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MA Legislature Back in Session – Trans Public Accommodations Bill Lingers

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Late last year, we outlined "The What, Where and When of the Massachusetts Trans Public Accommodations Bill," which would offer protections to transgender and gender non-confirming individuals in places open to the public. The Massachusetts State legislature did not vote on the Bill before its winter recess in 2015. However, Senate President Stanley Rosenburg and House Speaker Robert DeLeo have each given their support for the legislation. Speaker DeLeo indicated that "I still think we've got some homework that has to be done, and members have some questions that have to be answered before I think that they feel comfortable moving ahead," while President Rosenburg indicated that the Senate stands ready to vote on the Bill.

The Bill has gained significant momentum and boasts an impressive cast of supporters, including more than 170 businesses, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, many colleges and universities, and several prominent municipal leaders, including Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh. Massachusetts' all-Democratic congressional delegation has also come out unanimously in favor of the Bill.

The Legislative session resumes today and the current session runs until July of 2016. Supporters of the Bill are working to make sure that this legislation is a top priority for the Massachusetts Legislature and are applying pressure to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary to take a vote as quickly as possible. This continues to be legislation to watch, particularly for retail stores and malls, restaurants, hotels, theaters and other places of public accommodation whose obligations under the law may change if the Bill is passed.

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