-overdue piece of legislation for full consideration by the Legislature.

Sincerely,



Elias J. Lieberman
Rabbi

Carleton A. Williams

*9 Rio Grande Drive
Chelmsford, MA 01824-4443
Home: 978-256-1930, Cell: 603-566-5846*

Senator Cynthia S. Creem
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
Room 405
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem:

Please release "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights" from the Joint Committee on the Judiciary with a favorable recommendation.

As one who lives and works in Massachusetts, I am offended that our state has not yet ensured equal rights and protections for our transgendered neighbors.

As a seven year old child, I was puzzled, intrigued and disquieted by the sensation around Christine Jorgensen. I understand that gender is absolutely central to our personal identity, and that gender anomalies can be deeply disturbing. In the 60 years since, I have known several people for whom that discomfort has been constant and inescapable, as they realize that their identity is at odds with their physical characteristics and expected social roles.

Medical science is still far from a complete understanding of the complex genetic and hormonal interactions that guide fetal gender development and the subsequent effects on psychological development of imposed parental and societal norms. For most of us, this all works out fine. But for some of our fellow citizens, the result is a life of hidden torment, a debilitating conflict that interferes with their ability to be fully contributing members of our communities. When, through bravery or desperation, or the all-too-rare support of family and friends, a transgendered person is able to adopt a truer expression of their inner reality, they deserve the support and protection of an enlightened community, not the discrimination and rejection of the ignorant and fearful.

Among the 6 or 8 transgendered persons I have become acquainted with over the last 60 years, two instances are particularly instructive. One of my closest friends from college has found acceptance and appropriate medical care only by moving to Germany. She is finally comfortable in her own skin, after living almost 50 years as a restless and tortured man. The other example is of a young woman who has recently, and very successfully, completed college and is entering upon her career. As an adolescent boy, suicide seemed like the only option. With the support of family and

her church community, she got help, including reassignment surgery (in Thailand, because in the U.S. it was considered “elective cosmetic surgery” and not covered by insurance!).

The time is now to extend the protections theoretically guaranteed to us all to the transgendered people among us. The fact that they are few, or that some of us may be uncomfortable, is no excuse for failing to safeguard their rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carleton A. Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Carleton A. Williams

4/1/11

Senator Cynthia S. Creem
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
Room 405
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to testify in support to An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights. The first thing I want to say is that I am not transgendered. I am a woman. I am a woman who resides in Cambridge MA and is a registered voter. I am a woman has worked in the commercial construction industry in the Boston area for over 21 years. I wear jeans, flannel shirts and construction boots daily and often get confused as being transgendered or as being male. For the most part, the mistaken identity is usually handled well by the person who has misidentified me, when corrected. But there have been times when I have been greeted with aggressive responses to my atypical appearance. I was once assaulted by a male who, at first mistook me for another male, and then after being heckled by his friends who pointed out that I was a woman, became embarrassed by his mistake. He beat me and my sister in the parking lot of a supermarket, while a couple in the car next to ours watched. He called me a freak.

The statistics regarding violence and discrimination against people who identify as transgender are clear, and more than likely, under reported. I don't think anyone deserves to be beaten, be killed, lose their livelihood or have their basic human rights stripped simply because they are different from what others view as the norm.

This Act is not just about protecting people who identify as transgender, it will also protect voters like me who simply look differently, dress differently and carry themselves differently than what is expected. This is an important Act in that it makes it clear that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will no longer support the type of bigotry and intolerance that transgender people currently face every day in this state. Make no mistake about it: to not support this bill is to advocate that transgender people are second-class constituents of yours, undeserving of the protections of law granted other citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Thank you for your time,

Cheryl Lieteau
17 Kimball Street
Cambridge, MA

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
State House Room 416B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
State House Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem, Representative O'Flaherty, and Members of the Committee:

I live in Massachusetts, and I work with a transgender person. I am writing to ask you to support "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights." This proposed law would prohibit discrimination in employment, lending, housing, education, and public accommodations on the basis of a person's gender identity or expression. It also adds gender identity and expression to the hate crimes statute, which reflects the heightened level of violence experienced by transgender and gender non-conforming people. It is important to me that all of my co-workers have the same access to employment and opportunities that I do.

