

PFLAG National is proud to have so many people who are transgender and gender expansive and their loved ones as part of the extended family of PFLAG. Now is a critical time for all of us who value inclusion to add our voices to the conversations happening across the country about HB2 and anti-transgender discrimination.

We thought it would be helpful to provide a list of questions we've been hearing and some helpful responses, some further talking points to share, and data for your use and reference.

Thank you for all that you do, and for raising your voices in favor of fairness and dignity.

Section 1: Education and Understanding

When a colleague or neighbor turns to you looking for information, it's time to step up--as PFLAGers always do--and meet them, wherever they are. Some come to us with no information, some come already supportive and wanting to learn more, and some come to us from, perhaps, a less-than-supportive place. Regardless of their position when they first approach you, we have an opportunity to use support and education as a tool to move people along on the issues.

Here are some of the top questions we are hearing, with some guidance on answering them.

Q: What exactly is that law (HB2) in North Carolina and why is it getting so much attention?

A: While anti-LGBTQ and anti-trans people try to frame it about keeping bathrooms safe for women and children, is a far-reaching law that has already had a major negative economic impact in the state of North Carolina. The law affects employment, restricts wage levels, and prohibits individuals from bringing any civil action based on the law when there are charges of discrimination. It requires people to use state facilities in accord with the sex indicated on their birth certificate, not aligned with their gender identity, prohibits any municipality in the state from passing nondiscrimination ordinances, and renders current ones moot, like the one voted on in Charlotte. This is not about bathrooms, and our transgender loved ones are paying the price, with their rights and their dignity. As the US Attorney General stated, "far from protecting vulnerable populations from harm, this law inflicts indignity on a vulnerable population that already suffers far more than its fair share; it harms innocent Americans."

Q: I thought these laws were about making sure that pedophiles do not go into bathrooms?

A: That is being stated as the reason, but it is wrong and offensive for multiple reasons. First, it's already illegal for people to commit assault against other people, and everyone supports that. This off-topic argument is part of the distractive discussion to avoid facing the real issue: discrimination. Second, it is just wrong to state that anyone who is transgender is a pedophile because they are going into the bathroom that corresponds with their gender identity.

Q: Why is this even an issue? Is this just more political correctness?

A: I agree: It should not be an issue. Men should use facilities for men and women should use facilities for women; men shouldn't be in the bathroom with women. Transgender men are men. Transgender women are women. They have been using public facilities for years. This issue affects more than transgender people; people whose gender expression does not match what society might expect also risk being challenged, and that is an extreme example of gender-policing political correctness. Even Target's policy isn't new: their announcement was simply to reinforce an already-existing policy.

Q: I don't understand; I do not know any transgender people so this does not make any sense to me.

A: I get it; it can be confusing. I was you once but now because of my involvement with PFLAG, I know transgender people and their families and have learned a lot and keep learning. I am happy to answer your questions. You might actually know transgender people, contrary to the crazy scare tactics being used right now. They are your neighbors and colleagues who may not have disclosed they are transgender, they are just going about their lives, like you and I. I will say that once you do know someone is transgender, you will want them to share their story with you because their authenticity and courage will inspire you like it does me.

Q: Why don't people keep this stuff private instead of talking about it all the time?

A: I agree with you that the topic of bathroom and locker room use should be private and should not be used as camouflage to disguise discrimination. Transgender people in general, like anyone else, would rather this not be a topic of conversation, and trans people didn't raise it.

Q: Is this really an issue in our community?

A. The issue of discrimination is true in any community and yes, the issues of LGBTQ discrimination in our community are real and why I am involved with PFLAG. The law in North Carolina and the other laws across the country that are targeting the transgender community mask real facts and are sending an ugly message to vulnerable people, especially kids. Nearly half of young transgender people have seriously thought about taking their lives, and one quarter report having made a suicide attempt.* Thirty-three percent of students heard negative remarks at school specifically about transgender people. Less than two-thirds of students (61%) could identify at least six supportive school staff.** Most adult transgender people have experienced violence against them and these laws are making them feel very unsafe.

**Grossman, A.H. & D'Augelli, A.R. (2007). Transgender Youth and Life-Threatening Behaviors. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behaviors.37(5), 527-37. ** GLSEN: The 2013 National School Climate Survey.*

Section 2: Talking Points

- PFLAGers everywhere stand with the transgender community and all those who do not fit the gender mold against the false narrative that is being perpetuated. Together we will write a different story by sharing our own, both to change hearts and minds and to educate people about the facts.
- Our families should not be treated differently, and the wrong message is being sent especially to youth that discrimination against one group of people because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression is acceptable in 2016.
- It is not acceptable that any person should be subject to discrimination in their use of public facilities or services.
- People who are LGBTQ have a desperate need for workplace protections, and should have the same workplace rights and responsibilities as anyone else. In fact, the majority of Americans already agree that people in the workplace should be judged on the merits of their work, not based on who they are; that is fair.
- PFLAG chapters and individual members continue to be grateful and supportive of the hundreds of businesses who have spoken out.

Section 3: Resources and Data

- From PFLAG National
 - *guide to being a trans ally*, a publication from our Straight for Equality™ program
 - *OUR TRANS LOVED ONES: Questions and Answers for Parents, Families and Friends of People Who are Transgender and Gender Expansive*
- From our partners
 - [Statement from National Task Force on Violence](#)
 - [Injustice at Every Turn: The National Transgender Discrimination Survey Report](#)
 - [Movement Advancement Project Equality Maps on States with Nondiscrimination Laws](#)
 - [The Williams Institute - LGB within the T: Sexual Orientation in the National Transgender Discrimination Survey and Implications for Public Policy](#)
- From the media
 - <http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2016/images/05/09/transgender.rights.pdf>

- Helpful Statistics

- [CNN/Opinion Research Corp. \(ORC\) poll released on May 9th :](#)

- 57 percent of Americans reject laws like NC's HB 2.
- 75 percent of Americans support comprehensive nondiscrimination protections for transgender people.
- 80 percent of Americans support comprehensive nondiscrimination protections for LGBT people.

- The Movement Advancement Project

- The Movement Advancement Project reports that 52% of the LGBT population lives in states that do not prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

- National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)/The National LGBTQ Task Force

- Extreme poverty - respondents were nearly four times more likely to have a household income of less than \$10K/year compared to the general population.
- 53% reported being verbally harassed or disrespected in a place of public accommodation, including hotels, restaurants, buses airports and government agencies.
- Respondents experienced widespread abuse in the public sector and were often abused at the hands of "helping" professionals and government officials. One-fifth (22%) were denied equal treatment by a government agency or official. 29% reported police harassment or disrespect; 12% had been denied equal treatment or harassed by judges or court officials.
- 43% maintained most of their family bonds, while 57% experienced significant family rejection.
- 63% of survey participants had experienced a serious act of discrimination -- events that would have a major impact on a person's quality of life and ability to sustain themselves financially or emotionally.

- The Williams Institute
 - 41% of respondents attempted suicide - 41% of respondents reported attempting suicide compared to 1.6% of the general population, with rates rising for those who lost a job due to bias (55%), were harassed/bullied in schools (51%), had low household income or were the victim of physical assault (61%) or sexual assault (64%).
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- GLSEN
 - Those who expressed a trans identity or gender non-conformity while in grades K-12 reported harassment (78%), physical assault (35%) and sexual violence (12%); severe harassment led to nearly one-sixth (15%) to leave school in K-12 settings or in higher education.

Please stay connected to PFLAG National through our website (pflag.org), Like us on Facebook (facebook.com/pflag), and follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/pflag), for continued up-to-date developments.