



March 3, 2014

Portsmouth City Council
City Hall
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Dear Portsmouth City Council,

We are writing from Transgender New Hampshire (TG-NH) and Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) to express our support for the resolution to protect transgender individuals from discrimination in Portsmouth and throughout New Hampshire. TG-NH is an organization created to promote transgender visibility, education, support and civil rights in the state of New Hampshire. GLAD works in New England and nationally to create a just society free of discrimination based on gender identity and expression, HIV status, and sexual orientation through strategic litigation, public policy advocacy, and education.

The need for this resolution is great. Transgender individuals face enormous discrimination in all aspects of life, including employment. For example, a national survey conducted by the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force in 2011, found that transgender people face a host of challenges simply because of who they are, including:

- **Double the rate of unemployment:** Survey respondents experienced unemployment at twice the rate of the population as a whole.
- **Near universal harassment on the job:** Ninety percent (90%) of those surveyed reported experiencing harassment or mistreatment on the job.
- **Significant career interruption:** Forty-seven percent (47%) had experienced an adverse job outcome, such as being fired, not hired or denied a promotion.
- **High rates of poverty:** Fifteen percent (15%) of transgender people in the sample lived on \$10,000 per year or less—double the rate of the general population.

While many forms of employment discrimination are explicitly prohibited by the state's non-discrimination statutes, transgender people are not explicitly protected under state and federal employment discrimination laws. This resolution protects all people who are current or potential municipal employees in Portsmouth from being fired, denied a job or promotion, and harassed while at work solely on account of their gender identity or expression. It also demonstrates Portsmouth's support for passage of statewide discrimination protections for transgender individuals in the areas of employment, public accommodations, and housing.

Passing this resolution would put Portsmouth in the company of 17 states (CA, CO, CT, DE, HA, IL, IO, MA, ME, MN, NJ, NM, NV, OR, RI, VT, & WA), the District of Columbia, and almost 200 municipalities that already have non-discrimination laws or policies that protect transgender people.

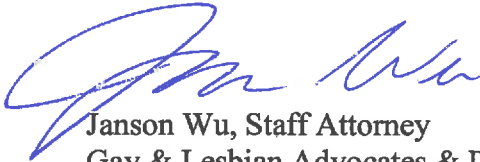
We have included a publication, “We are New Hampshire: Transgender Lives in the Granite State,” which includes stories of many transgender residents of New Hampshire. These stories illuminate the broad range of experiences of transgender individuals in New Hampshire, including experiences with discrimination. In addition, we have also heard many other examples of employment discrimination against transgender people in New Hampshire, some of which are included in a second attachment to this letter, entitled “National Statistics – Local Stories.”

Explicit protections for transgender people in Portsmouth are necessary to send a strong message that discrimination against transgender people is wrong and unjust. Passing this resolution will also demonstrate to the New Hampshire Legislature that protections for transgender people are necessary, easy to implement, and beneficial to the entire state. This resolution would continue Portsmouth’s long tradition of being a welcoming and accepting city that supports all of its citizens to live their lives free of discrimination and harassment.

Sincerely yours,



R. Ellen Semran, Steering Committee
Transgender New Hampshire
46 Park Street
Dover, NH 03820



Janson Wu, Staff Attorney
Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders
30 Winter St., #800
Boston, MA 02108
617-425-1350
jwu@glad.org