



Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition

PO Box 301897, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

www.masstpc.org info@masstpc.org

617-778-0519

Legislator Letter Writing 101

1. Find out who your State Representative and State Senator are by checking the Legislator Guide provided in the kit or by visiting <http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php>
2. You should write two letters – one to your Representative and one to your Senator!
(unless co-sponsors – see below)
3. Check the list below to make sure your legislators are not already co-sponsoring “An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights.”
If your legislator is a co-sponsor you will be writing a letter to the **Senate President Therese Murray** (State House Room 330, Boston, MA 02133), **Speaker of House Robert A. DeLeo** (State House Room 243, Boston, MA 02133), **AND** sending a “Thank You” letter to your Rep and/or Senator.
(see example below)

Lead House Sponsors		
Carl Sciortino, Jr.	34th Middlesex	Somerville, Medford
Byron Rushing	9th Suffolk	Boston

House Co-Sponsors - see www.masstpc.org for most up to date list

Lead Senate Sponsor		
Benjamin B. Downing	Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin	Adams, Alford, Ashfield, Becket, Charlemont, Cheshire, Chesterfield, Clarksburg, Conway, Cummington, Dalton, Egremont, Florida, Goshen, Great Barrington, Hancock, Hawley, Heath, Hinsdale, Huntington, Lanesborough, Lee, Lenox, Middlefield, Monroe, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Ashford, New Marlborough, North Addams, Otis, Peru, Pittsfield, Plainfield, Richmond, Rowe, Sandisfield, Savoy, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham, Washington, West Stockbridge, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Williamstown, Windsor, Worthington

Senate Co-Sponsors – see www.masstpc.org for most up to date list



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Writing a Letter to your Legislator Asking them to support “An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights”

An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights was introduced in the House by Representatives Carl Sciortino and Byron Rushing and in the Senate by Senator Benjamin 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, as well as amending the existing hate crimes statute to include gender identity and expression.

Your letter should be no more than up to two handwritten pages or one typed page.

Start with an introduction:

The "Art of Introduction" is choosing which facts about yourself you choose to share to an elected official, either in person or on paper. Making a personal connection to a legislator increases the legitimacy of an issue for the elected official. Your introduction should include:

- Your name and some identifying characteristic, such as the type of work you do
- The name of the bill you are testifying in support of: “An Act Relative To Transgender Equal Rights”
- Your connection to Massachusetts (where you live/work/vote/go to school)
- Your relationship to the transgender community, or why civil rights laws like this bill matter to you
- Why this issue is important to you and why the legislators should support it.

Here are some other facts about yourself you may want to include in your introduction. Don't try to use your answers to all of the suggested questions, but use the questions as a guide to think about what facts you could use to strengthen your introduction.

- How many years have you lived your legislator's district? Did you grow up there?
- Did you attend the public school system there?
- Did you originally move there to attend college and now plan to stay?
- What do you love about the district?
- What is your current or past occupation(s)?
- Do you belong to a union or a professional association?
- What are your community connections?
- What organizations do you belong to or lead? (Neighborhood Associations, Parent-Teacher Associations, Steering committees, Boards, Churches/Synagogues, GLBT, etc...)
- Do you have children?
- What school do they attend?



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The body of the letter:

Explain why you support this legislation, and why your legislator should. A few things to keep in mind:

- Why does this issue matter to you? (Do you care about civil rights, do you know transgender people who have been discriminated against or harassed, etc.)
- Have you experienced discrimination or violence because of your gender identity or gender expression? If so, use your one strongest example story in your letter.
- Who do you know that is has affected? (family member, partner, friend, co-worker, teacher, etc)
- Why should YOUR legislators care?
(You work/live/vote in MA, you are writing about something personal or emotional that might affect their constituency, etc.)
- What are the most important things you need to get across?

The big finish:

Thank the legislator for their attention to this matter and request a response about where they stand on the bill. For instance: ***I would like to know if you will support “An Act Relative To Transgender Equal Rights”. Please contact me at*** (give your phone #, email address, or mailing address). ***I look forward to hearing from you!***



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Some Sample Letters

From a transgender person:

I am writing this letter in support of "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights", sponsored by Representatives Sciortino and Rushing in the House and Senator Downing in the Senate.

I have navigated my way thorough life being the person who I know myself to be: a hard-working, dedicated, kind, generous productive human being, who, as a citizen in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, contributes to the betterment of our society through the work I do, both professionally and personally.

Regardless of how I value and see myself, there have been countless times where I have experienced harassment and discrimination by others for merely attempting to perform the daily functions of life that so many people take for granted. I have been turned away from housing and job opportunities based on how I look. I would like to know if you are going to support "An Act Relative To Transgender Equal Rights". Please contact me at...

Thank you,

From a family member:

I am writing this letter in support of "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights", sponsored by Representatives Sciortino and Rushing in the House and Senator Downing in the Senate.

"An Act Relative To Transgender Equal Rights" would provide much needed protections for families like mine, families with one or more transgender parent(s). As the daughter of a transgender person, I have witnessed the impact of transgender discrimination on my family. My parent has struggled to support our family and found that her best option was to leave the state. Passage of this legislation would provide transgender parents like mine with the opportunity to work and live in Massachusetts without fear of discrimination. I would like to know if you are going to support "An Act Relative To Transgender Equal Rights". Please contact me at...

Thank you,



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From an ally:

I am writing this letter in support of "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights", sponsored by Representatives Sciortino and Rushing in the House and Senator Downing in the Senate. This bill provides much needed protection from the kinds of violent crimes and prejudiced actions that unfortunately happen periodically in our Commonwealth.

I am just an average person and have no strong connections to any transgender group outside of a few friends I have met. I do not consider myself to be someone who will personally benefit from this Bill, as I do not have a transgender identity.

We have a need to extend full civil rights to all of the state's citizens and "An Act Relative to Transgender Equal Rights" will accomplish that by guaranteeing the rights which are inherent in the Commonwealth's constitution. I would like to know if you are going to support "An Act Relative To Transgender Equal Rights". Please contact me at...

Thank you,

“Thank You” letter for a current sponsor:

I want to personally thank you for supporting “An Act Relative To Transgender Equal Rights”. Inclusion of gender identity and gender expression in Massachusetts non-discrimination laws and hate crimes statues will provide much needed protections for transgender and gender non-conforming people in our community.

Sincerely,