

Right wing group considering repeal effort targeting Maryland's new transgender inclusive law

By Kelli

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Abstract

[su_kellibusey2] The day after the Maryland House of Delegates passed legislation making discrimination against transgender people illegal, one group has decided to take action against it. The bill, SB 212 "Fairness for All Marylanders Act of 2014" amends the state's law to include gender identity in the workplace, housing, and public accommodations. The Baltimore Sun is reporting that [...]

Article



The day after the Maryland House of Delegates passed legislation making discrimination against transgender people illegal, one group has decided to take action against it.

The bill, SB 212 "Fairness for All Marylanders Act of 2014" amends the state's law to include gender identity in the workplace, housing, and public accommodations.

The Baltimore Sun is reporting that the conservative group MD Petitions emailed supporters telling them:

"The good news is that we don't have to accept this bill as law - there is another way to defeat this terrible bill,"

"The group invented an online process in 2011 for collecting signatures, which allowed them to petition a law to referendum for the first time in two decades. By the 2012 election, MdPetitions.org successfully put three laws onto the ballot: same-sex marriage, the congressional redistricting map, and in-state tuition for certain undocumented immigrants. Voters upheld all three."

The major player in the bill's passage, Maryland TransEquality issued this statement by Carrie Evans, Executive Director of Equality Maryland:

"This is the culmination of a very long and sustained effort by Equality Maryland to ensure

transgender Marylanders are included in our state's anti-discrimination laws. Today's win is the result of so many people and organizations - transgender individuals and their families showing up and telling their stories year after year, elected officials like Senator Rich Madaleno and Delegates Luke Clippinger, Bonnie Cullison and Joseline Peña-Melynk, many years of dedicated and committed Equality Maryland Board and staff, amazing coalition partners like the Human Rights Campaign and so many more people and organizations that we will highlight in the coming months."

SB 212 now heads to Governor O'Malley's desk, who stated at MCTE's Lobby Day last month, "I am waiting to sign it."

But not everyone is thrilled about the bill's passage. Maryland House Minority Whip Kathy Szeliga told Delmarva now

"We need to know whose safety comes first. We should be very concerned about the safety of women and little girls, because what this allows without striking accommodations are possible predators and pedophiles from going in our women's restrooms," said Szeliga R-7-Baltimore County. "I think the rights of women and little girls safety should come before that of anyone else."



Figure 1. The Southern Poverty Law Center has designated "PJI" a hate group for its campaign using children in their war against transgender people.

Promoting fear of transgender people using children as a weapon is a time-honored tradition of hate mongers and bigots but one that has no basis in reality. The truth.

What right-wing groups say will happen if states implement laws to protect transgender people from discrimination:

Laws would be “abused” and “exploited” by sexual predators.
- Pacific Justice Institute

“Sexual predators” would have “legitimized access” to women’s restrooms.
- Peter Sprigg, Family Research Council

Laws would allow “sexual predators to gain easier access to their targets.”
- Texas Values

What experts from states with laws on the books say:



“Beyond specious” to say laws will lead to sexual assault.
Toni Troop, spokeswoman for Jane Doe Inc.



Sexual assaults stemming from law “not even remotely” a problem.
John Elder, Minneapolis police spokesman



No problems since passage of 2011 law.
Las Vegas Police Department



Opponents of protections are trying to “create fear.”
Alexa Priddy, director at Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault



“Has not resulted in increase[d] sexual assault”
William Hoshijio, executive director of Hawaii Civil Rights Commission



“Zero allegations” of bathroom sexual assault.
Charlie Burr, spokesman for Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries



“Not aware” of any problems from a 2001 law.
Karen Richards, Vermont Human Rights Commission



No increase in sex crimes due to 2001 law.
Michael D. Evora, executive director of Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights



“No factual basis” for sexual assault fears.
Amy Snierston, executive director of Maine Human Rights Commission



“Unaware of any sexual assault as the result of the CT gender identity or expression law.”
Jim O'Neill, spokesman for the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights in Opportunities

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