

PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS

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OCTOBER 2015

Pennsylvania Competes rep to speak on proposed Fairness Act for the Keystone state

At our monthly program and meeting on Monday, October 19, we'll hear from Jimmy Liacos, a representative of Pennsylvania Competes, an organization that is dedicated to growing the Keystone State's economy by ensuring that all Pennsylvanians are able to fully participate and have equal protections in the workplace, housing, and business and government services.



Pennsylvania businesses and citizens are joining together to support passage of the "Pennsylvania Fairness Act," which will update the state's Human Relations Act originally written in 1955 – to ensure that all citizens

regardless of race, color, religion, ancestry, age, sex, national origin, disability, and now sexual orientation, gender identity and expression can participate in the state's economy.

The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. at Mechanicsburg Presbyterian Church, 300 E. Simpson Street. Please use the entrance in the rear of the church and follow the sign to the meeting room.

Jimmy will be updating us on the status of the Pennsylvania Fairness Act now working its way through the Pennsylvania State Senate and House of Representatives. This initiative is a key piece in the creation of a law that will protect LGBT people from discrimination in employment, housing and expression.

Our gatherings are confidential and you will be among friends. If it's your first time, you don't even have to give your name. You will feel safe with us!

Fast Facts from Pennsylvania Competes

Thirty-four municipalities already have passed separate ordinances to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, including Pittsburgh, Lancaster, Erie, Harrisburg, Scranton and Philadelphia. A statewide uniform nondiscrimination law – similar to all

of the other states in Northeast – provides certainty and clarity to Pennsylvania employers and employees.

Today in Pennsylvania, gay and transgender people can be fired, evicted and turned away from a business simply because of who they are and who they love.

Seventy-eight per cent of Pennsylvanians support updating the law to include sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

o date, 21 other states have passed nondiscrimination laws – leveling the playing field for employers and employees and attracting new companies and new jobs to those states.

The Pennsylvania Fairness Act will update the Human Relations Act, originally written in 1955, by prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Nearly 400 Pennsylvania small businesses have signed a letter supporting updating the Act to include protections from discrimination for gay and transgender people.

Thirty-four municipalities in Pennsylvania already prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or both including the cities of Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Erie and Scranton.

inety-five per cent of Pennsylvanians believe that everyone needs to be able to earn a living – including gay and transgender people – and that employees should be hired, fired or promoted based on their qualifications, experience and the jobs they do – nothing more, nothing less.*

All 18 of Pennsylvania's Fortune 500 companies prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression ... and more than 50% of PA's largest employers have nondiscrimination policies, including: UPMC, Aramark, Comcast, CONSOL, Hershey Foods, Mylan, PPL, Rite Aid, Sunoco, and UGI.

Pennsylvania's Religious Freedom Protection Act allows individuals, religious organizations, and nonprofits whose religious practices are threatened by state or local government regulations or laws to seek a court order exempting them from the regulation.

Equality Pennsylvania – a partner of Pennsylvania Competes – applauds the introduction of the Pennsylvania Fairness Act



(A news release) New bills in House and Senate will update discrimination laws to include sexual orientation, gender identity or expression and have bi-partisan co-prime sponsors

The Pennsylvania Fairness Act was introduced in the Pennsylvania General Assembly to update the Human Relations Act to ensure that no one can be fired from a job, turned away from a business, or evicted from a home just for being gay or transgender.

"Most people in Pennsylvania are shocked to learn that it is still legal to discriminate in Pennsylvania just because of who a person is or who a person loves," says Ted Martin, Executive Director of Equality PA. "We applaud the bi-partisan co-prime sponsors of the Pennsylvania Fairness Act who introduced bills to update the discrimination laws of Pennsylvania to include sexual orientation and gender identity and expression."

he Pennsylvania Fairness Act, or <u>HB 1510</u> and <u>SB 974</u>, are companion bills that update the Human Relations Act to include gender identity and expression and sexual orientation. The Human Relations Act, originally written in 1955, currently protects people from discrimination based on race, color, religion, ancestry, age, sex, national origin, disability.

The Pennsylvania Fairness Act was introduced by co-prime sponsors, Rep. Dan Frankel (D-23), Rep. Tom Killion (R-168), Sen. Larry Farnese (D-01), and Sen. Pat Browne (R-16). The bills have a long list of bi-partisan co-sponsors in both the House and the Senate. The House Bill, HB 1510, has 81 co-sponsors, and the Senate Bill, SB 974, has 26 co-sponsors.

There is widespread support for updating Pennsylvania's discrimination laws to protect gay and transgender people around the state:

- The most recent <u>Susquehanna Research Poll</u> found that 74% of Pennsylvanians support updating the law.
- More than <u>400 small businesses</u> signed on to support the campaign to end discrimination against gay and transgender people.
- Currently, 89 percent of Fortune 500 companies have sexual orientation nondiscrimination policies; while 66 percent have gender identity non-discrimination policies.
- The bishops of three Christian denominations in Pennsylvania have released public letters asking the state to update the discrimination laws to include gender identity and expression and sexual orientation.
- More than 700 clergy and more than 1,000 lay faith leaders are part our statewide network and more than 31 denominations have signed on to a moral statement in support of nondiscrimination.
- The Board of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches voted in June 2015 to send a <u>statement</u> to legislators asking them to protect LGBT people from discrimination in Pennsylvania.
- The AFL-CIO released a public statement in support of protecting gay and transgender people from discrimination.
- The Greater <u>Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce</u>, the <u>Harrisburg Regional Chamber</u> of <u>Commerce</u>, and the <u>Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce</u> all support updating the law to protect gay and transgender people.

It's time for our annual membership drive! Please complete this form and return it to keep your membership up-to-date. You may also return your form and payment at any of our meetings. Thank you so much for your support of the organization that advocates for our lgbt family and friends!



Yes, I want to become/remain a member of PFLAG of Central Pal

| ☐ Yearly Membership—\$35 ☐ An additional contribution to help support PFLAG is included. Amount \$ | | | | | |
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| | | | Here are my concerns/suggestions for program topics: | | |
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| I would like to receive via email: | PFLAG of Central Pa. Newsletter | | | | |
| | ☐ PFLAG National Newsletter | | | | |
| Name | | | | | |
| Address | | | | | |
| City | State ZIP | | | | |
| Date | E mail | | | | |

Make checks payable to "PFLAG of Central PA" and mail to:

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