

Dear Representative Mary Keefe and Senator Harriet Chandler,

My name is Tess Myerson and I live on Valley Hill Drive in Worcester with my husband and our two kids. I'm a mom and a homemaker.

I am writing to urge you to support ***An Act Relative to Equal Access in Hospitals, Public Transportation, Nursing Homes, Supermarkets, Retail Establishments, and all other places open to the public***, introduced in the House by Representatives Carl Sciortino and Byron Rushing and in the Senate by Senator Ben Downing and Sonia Chang-Diaz. This proposed law would prohibit discrimination in places of public accommodation such as nursing homes, sidewalks, public transit, and law offices.

This bill is important to me on a very personal level. As the mom of a gender-nonconforming son, I have to worry constantly about protecting my child's safety when we go out together in public. In places like bus stops, restaurants, and even on the street I frequently have to field invasive questions and disrespectful comments about my son's gender presentation. It frustrates me that in 2013 my family can still be kicked out of a restaurant because my son expresses who he is. And it scares me to think about the discrimination he might face years down the line when he goes off to college or starts going out alone and I am no longer there to protect him.

With the passage of this law, Massachusetts would send a clear message to its citizens that all people are entitled to feel safe in their communities and to be offered the full protection of the law, regardless of their gender identity or expression.

By offering protection in places of public accommodation where people experience harassment and discrimination, this law would increase productivity, freedom and safety for transgender youth and adults who are employees, consumers, residents and students.

Please help Massachusetts join the many communities, including the states of Rhode Island, Vermont, and Maine, which already provide protection in places of public accommodation on the basis of gender identity and/or expression.

When this bill passes it will give me more assurance that both of my kids will grow up in a world with equal rights and opportunities.

Respectfully,

Tess Myerson