

TRANSADVOCATE

Press Release from TransMaryland Concerning HB235

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Abstract

Press release from TransMaryland: TransMaryland Issues Statement of HB235's Demise Maryland House Bill Ultimately Failed on Several Levels Annapolis -- April 12, 2011 -- Today is not a day to celebrate, for it is still one more year without the critical and necessary public accommodations protections for transgender Marylanders and those transgender individuals merely visiting [...]

Article

Press release from TransMaryland:

TransMaryland Issues Statement of HB235's Demise

Maryland House Bill Ultimately Failed on Several Levels

Annapolis -- April 12, 2011 -- Today is not a day to celebrate, for it is still one more year without the critical and necessary public accommodations protections for transgender Marylanders and those transgender individuals merely visiting our state. Today is a day to remember that every November 20 we hold a vigil, a Day of Remembrance Service for those we lost due to violence because they are transgender or transsexual. That with HB 235 or without it, the list will grow longer until full protections are in place. It must be the stated goal of every transgender person in Maryland and any like minded ally, in or out of our state, transgender or not, to see the day that we stop adding to that list.

TransMaryland believes the goal of every member of Maryland's transgender community should be the day in which the Governor of Maryland signs into law an anti-discrimination bill which includes public accommodations protections based on gender identity. Today is not a victory for our community as we have no such bill to present to the Governor. We wish to thank our allies for their support in fighting for that goal, both now and in the future.

Why Maryland House Bill 235 needed to be defeated

In the last 90 days, the state of Maryland, the greater transgender community across the country and the blogosphere has been ablaze over a piece of legislation introduced in Maryland, House Bill 235.

HB235 was the Gender Identity Anti-Discrimination bill intended to provide anti-discrimination protections for the transgender community. Prior legislative sessions of Maryland's General Assembly have introduced bills for protection, but none like HB235.

It was a flawed bill. Its authorship lacked community involvement, its level of protections lacked community buy-in and its messaging spoke to the flawed strategy of deceiving the community of what real protections look like. We can simply examine one of 13 states or the District of Columbia if we wish to see how a state achieves that. HB235 followed none of those success stories.

The Authorship

TransMaryland has sought to clarify the exact nature in which this bill came into existence. We do not wish to condemn those involved, but to assure such mistakes are not repeated. We insist on transparency throughout this process as a necessary foundation for community involvement.

The Level of Protections

Members of Maryland's transgender community have grown accustomed to seeking a measure consistent to last years bill, HB1022 (which received no action during an election year) which itself was a carry over of 2009's HB 474. HB474 included employment, housing and public accommodations. Thee greater community was betrayed when the most vital piece of that legislation, public accommodations had been removed and no community buy-in was sought. We insist on a seat at the table for members of the community in determining protections.

The Messaging

Words mean something and we find it unacceptable to use terms of "just like" and "similar" when defining a bill intended to save the lives of our peers. The truth of what it does or doesn't do needs no obfuscation. The deflection of criticism, censoring of expression or other means to perpetuate an untruth is unacceptable. We own our voices and expect them to be heard and never silenced.

Intentions are never grounds to excuse poor actions. We are committed to not repeating the mistakes of HB 235

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For more information on TransMaryland:

<http://www.TransMaryland.org>

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