

Transgender Experiences in the Commonwealth



**Massachusetts
Transgender
Political
Coalition**

People with diverse gender identities and expressions suffer discrimination and harassment throughout Massachusetts. As we wait to hear whether “*An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes*” will pass, organizations throughout Massachusetts continue to hear about transgender-related discrimination, harassment and violence.

March and April Intakes

Organizations received 54 calls in March and April on transgender-related discrimination, harassment and violence. A short sampling follows:

- A transgender woman was beat up on the street by a group of kids. (3/18/10)
- A transgender woman was barred from a local pub she had been visiting for over a year. The owner said she was no longer welcome due to her transgender identity. (3/1/10)
- A transgender woman was harassed at work by her co-workers. She disclosed she is transgender to her supervisor and HR and now all her co-workers know. Some of her co-workers are making false accusations to get her written up so she will get fired. (3/11/10)
- A transgender man called because his boss disclosed his transgender identity to his family. The transgender man was later fired. (4/22/10)
- A police department contacted a transgender organization in regards to a missing transgender girl. (4/20/09)

Fighting to Feel Safe at Home

In March and April organizations heard from two individuals suffering from unsafe home situations. *Names have been changed for confidentiality

Jessica, a transgender woman from Central Massachusetts, faced verbal harassment by her neighbors who live in the same apartment complex. Jessica then contacted the local police to report the harassment. But after the harassment was reported to the police, Jessica’s neighbors (the same individuals who verbally harassed her) kicked down her apartment door and physically attacked her. The police were contacted but left the scene without making a report. Jessica contacted a transgender-friendly agency and is now receiving counseling and support services.

Lou, a transgender man from Boston, recently started his transition from female to male. He lives with his partner in an apartment building. The landlord does not know of Lou’s transgender status, but he worries that once the landlord discovers his transgender status he and his partner will be evicted with nowhere to go. Lou wants to be able to plan for the future and know his rights in case this situation should arise.

Many of us take housing for granted. We do not have to think about our safety when we return to our homes, apartments or condos after a long day. And if our safety is in jeopardy in the face of physical attacks and verbal harassment we are comforted by the fact that the police and the law are available to protect us.

But Jessica and Lou do not have that luxury. Jessica fears for her safety and who she can contact to protect her from physical and verbal harassment. Lou lives day to day not knowing when the housing for him and his partner will be in jeopardy. Jessica and Lou live in fear because they have no legal protections to ensure their safety when they need it the most.