



THE CASE FOR INCLUSION

News and Legal Analysis on Issues Related to Diversity and Inclusion

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.