I believe this bill is important because transgender people and others whose gender does not conform to rigid stereotypes are often harmed by harassment, discrimination, and violence. For example, transgender people are routinely fired by their employers either before or after transitioning from one sex to another; many others remain unemployed or underemployed as a result of discrimination, hostility and misunderstanding about transgender people. Employment is one of the key areas in which transgender and gender non-conforming people are vulnerable to discrimination, making it hard for them to make a living. I do not want to see this happen to my co-worker.

This legislation is vital to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Transgender people face discrimination in many aspects of their lives. The Massachusetts legislature has a chance this year to send a very different message – passing this bill makes it clear that Massachusetts values all of its residents, and protects all of them equally against discrimination and violence.

I urge you to support this bill, which represents an important step towards equality for all citizens of the Commonwealth. It is time for Massachusetts to join the 13 other states and dozens of municipalities that already protect their citizens on this basis, and once again take its rightful place as a leader in the struggle for equality for all people.

Sincerely,

Lance Krajewski

Yohah Ralph
19 Walnut St.
Northampton, MA 01060

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House Room 405 Boston, MA 02133

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House Room 136 Boston, MA 02133
Re: An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights

Dear Senator Creem, Representative O'Flaherty, and Members of the Committee: I am writing to ask you to support the passage of "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights" (H.502/S.764). This proposed law would prohibit discrimination in employment, housing, education, credit lending, and public accommodations on the basis of a person's gender identity or expression. It adds 'gender identity or expression' to existing hate crimes statutes, which reflects the heightened level of violence experienced by transgender people.

This bill is important to me because as a transgender person, I have faced many forms of discrimination both socially and in the realm of employment. I believe that passing this bill will help to educate and socially advance the human rights and quality of life for transgender people in the state of Massachusetts, and that this significant step will radiate with hope for transgender people in other places in the United States and the world. For any individual to be denied basic opportunities such as employment because of discrimination is to foster dysfunctional ways of survival in the world, ultimately putting all people at risk, and stunts the wealth of human potential each person has to contribute to society.

Transgender people throughout the Commonwealth are often harmed by harassment, discrimination, and violence. Hate crimes occur because the perpetrator's perception is that someone is less than human. Please endorse the full humanity of transgender people. Our unique characteristics are little different than any other person who is born into a body with a particular skin color, gender, medical condition, or any other trait.

This legislation is vital to our community. This bill makes it clear that we value our transgender residents and will protect them against discrimination and violence. I urge you to support this legislation, which represents an important step towards equality for all citizens of the Commonwealth. It is time for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to join 13 other jurisdictions, including Washington D.C., and the hundreds of municipalities, including Boston, Cambridge, Northampton, and Amherst, that already protect their transgender residents in this country, and once again take its rightful place as a beacon of liberty, justice and equality for all people.

Sincerely,


Yohah Ralph

"All I'm saying is simply this, that all life is interrelated, that somehow we're caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason, I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. You can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be."

Martin Luther King

39 Priscilla Road
South Easton, MA 02375
May 14, 2011

Senator Cynthia S. Creem
State House
Room 405
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem,

Please accept this letter regarding "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights". I am requesting your active support for this essential bill.

I am a resident of Easton, MA, where I am a fourth grade special education teacher, and my family has lived for 26 years. I am the mother of four wonderful adult children. My second oldest is transgender.

As a young mother, I had hoped and dreamed for my children to be happy and healthy and fulfilled. Now, I pray for them to be safe, respected, and treated fairly. I am not asking for anything special or unusual. In fact, quite the contrary is true. I am only asking for my children and family to receive the same protection by law that all children and families deserve.

My husband and I have been members of a support group for parents of transgender and gender variant children for almost three years. We have grown from a small group of three families to our current group of over twenty families. Each family is as unique as each child, but we share some commonalities: we love all our children unconditionally, and we demand equality for all our children. As a parent, one of my greatest concerns is for my children's safety. In particular, my transgender child's safety is of grave concern. I know that thankfully our current societal environment is becoming more accepting. However, I also know that civil rights are not protected based on gender identity and expression. While we cannot legislate respect, we can legislate equality. The transgender community is at risk for harassment, bullying and violence. However, there is no explicit protection under the law based on gender identity and expression. The indignities, harassment, job discrimination and bullying my child has endured are intolerable.

