

TRANSADVOCATE

Genital Checking, Bad ENDA Language, and NCTE Lobby Days

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Abstract

Recently I did an interview with Ethan St. Pierre of Transfm.org. You can listen to here: We discussed a post at the Bay Area Reporter titled “Leaders: ENDA will get House vote this month”, specifically comments from the executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), Mara Keisling. Even as NCTE gears up [...]

Article

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We discussed a post at the Bay Area Reporter titled “Leaders: ENDA will get House vote this month”, specifically comments from the executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), Mara Keisling.

Even as NCTE gears up for it’s “Lobby Day 2010”, Keisling said of the changes to the ENDA language concerning transgender people:

“it might be harmless or it might be horrible.”

Yet she is asking people to spend thousands of dollars to travel to Washington D.C. to lobby for a bill that has language that could possibly be “horrible” for transgender people. This is a very reckless thing to do. If the language were to suggest that transgender people need to have proof of bottom surgery to use gender appropriate bathrooms or that an employer can demand proof of the state of a transgender person’s genitals, anyone that had previously lobbied for the bill would be supporting that language. Several well connected sources have confirmed to me that this is indeed the type of language being considered. There is no way to unlobby a bill you’ve already expressed your support for.

But it gets worse.

“Keisling said Frank has been ‘working very hard’ on the bill, ‘and we’ve been working closely with his office.’

‘I want to be clear, Congressman Frank’s not saying he wants bathroom language,’ said Keisling. ‘He’s saying they really think we need it to pass.’

‘They,’ she said, are the variety of Democratic leaders working on passing the bill. And the conclusion is that the clarifications are ‘not helpful substantively or legally,’ she said, ‘but they

say they are helpful politically.”

Frank’s intent isn’t really important in the fight for a truly inclusive ENDA. The logic that Keisling doesn’t know the language, but is “working closely” with Frank, is faulty. It’s more than faulty, it’s a lie. Either Keisling knows the language and is lying, or is lying about being in the loop. Both can’t be true.

Regardless of that, Keisling is asking the transgender community to trust Frank that the language won’t harm transgender people. We tried that in 2007 (which Keisling also pushed) and look where it got us.

Please contact NCTE and request that they not lobby for a bill that will harm transgender people. Again, MULTIPLE HIGH LEVEL SOURCES have confirmed that the language being put forward will harm the majority of transgender people. Until this language sees the light of day, it should NOT be lobbied for.

Suggested citation

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