

**For Immediate Release**  
**July 13, 2009**

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**Organizations Committed to Women and Children Call for  
Passage of Transgender Civil Rights Bill**  
*Tell Bill's Opponents: "Stop the lies in our name"*

BOSTON -- Representatives from prominent Massachusetts organizations committed to women's and children's issues gathered at the State House this morning to urge legislators to support non-discrimination and hate crimes legislation for transgender people, and to demand that opponents of the transgender civil rights bill immediately stop using lies and scare tactics about women's and children's safety for their own political gain.

"Opposing this bill does nothing to protect people from sexual assault," said Toni Troop, director of communications for Jane Doe Inc., the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence. "The political opponents of this bill say it will make bathrooms unsafe for women and children. In doing so, they spread dangerous myths about violence against women and divert attention from the facts. The vast majority of sexual assaults are committed in the home, by relatives or acquaintances."

In response to advertisements linking the bill to an increase in child sexual abuse Nancy Allen Scannell, director of policy and planning for the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) said, "The information in these ads is dangerously misleading, not only about the impact of this bill but about the realities of child sexual assault. This bill provides no safe harbor for criminal activity, wherever it occurs. Facts matter. Especially when it comes to protecting kids and protecting kids must never take a back seat to any other agenda."

The bill, "An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes," (H.1728/S.1687) will add "gender identity or expression" to existing Massachusetts hate crime laws and to non-discrimination laws that protect people from unequal treatment in employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, and public education. It will have the effect of protecting the state's transgender citizens from discrimination.

"We came here today to support all women" said Victoria Steinberg, co-president of Mass. NOW, the Massachusetts chapter of the National Organization for Women. "No one deserves to be fired, refused work, denied housing, education or credit, or to live in fear of violence because of his or her gender."

The Joint Judiciary Committee of the Massachusetts Legislature will hear testimony on the bill tomorrow, starting at 2:30 PM.

**Declaration of Women's Organizations Supporting Transgender Civil Rights Bill**  
*Stop Scare Tactics in Our Name*

We, the undersigned, unite in our support of "An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes," (H.1728/S.1687). We call on our legislators to pass this bill, which will add the category "gender identity or expression" to existing Massachusetts hate crime laws and to non-discrimination laws that protect people from unequal treatment in employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, and public education. This legislation will affirm the right of **all** Massachusetts citizens to live with dignity and respect, free from discrimination and violence.

As organizations committed to advancing the rights and protecting the health and safety of women and children throughout the Commonwealth, we are called to stand for justice for all people subject to gender-based discrimination, harassment, or violence. No person deserves to be fired, refused work, denied housing, education or credit, or to live in fear of violence because of his or her gender.

Collectively, we have worked for decades with thousands of Massachusetts women and children, from Boston to Springfield, from Haverhill to Pittsfield. We know the day-to-day reality of women's lives. **Opposing this bill does nothing to benefit or protect women and children. By suggesting that this legislation makes bathrooms unsafe for women and children, opponents of transgender equality spread dangerous myths about assault and divert attention from the facts: the vast majority of sexual assaults are committed in the home, by relatives or acquaintances, and the law provides no safe harbor for criminal activity, wherever it occurs.**

It is offensive that opponents of this bill would use unfounded threats to scare women and those who care about our safety into opposing legislation that will protect others from real gender-based discrimination and violence. These scare tactics are a dangerous diversion from the real sources of discrimination and violence that women face every day. We reject the use of fear-mongering in our name as a political tool, and urge all legislators who truly care about women and gender-based violence to support "An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes."

Mass. NOW  
Jane Doe, Inc.  
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC)  
City of Boston Women's Commission  
City of Cambridge Women's Commission  
League of Women Voters  
National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Massachusetts  
National Council of Jewish Women  
Victim Rights Law Center  
Women's Bar Association