Recently I chaperoned the BAGLY prom, and thought about the many kids there who need and deserve our protection. We have the opportunity to send the message that ALL citizens are protected under the law, regardless of their gender identity and expression. We have the opportunity to tell these kids that they are valuable, and we will protect them.

My goal is simple: to work to ensure the passage of "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights". Your support is of great importance. Please consider the value of each individual, including my transgender child, and support this bill.

Sincerely,

Dianne E. Monnin

Dianne E. Monnin
39 Priscilla Road
South Easton, MA 02375

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
State House Room 416B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
State House Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem, Representative O'Flaherty, and Members of the Committee:

I live in Massachusetts, and I work with a transgender person. I am writing to ask you to support "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights." This proposed law would prohibit discrimination in employment, lending, housing, education, and public accommodations on the basis of a person's gender identity or expression. It also adds gender identity and expression to the hate crimes statute, which reflects the heightened level of violence experienced by transgender and gender non-conforming people. It is important to me that all of my co-workers have the same access to employment and opportunities that I do.

I believe this bill is important because transgender people and others whose gender does not conform to rigid stereotypes are often harmed by harassment, discrimination, and violence. For example, transgender people are routinely fired by their employers either before or after transitioning from one sex to another; many others remain unemployed or underemployed as a result of discrimination, hostility and misunderstanding about transgender people. Employment is one of the key areas in which transgender and gender non-conforming people are vulnerable to discrimination, making it hard for them to make a living. I do not want to see this happen to my co-worker.

This legislation is vital to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Transgender people face discrimination in many aspects of their lives. The Massachusetts legislature has a chance this year to send a very different message – passing this bill makes it clear that Massachusetts values all of its residents, and protects all of them equally against discrimination and violence.

I urge you to support this bill, which represents an important step towards equality for all citizens of the Commonwealth. It is time for Massachusetts to join the 13 other states and dozens of municipalities that already protect their citizens on this basis, and once again take its rightful place as a leader in the struggle for equality for all people.

Sincerely,

Joan Anderson ^{MA}/_{LADCF}
AIDS Project Work.

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
State House Room 416B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
State House Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem, Representative O'Flaherty, and Members of the Committee:

I live in Massachusetts, and I work with a transgender person. I am writing to ask you to support "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights." This proposed law would prohibit discrimination in employment, lending, housing, education, and public accommodations on the basis of a person's gender identity or expression. It also adds gender identity and expression to the hate crimes statute, which reflects the heightened level of violence experienced by transgender and gender non-conforming people. It is important to me that all of my co-workers have the same access to employment and opportunities that I do.

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I urge you to support this bill, which represents an important step towards equality for all citizens of the Commonwealth. It is time for Massachusetts to join the 13 other states and dozens of municipalities that already protect their citizens on this basis, and once again take its rightful place as a leader in the struggle for equality for all people.

Sincerely,

*Linford Cunningham (Linford Cunningham)
Worcester MA 01605
May 13th, 2011*

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
State House Room 416B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
State House Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem, Representative O'Flaherty, and Members of the Committee:

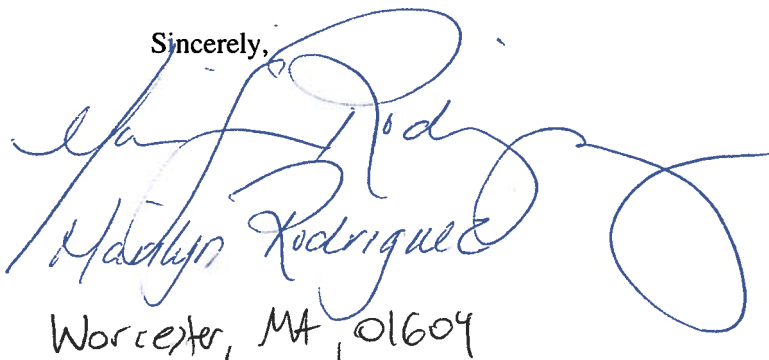
I live in Massachusetts, and I work with a transgender person. I am writing to ask you to support "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights." This proposed law would prohibit discrimination in employment, lending, housing, education, and public accommodations on the basis of a person's gender identity or expression. It also adds gender identity and expression to the hate crimes statute, which reflects the heightened level of violence experienced by transgender and gender non-conforming people. It is important to me that all of my co-workers have the same access to employment and opportunities that I do.

