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# Hundreds Lobby For Transgender Protec

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## An estimated 250 people lobbied lawmakers last week for transgender protections at the Massachusetts Statehouse

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An estimated 250 people lobbied lawmakers last week for transgender protections at the Massachusetts Statehouse, gay weekly 'Bay Windows' reported.

Thursday's third annual Transgender Equality Lobby Day served as a reminder that Massachusetts – arguably the nation's most liberal state – has yet to join 13 other states in approving laws that protect transgender people. The event was sponsored by the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC) and the Massachusetts chapter of National Organization for Women.

“All people are children of God and God loves his children regardless,” Rev. E. Carrington Heath, a pastor with the United Church of Christ in Provincetown, said.

Lawmakers are considering a bill that would add gender identity and gender expression to the list of protected categories in the state's civil rights and hate crime laws, protecting transgender people in the areas of housing, employment and public accommodations.

“We are all equal and this bill just verifies that,” Heath added.

Passage, however, has been elusive for supporters, who have floated similar bills since 2007.

This year's bill was debated in the state's Judiciary Committee in July. At the hearing, opponents dragged out the same old arguments used earlier in the year in North Dakota, Florida and even neighboring New Hampshire.

The Massachusetts Family Institute, a group that opposes the bill, warned in a radio spot that the bill would invite sex offenders to lurk in public restrooms, endangering public safety.

“This is a bill that begins to confuse the gender differences between men and women to the point of trying to allow men to use women's restrooms, and, of course, that means sexual predators going after young children,” Tom Minnerly, senior vice president of public policy at Focus on the Family Action, said in a radio message urging North Dakota voters to oppose a transgender protections bill.

“This is an invitation, it seems to me, for people with predatory tendencies to come out and hide behind the fact that they are having a transgender experience,” state Rep. Peyton Hinkle, a Republican, said on the New Hampshire House floor during debate on a similar bill that was ultimately approved by the Legislature.

One of the bill's primary sponsors has dismissed such concerns: “Anyone that uses a facility to commit a crime or does something indecent can be prosecuted under the



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current laws and this bill does nothing to change that,” [Rep. Carl Sciortino](#), a Democrat, told the AP.

According to a survey conducted by [Lake Research Partners](#), more than 3 in 4 Massachusetts voters (76%) support the bill.

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