

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.

February Intakes

Organizations received 38 calls in February on transgender-related discrimination, harassment and violence. A short sampling follows:

- A transgender woman had a beer bottle thrown at her from a moving vehicle while walking down the street. She heard a person in the car scream, “you fucking freak” at her before she was hit. (2/18/10)
- A transgender student experienced teasing and discrimination by a school teacher. (2/28/10)
- A group of 8 transgender women were denied entry to a restaurant due to their gender identity and expression. (2/8/10)
- A transgender man was harassed by his coworker. He reported the harassment but is not receiving support. (2/10/09)
- A transgender woman was kicked out of a training program after experiencing transphobic comments from faculty members. (2/7/10)

Transgender Youth Silenced and Disenfranchised at School - A Provider's Story

Boston Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Social Services (GLASS) serves disenfranchised youth and each month transgender youth contact them with reports of discrimination and harassment. However, some transgender students are reluctant to reach out given the limited protections and resources available to them.

**This story was submitted by Manou Joassaint, Health Coordinator for Boston Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Social Services (GLASS). Names have been changed to maintain the confidentiality of the client.*

In February Sandra, a 17-year-old transgender woman, contacted GLASS after months of verbal harassment from teachers and both verbal and physical harassment from students. Sandra's teachers refused to use female pronouns for her, and aggressively questioned her gender identity and expression in front of her classmates. She stated that a school administrator required her to use the boy's bathroom where she was verbally harassed and physically assaulted by male students. When Sandra finally contacted GLASS she admitted that she felt unsure if she had any rights.

Eventually disciplinary action against the students and faculty members was taken and with the support of the principal, Sandra was allowed access to the girl's bathroom. Unfortunately very few students we see have the same success.

As a social services provider I am committed to advocating for my clients to the best of my ability and knowledge. However, without fully inclusive non discrimination laws and hate crimes legislation that protects the most marginalized populations among us, transgender youth, I fear these horrifying stories will not only continue, but that they will escalate, and transgender youth concerns will continue to be violently silenced.