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Sincerely,



Madlyn Rodriguez
Worcester, MA, 01609

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
State House Room 416B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
State House Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem, Representative O'Flaherty, and Members of the Committee:

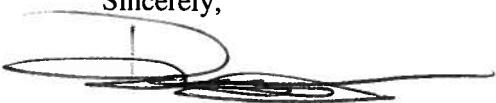
I live in Massachusetts, and I work with a transgender person. I am writing to ask you to support "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights." This proposed law would prohibit discrimination in employment, lending, housing, education, and public accommodations on the basis of a person's gender identity or expression. It also adds gender identity and expression to the hate crimes statute, which reflects the heightened level of violence experienced by transgender and gender non-conforming people. It is important to me that all of my co-workers have the same access to employment and opportunities that I do.

I believe this bill is important because transgender people and others whose gender does not conform to rigid stereotypes are often harmed by harassment, discrimination, and violence. For example, transgender people are routinely fired by their employers either before or after transitioning from one sex to another; many others remain unemployed or underemployed as a result of discrimination, hostility and misunderstanding about transgender people. Employment is one of the key areas in which transgender and gender non-conforming people are vulnerable to discrimination, making it hard for them to make a living. I do not want to see this happen to my co-worker.

This legislation is vital to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Transgender people face discrimination in many aspects of their lives. The Massachusetts legislature has a chance this year to send a very different message – passing this bill makes it clear that Massachusetts values all of its residents, and protects all of them equally against discrimination and violence.

I urge you to support this bill, which represents an important step towards equality for all citizens of the Commonwealth. It is time for Massachusetts to join the 13 other states and dozens of municipalities that already protect their citizens on this basis, and once again take its rightful place as a leader in the struggle for equality for all people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Priscila Rodriguez", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Priscila Rodriguez

Worcester, MA 01604

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
State House Room 416B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
State House Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem, Representative O'Flaherty, and Members of the Committee:

I live in Massachusetts, and I work with a transgender person. I am writing to ask you to support "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights." This proposed law would prohibit discrimination in employment, lending, housing, education, and public accommodations on the basis of a person's gender identity or expression. It also adds gender identity and expression to the hate crimes statute, which reflects the heightened level of violence experienced by transgender and gender non-conforming people. It is important to me that all of my co-workers have the same access to employment and opportunities that I do.

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I urge you to support this bill, which represents an important step towards equality for all citizens of the Commonwealth. It is time for Massachusetts to join the 13 other states and dozens of municipalities that already protect their citizens on this basis, and once again take its rightful place as a leader in the struggle for equality for all people.

Sincerely,



Patricia Price

May 18, 2011

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House Room 405
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem,

I am writing to ask you to support the passage of "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights" (H.502/S.764).

My name is Laurie Wolfe. I went to university and professional school, graduated with honors. I should be on easy street, but I'm not, because most of my life I had to hide who I was.

I worked at Share as a fundraiser for non-profit organizations, and I coached new fundraisers when we were hiring. I'm a proud member and steward with United Auto Workers local 1596. I'm an activist in the lgbt community. I'm a speaker and trainer with MTPC, the Massachusetts Transgender Working Group, and co-chair of two committees with Keshet, the Jewish LGBT Organization. Things have to be better for those who follow.

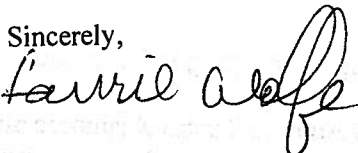
I grew up in NYC in the 50's and 60's. In those days when I told people what I liked, they abandoned me. I had to hide, or I would be living without a friend. The front page of the newspapers showed pictures of police loading paddy wagons with 'men dressed as women' and taking them away to jail. In 1970 I arrived at Tufts, and tried to find support by seeing the school counselor. She listened for 40 minutes, and never said a word. I left knowing there was no place for me in the world. I went into deeper hiding, and dreaded graduating. Questions of survival are secondary when you know you can't exist.

Things changed thanks to the internet and Gay Rights movement. I found others like me. In my fifties, I got support from a therapist at Fenway Community Health Center to help overcome years of oppression and fear. I came out of hiding, and like others, was subjected to harassment and derision. But you keep your focus on making things better; since coming out I work with others to help change things. But the impact is there nonetheless. Last year I earned less than 20K. And this year began with Share closing it's doors. Being unemployed is tough for anyone, but when you're transgender, the cards are stacked even higher against you.

