

INSIGHTS + NEWS

Transgender Rights Up For Vote in Massachusetts

BY CHELSIE A. VOKES • SEPTEMBER 5, 2018

Taking the T to work, grabbing a coffee, going out to eat, lying on the beach and seeking help at the hospital – these are only a few examples of how public accommodations play a role in our daily lives. Before July of 2016, transgender people in Massachusetts could be, and in many cases were, [lawfully denied access to places of public accommodation](#). On July 8, 2016, Governor Baker signed [An Act Relative to Transgender Anti-Discrimination](#) into law, stating “no one should be discriminated against in Massachusetts because of their gender identity.”

Opponents of these transgender protections now seek to overturn the law, alleging that “countless deviant men in this world . . . will pretend to be transgender as a means of gaining access to the people they want to exploit, namely women and children.” This “[bathroom bill](#)” argument persists despite research showing that allowing transgender people to use facilities that conform to their gender identity [does not increase the risk of voyeurism and sexual harassment](#). In fact, research shows that transgender individuals are the ones who face [high rates of harassment and assault](#) when forced to use facilities that do not conform to their gender identity.

A WBUR poll in late May showed that a [slim majority of Massachusetts residents support keeping the law in place](#).

ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2018, MASSACHUSETTS WILL VOTE ON WHETHER TO KEEP THESE PROTECTIONS IN PLACE. A “YES” VOTE ON QUESTION 3 WILL KEEP THESE PROTECTIONS IN PLACE. A “NO” VOTE ON QUESTION 3 WILL REMOVE THESE PROTECTIONS FOR TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS.