



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

## GENDA Sponsor Squadron Council Testimony on Fairness for Transgender NYers

DANIEL L. SQUADRON June 19, 2017

| ISSUE: **GENDA, EQUALITY, LGBT, TRANSGENDER, GENDER EXPRESSION NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT**



**New York** – Today, State Senator Daniel Squadron, lead sponsor of the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (**GENDA -- S.502**) to codify basic fairness for transgender New Yorkers, submitted the following testimony to the New York City Council supporting Council Res. 614 (which urges passage of GENDA):

## **Prepared Testimony of State Senator Daniel Squadron to the New York City Council Committee on Civil Rights on the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) and Equality Act**

My name is Daniel Squadron, and I represent the New York State Senate 26th District. My district includes the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Brooklyn Heights, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, the Columbia Waterfront, DUMBO, Downtown Brooklyn, Fulton Ferry, Greenpoint, the Navy Yard, Vinegar Hill, and Williamsburg, and the Manhattan neighborhoods of Battery Park City, Chinatown, the East and South Village, the Financial District, Little Italy, the Lower East Side, SoHo, and Tribeca.

As lead sponsor of the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) in the State Senate, I thank Councilmember Dromm and the City Council's LGBT Caucus for sponsoring Res. 614 in support of GENDA and Res. 1287 in support of the Equality Act. I also thank Chair Mealy and the Committee on Civil Rights for the opportunity to submit testimony today.

Many New Yorkers are surprised to learn that the basic fairness guaranteed for protected classes by state law -- ensuring New Yorkers are not fired, denied housing, or access to public accommodations -- does not explicitly include gender identity or expression.

New York City embraced similar provisions in 2003. Similar protections exist in localities across the state, including the cities of Binghamton, Buffalo, Ithaca, Rochester, Syracuse, and the counties of Albany, Suffolk, Tompkins, and Westchester. The police leadership of New York City, Albany, Binghamton, Ithaca, Rochester, Syracuse, as well as Tompkins and Suffolk counties have all come out in support of the basic fairness guaranteed by GENDA.

These protections are important in their own right and also send an important message. Progress on LGBT equality correlates with reductions in LGBT suicide risk -- and discriminatory legislation correlates with negative mental health outcomes. GENDA could have similar impacts in New York, which makes passage all the more urgent.

In 2015, Governor Cuomo clarified that existing Human Rights Law covers gender identity and expression. As the Trump Administration's actions and the ongoing escalation of federal anti-LGBT rhetoric has highlighted, however, the codification of civil rights progress is critical to ensuring it remains in place regardless of administration.

New York has long been a leader on civil rights in the country, passing the first Human Rights Law in 1945. Our state and city are also credited with the birth of the modern LGBT civil rights movement. Yet the State Senate Majority blocking explicit fairness for transgender New Yorkers has long been a disappointing stain on that proud history.

In April, I forced a vote on S502 (GENDA) in the State Senate's Investigations and Government Operations Committee. Unfortunately, every single Senate Republican on the Committee voted against it. This is made all the more shocking by the State Assembly's tenth passage of GENDA earlier this year, with bipartisan support, where Assemblymember Gottfried sponsors the bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2017-S502

- 
- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Prohibits discrimination based on gender identity or expression and includes offenses regarding gender identity or expression under the hate crimes statute

January 03, 2017

In Senate Committee Investigations and Government Operations

Sponsored by Daniel L. Squadron

Do you support this bill?