As a Commonwealth we stand for certain things. Until we all have the same legal rights and protections as everyone else, we are failing in one of our most important precepts: equality under the law.

Please support the passage of "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights" (H.502/S.764) and help set things on the right path. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Laurie Wolfe
18 Royal St.
Watertown, MA 02472

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
State House Room 416B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
State House Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem, Representative O'Flaherty, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to ask you to support "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights." This proposed law would prohibit discrimination in employment, lending, housing, education, and public accommodations on the basis of a person's gender identity or expression. It also adds gender identity and expression to the hate crimes statute, which reflects the heightened level of violence experienced by transgender and gender non-conforming people. I live in Massachusetts, and I support this bill because I have a friend who is transgender. It is important to me to know that all of my friends are protected equally under the law, no matter who they are.

I believe this bill is important because transgender people and others whose gender does not conform to rigid stereotypes are often harmed by harassment, discrimination, and violence. For example, transgender people are routinely fired by their employers either before or after transitioning from one sex to another; many others remain unemployed or underemployed as a result of discrimination, hostility and misunderstanding about transgender people. Widespread prejudices about how "real men" or "real women" should look or act often lead to harassment and unfair treatment in public accommodations, housing, and credit transactions.

This legislation is vital to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Transgender people face discrimination in many aspects of their lives. The Massachusetts legislature has a chance this year to send a very different message – passing this bill makes it clear that Massachusetts values all of its residents, and protects all of them equally against discrimination and violence. I don't want to see my friend marginalized and excluded any more.

I urge you to support this bill, which represents an important step towards equality for all citizens of the Commonwealth. It is time for Massachusetts to join the 13 other states and dozens of municipalities that already protect their citizens on this basis, and once again take its rightful place as a leader in the struggle for equality for all people.

Sincerely,

Annie Paquette


May 13, 2011

Dear Chairs of the Judiciary Committee,

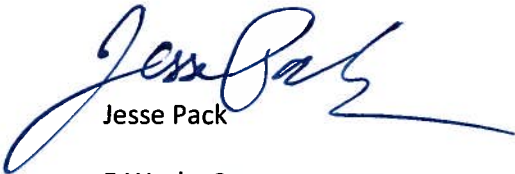
My name is Jesse Pack, I am a resident of Worcester, I am a registered voter, and I am also a member of the transgender community. I am writing to urge you to support the legislation entitled "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights". This legislation is crucial to protect the rights of transgender residents of Massachusetts, particularly in areas like Worcester where there are no local ordinances to protect transgender people.

In addition to being a transgender person, I am also a social service provider. I am currently the Director of Prevention and Education at AIDS Project Worcester, where I have been steadily employed since 2004. However, many members of my community are not as fortunate as me in that they cannot live and work openly as transgender without fear of stigma, discrimination, or mistreatment. As a social servant, I receive calls for help from fellow transgender people on a regular basis. The majority of these complaints are related to anti-transgender discrimination in employment and housing. A recent national survey of transgender people found that of respondents living in Massachusetts, 76% experienced harassment or mistreatment at their job, 20% were fired from their jobs, and 39% were not hired because of their transgender status. I have attached a copy of this study's findings for you to review. As a service provider, I can tell you that these findings reflect my community's day-to-day reality, because I field their distressed calls and emails on a daily basis. Each number on the attached piece of paper represents a real human being whose life has been ruined or made unnecessarily painful or difficult due to anti-transgender bias and discrimination.

The current situation of rampant discrimination against people like me is unacceptable and is, frankly, an embarrassment to our otherwise great state. I therefore strongly urge you to treat this piece of legislation favorably, as its passage will save lives.

If you have any questions regarding what I have written to you, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jesse Pack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jesse Pack

5 Wesby Street

Worcester MA 01609

(508) 755-3773 (office)

(774) 641-3337 (cell)

Senator Cynthia S. Creem
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
Room 405
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem:

My name is Dee Halzack and I am writing, as a long-time registered Massachusetts voter (living in the state since 1972), in support of "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights". I urge you to release the bill from committee. It is long past time that the transgender community is afforded the same equal protections from discrimination as the rest of our residents. I support the bill on religious, humanitarian, and civic grounds.

