

Massachusetts House passes transgender rights bill

The Massachusetts House of Representatives passed a bill Wednesday that provides protection to transgender persons in public places. House Bill 4253, "An Act relative to gender identity and nondiscrimination," provides that those who identify as transgender shall not be subject to discrimination in such public places as hospitals and restaurants, and will allow those who are transgender to use the rest- and locker-rooms of the gender with which they identify. A similar bill has been approved in the Massachusetts Senate, and when questioned about the topic Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker said that, "No one should be discriminated against in Massachusetts because of their gender identity."

Transgender access to public areas has been a controversial topic and has created a wave of legislative and judicial actions. Last month the Obama administration issued guidance to schools on ensuring "transgender students enjoy a supportive and nondiscriminatory school environment," prompting a lawsuit by 11 states. Also last month the Florida American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a lawsuit against the Marion County school district, challenging their bathroom policy as anti-transgender. The US Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a lawsuit in May challenging North Carolina's controversial House Bill 2.

By: Gwennyth Gamble