

Illinois Gender Advocates



Advocacy for the Transgender and Gender Variant Community

A §501(c)(3) Charitable Organization

www.GenderAdvocates.org

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STATE LGBT Non-Discrimination Law Enacted!

After languishing in the General Assembly for nearly thirty years, a bill to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity has finally become law in Illinois. The measure, known as S.B. 3186, received the bare minimum number of votes for passage in the Senate during the closing days of the legislative session, but subsequently passed in the House with a healthy majority. Gov. Rod Blagojevich signed the bill on January 21, 2005. The new provisions will take effect on June 1 of this year.

For the first time in history, LGBT people throughout the State of Illinois have been afforded basic civil rights protections. Only fourteen other states in the country have civil rights legislation for their gay and lesbian citizens. Of those, only four states prohibit discrimination based on gender identity.

The original Human Rights Act which passed in 1979 and became effective in 1980, guarantees freedom from unlawful discrimination on the basis of a variety of factors, including race, religion, sex, age, and a number of other characteristics, now including sexual orientation (and gender identity). Discrimination is prohibited in relation to employment, real estate transactions, access to financial credit, and the availability of public services and accommodations. It also provides protection from harassment in employment and higher education, and against retaliation for filing a discrimination charge.

Although widely characterized by the news media as controversial, the scope of the legislation is actually quite narrow and limited. In some ways, the new state law is not as strong as the human rights ordinances in Chicago and Cook County, as well as various other local jurisdictions throughout the state. For instance, there is no protection for discrimination in housing in the case of a building with

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CALENDAR

Tuesday, February 1st — REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7:30 PM, Featuring Rev. Karen Hutt, Co-Pastor of the Church of the Open Door, discussing race and faith issues in the LGBT community; New Spirit MCC, 542 S. Scoville Ave., Oak Park

Friday, February 4th—IGA-TV on Chicago Access Network Television Channel 21 (only available on cable in Chicago) starting at 6:30 p.m.; our guest will be Rev Karen Hutt, Co-Pastor of the Church of the Open Door

Tuesday, March 1st—REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, 7:30 PM, Featuring a panel discussion of how transgender people can gain greater acceptance in the greater LGBT community; New Spirit MCC, 542 S. Scoville Ave., Oak Park

How to contact us...

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Telephone Hotline:
312-409-5489

Please leave a message.
We will get back to you as quickly as possible.

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Feedback...

Let us know what you think, or submit an article.

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STATE LGBT Law *(continued from page 1)*

five or fewer units, provided the landlord lives on the premises. Employment discrimination is only prohibited in businesses with more than fifteen employees. No special rights have been created under the law, and affirmative action policies are not mandated.

On the other hand, the Chicago and Cook County ordinances have a sweeping exemption for religious institutions that is not found in the state law.

Fortunately, a victim of discriminatory treatment has the option to choose a remedy under the state law or the local

ordinance, if the incident occurred in Chicago or Cook County.

Until now, those who lived or worked outside of Cook County had no recourse at all if they had been discriminated against. Passage of the new state law makes all Illinois residents safer from discrimination. Complaints can be filed with the Illinois Dept. of Human Rights, Suite 10-100, 100 W. Randolph St., Chicago, IL 60601.

Membership/Renewal

Please do not forget to send in your membership and dues for 2005. We cannot exist without our members.

GET INVOLVED, SUPPORT THE CAUSE OR JUST STAY INFORMED!

Application for New or Renewal Membership

YES, I would like to join () or renew () my membership in Illinois Gender Advocates.

Name(s) _____.

Name to Be Used on Mailing Label (if different from above) _____.

Address _____ **City** _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____.

Email address _____ **Phone Numbers** _____.

Membership Level (check one): () Student/Youth - \$10 () Regular Membership - \$30

() Supporting Member - \$100 () Benefactor - \$250 () Other - \$ _____

EVER BEEN A VICTIM OF A HATE CRIME OR DISCRIMINATED AGAINST DUE TO YOUR GENDER IDENTITY, EXPRESSION, OR IMAGE?

Yes / No (circle one) If yes, may we add your case to our report? Yes / No (circle one)

Please mail, along with your check or money order, to:

Illinois Gender Advocates, 47 W. Division St., #391, Chicago, IL 60610