As a Unitarian Universalist, my faith calls me to oppose all forms of discrimination. Discrimination is actually a violation of our religious principles, which affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

As one who was picked on in school for simply having a "funny" last name and no money, I am only too aware of how much a part of human nature it is to exclude those who are somehow different, and how cruel people can be, on the slightest pretext. Which makes it that much more important to put legislation in place to protect those who stand out as different. People who are very different are feared by some, which is the basis of some of the cruelest forms of bias-based behavior. No one should be subjected to cruelty simply because someone else doesn't accept who they are.

While you can't change human nature, you CAN protect transgender people from discrimination that prevents them from finding a good job and a decent place to live. And by doing so, you will also send a message of acceptance that needs to be heard so that they can more fully participate in our society.

Finally, as a tax payer, I am angry that discrimination is allowed to keep people in poor circumstances and force them to depend on public assistance. According to studies I have seen, transgender people are more likely to be in low-paying jobs that put them in that category. According to a just-released study by the Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Law and Public Policy, employment discrimination against transgender residents of Massachusetts may be costing us millions of dollars every year. They estimate that public health care insurance ALONE is costing \$3 million dollars.

For all these reasons I urge you to release the bill from committee and allow it to move forward. We would not be the first State to have such a law on the books. Hopefully we won't be the last. With the current makeup of the US Congress, it is unlikely that the necessary Federal bill will advance. At least we can protect the citizens of this state.

Thank you for your time.



Dee Halzack
(Registered voter name: Dorothy E. Halzack)
318 Pawtucket St
Lowell MA 01854

May 15, 2011

Senator Cynthia S. Creem
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
Room 405
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem,

My name is Jeanne Hardy and I live in Hingham. I am a para-professional at Hingham High School. I am a member of PFLAG and attend monthly support group meetings. I am the parent of a young adult who is transgender.

I am writing to you in support of "**An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights**", Senate Bill 764.

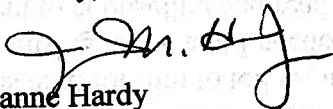
My husband, David Hardy, has testified in support of this bill in the past and will testify again at the hearing in June.

We are the parents of three sons ages 29, 28 and 26. Our youngest attended college in Boston and graduated with a degree in Music Therapy. He came out to us when he was 20 years old. It was hard for him to tell us, as he didn't want to disappoint us or cause us pain. It was all very confusing to me and I needed to try to understand what this meant and why this was occurring. I went to counseling and read a lot, both of which provided me with valuable information.

Each of my sons presents worries in different ways. The oldest joined the Army Reserve and his unit was activated. He is now an Iraq War Veteran. He then joined the Massachusetts National Guard, was activated to Afghanistan and just returned in December. My next son is a college graduate, a carpenter, a mountain biker and an avid rock climber. My third son has transitioned from female to male. As a parent, the worries are life-long. However, worrying about discrimination for one of these three shouldn't be added to that list. This is not a worry brought on by something voluntary like volunteering for Army Reserve or rock climbing. This is something intrinsic. It is handled differently by each individual. Our son takes hormones, had a mastectomy and presents as male. He is very open about his personal situation. But what happens if he is "found out" by someone who reacts negatively?

Please help ease all parents' worries by reporting favorably on "**An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights**", Senate Bill 764. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Hardy

1 Holly St. Hingham, MA 02043

(781) 740-2259

dlhardy@verizon.net

May 15, 2011

Senator Cynthia S. Creem
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
Room 405
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem,

I am writing to ask for your support in passing the legislation entitled "**An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights**", **Senate Bill 764**

My name is David Hardy. I am a resident of Hingham, a retired Boston Public Schools teacher, a GED instructor in the GLBTQ community and the proud father of three sons. Like all parents, my wife and I are proud of our sons.

Our oldest son is an EMT and a Combat Medic in the Mass. National Guard. He recently returned from active duty in Kabul, Afghanistan. We worry about him.

Our second oldest son is a college graduate. He is currently working as a carpenter and hopes to one day have his own business. He is also an avid, highly skilled rock-climber with experience all across the country. We worry about him.

Our youngest son is a college graduate, magna cum laude. He is working to build a private practice in Music Therapy. He is transgender. We really worry about him.

