

Massachusetts Transgender Equal Rights Bill

Governor Patrick recently signed into law “An Act Relative to Gender Identity”. The Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity in a variety of areas, including education, housing, credit and employment. With the enactment of this new law, Massachusetts joins 15 other states in officially recognizing “gender identity” as a protected class, though as a practical matter the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination has recognized transgendered individuals under the protected class of “sex” for many years.

Employers are advised to review their employment policies, such as their employment applications, anti-discrimination policies, and employee handbooks, to ensure that the list of protected classes (e.g., race, gender, age) now includes “gender identity”. The law goes into effect on July 1, 2012.

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