

December 2009

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.

November Intakes

Organizations received 33 calls in November 2009 on transgender-related discrimination, harassment and violence. A short sampling follows:

- A 27 year old transgender woman was harassed in the emergency waiting room. (11/22/09)
- A transgender woman was harassed by people in her school. (11/22/09)
- A transgender woman was attacked in prison and felt that the prison officials did not keep her safe. (11/2/09)
- A transgender woman who is switching health insurance companies wanted to know which gender to mark on her forms to receive appropriate health coverage. (11/18/2009)
- A transgender woman is thinking about transitioning on the job, but is nervous about her employer’s response. (11/17/2009)

Transgender Day of Remembrance

We Remember in order to Protect

Families, friends and loved ones gathered on November 20th to mourn the lives of transgender people lost to acts of violence and hate. Transgender Day of Remembrance started after the unsolved murder of Rita Hester, who was stabbed to death on November 28, 1998 in Boston. This year, cities throughout Massachusetts, the United States and the world remembered 163 transgender people who were murdered simply for who they were. Hate crimes and violence against transgender and gender non conforming individuals continue at an alarming rate, but Transgender Day of Remembrance allows us to reflect on the lives we have lost, in order to understand how to better protect the lives of others in the future. We remember:

Debra Forte – Date of Death: May 12, 1995

Location: Haverhill, MA

Cause of Death: Multiple six-inch stab wounds to the chest, any of which would have been sufficient to kill her. She was also beaten about the head and shoulders.

Lisa Daniels – Date of Death: September 17, 2005

Location: Dorchester, MA

Cause of Death: Shot to death near local Stop n’ Shop

These violent acts are not isolated cases; they instill fear in an entire community. In Massachusetts we have the opportunity to protect victims of hate crimes based on their gender identity, thus creating a sense of peace and community among transgender people and their families, friends and loved ones.

***Other Contributing Organizations:** Transgender Civil Rights Coalition, Massachusetts Transgender Legal Advocates, Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, Health and Education Services, The Network/La Red, AIDS Project Worcester, Fenway Health, Gay Men’s Domestic Violence Project, Cambridge Cares About AIDS