All three of our sons are solid, contributing citizens deserving of all the privileges and protections of our laws. Yet, only two of our sons fully receive these protections. Because of his gender identity, our transgender son could easily be the target of harassment or violence. He could be the victim of discrimination in housing or in the workplace. These grievances could not be adequately addressed under current state law. It is manifestly unfair and very frustrating to us that Massachusetts State Law does not afford him and, so many other people, the equal protections that are afforded to his brothers.

As a teacher in Boston, the safety of children was always a major concern and often a source of frustration. As a GED instructor in the GLBTQ community, I met students who, because of their gender identity, had to face the threat of harassment, bullying, violence and discrimination regularly in their daily lives. These problems were some of the reasons why they were in a GED program rather than their regular high school.

It is dismaying to have to come back year after year to ask for the passage of legislation so badly needed.

In the past our Commonwealth of Massachusetts has set a high standard of forward thinking and courageous action in so many areas of human rights. It is a great source of frustration to my wife and I that the Legislature has moved so slowly in providing protections in the realm of gender identity.

It is time for Massachusetts to take a strong and positive step forward. We urge a favorable vote on **An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights”, Senate Bill 764.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Hardy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David L. Hardy

1 Holly St.

Hingham, MA 02043

(781) 740-2259

dlhardy@verizon.net

May 14, 2011

Senator Cynthia Creem
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
Room 405
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
Room 136
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Creem and Representative O'Flaherty:

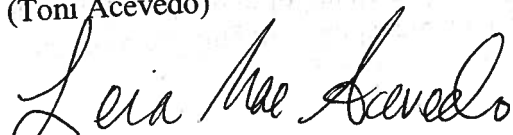
My name is Angelica Acevedo, MSW, LICSW, married to my wife, Leia M. Acevedo, residing in 3105 Harvest Drive, North Andover, MA 01845 with two dogs. We are hard working individuals and couple who care about human rights for all people including our current situation. I, Angelica, prefer my name as Toni Acevedo, came out to my Dominican and Puerto Rican family 9 years ago, and now will be coming out again as Transgendered Female to Male. I am proud to say through the work with clients as their individual mental health therapist using clinical social work skills, I have admitted to myself my identity as transgendered something I have known all of my life but didn't have the words or the term.

There is still more work needed to have this world equal for all, for now I would like you to strongly consider to PASS the "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights" to assist people like me who are transgendered and so that we won't lose housing, jobs or become physically harmed in any work environment. This bill will help me and other people like myself feel more comfortable in all settings (at least) for one moment in time, to obtain the equal rights we all take for granted. PLEASE PASS THIS BILL. I will also be involved through NASW as Leadership Committee member for the North Shore area. You will be hearing from myself and my wife in the near future.

Sincerely,



Angelica Acevedo, MSW, LICSW
(Toni Acevedo)



Leia Mae Acevedo, Wife

DONNA M. CRUZ
56 Hayward Street
Hopkinton, MA 01748
(508) 904-1821
Saljoy11@juno.com

May 16, 2011

Senate Chair Cynthia S. Creem
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
Room 405
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Sen. Creem:

I am writing to urge you to support "An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes", introduced by Representatives Carl Sciortino and Byron Rushing, and Senator Downing. This proposed law would prohibit discrimination in employment, lending, housing, education, and public accommodations on the basis of a person's gender identity or expression.

I believe this bill is important because transgender people and others whose gender does not conform to rigid stereotypes are often harmed by harassment, discrimination, and violence. For example, transgender people are routinely fired by their employers either before or after transitioning from one sex to another; many others remain unemployed or underemployed as a result of discrimination, hostility and misunderstanding about transgender people. Widespread prejudices about how "real men" or "real women" should look or act often lead to harassment and unfair treatment in public accommodations, housing, and credit transactions. Transgender and non-transgender students are often bullied and even assaulted and lose educational opportunities when they don't conform to stereotypes of how boys and girls should look or act. This law would strengthen the ability of schools in our state to protect all students.

With the passage of this law, Massachusetts would send a clear message to all citizens of Massachusetts, especially employers, landlords, and providers of public accommodations, that all people are entitled to the full protection of the law, regardless of their gender identity or expression. By addressing critical areas where people experience harassment, discrimination, and violence, this law would increase the productivity and safety of employees, consumers, residents, and students.

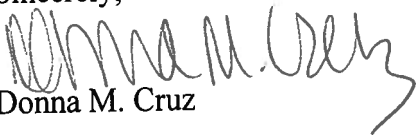
Senator Chair Cynthia S. Creem

May 16, 2011

Page 2

Please help Massachusetts join the many communities, including the states of Rhode Island and Maine, which have already provided protection to their citizens' right to safely define and express their gender as they choose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna M. Cruz", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Donna M. Cruz



**HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN®**

Written Testimony of Joe Solmonese, President of the Human Rights Campaign, in Support of
House Bill 502: An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights

to

The Massachusetts Joint Committee on the Judiciary

May 4, 2011

Dear Members of the Committee:

My name is Joe Solmonese, and I am the President of the Human Rights Campaign, America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality. By inspiring and engaging all Americans, HRC strives to end discrimination against LGBT citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all. On behalf of our over 750,000 members and supporters nationwide, including more than 40,000 in Massachusetts, I am honored to submit this statement in support of HB 502, An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression.

Massachusetts has a proud history of extending protections for minorities and being a leader on civil rights. The people of the Bay State are known for valuing liberty and a respect for privacy. Anti-discrimination laws put those values into practice. They send a strong message that all of Massachusetts's residents matter. Today it is time to protect the most vulnerable among us by extending civil rights protections to cover gender identity and expression.

Discrimination against transgender and gender non-conforming individuals continues to be a very real problem. As part of my role at HRC, I travel the country speaking to members of the LGBT community. I have heard far too many stories of transgender people who have lost their livelihoods simply because of some combination of an employer's fear, ignorance and bigotry. Some are of highly skilled professionals who, though seemingly irreplaceable in their positions, suddenly become expendable when they announce the intent to live as the people they truly are. Others are accounts of people forced into whatever jobs they can find, scraping together money for the tremendous medical costs of gender transition, which are rarely, if ever, covered by health insurance. They are stories of people in every walk of life – doctors and lawyers, plumbers and bus drivers. Many are also stories of parents and spouses, whose efforts to find secure, fulfilling employment are also a struggle to provide for their families. The time has long since passed when we as a nation ought to tolerate arbitrary discrimination against any group of people. I cannot understate the real-life implications for Massachusetts's residents. That any hardworking transgender Massachusetts's resident should be denied the ability to contribute to the economy and support his or her family is simply unacceptable.

WORKING FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER EQUAL RIGHTS

1640 Rhode Island Avenue Washington, D.C. 20036

phone (202) 628 4160 fax (202) 216 1505 e-mail events@hrc.org

In addition to guaranteeing a level playing field in employment, House Bill 502 would ensure that housing opportunities are made available to all, students are free from discrimination in schools, and no one has to forego entering a public establishment based solely on who they are. It is well-documented that transgender and gender non-conforming individuals are shown less desirable properties for purchase or rent, are excluded from schools activities, receive less favorable customer service, or encounter outright refusal of service. This bill does not prevent employers from firing incompetent employees and does not prevent landlords from turning down unqualified renters. Instead, this bill simply makes sure that all employees get a fair chance at working hard to get ahead without discrimination or bias and that no one is singled out for arbitrary discrimination when it comes to areas like housing, education, public accommodations, and access to credit.

HB 502 will bring Massachusetts law further in line with the federal *Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2010*. The need for inclusion of gender identity in state hate crimes laws remains strong. Transgender individuals are disproportionately affected by violent, bias-motivated crime. These crimes are among the most violent and brutal, often resulting in the death of the victim. Adding gender identity to the Massachusetts law will close the gap on crimes lacking a federal nexus, as well as property crimes.

Passing HB 502 will once again make Massachusetts a leader in civil rights, but Massachusetts would not be alone. Beginning with an ordinance passed in Minneapolis in 1975, 12 states, the District of Columbia, and more than 135 cities and counties have enacted laws prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity. More than 500 private businesses across the United States, including 42% of Fortune 500 companies and 69% of Fortune 100 companies, have voluntarily adopted policies that prohibit employment discrimination based on gender identity. Addressing discrimination on the basis of gender identity is not new for Massachusetts. In 1997, the City of Cambridge added gender identity to its local non-discrimination ordinance, followed in subsequent years by Boston and North Hampton.

The time has come for Massachusetts to finally act and ensure that discrimination has no place in this great commonwealth. Please vote in favor of House Bill 502.

Joe Solmonese
President, Human Rights Campaign
1640 Rhode Island Ave N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202- 628-4160