

1.19.12 Gender Identity Ceremonial Bill Signing

Deval L. Patrick

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Senate Reading Room, State House

Thursday, January 19, 2012

Welcome to the State House, your house. I'm proud that you're here. And look what you did. Look what you did. This is what comes from turning to each other rather than on each other.

I'd like to thank Senate President Therese Murray, Speaker of the House Bob Deleo, and the members of the legislature, the constitutional officers who are here today, each of whom showed what for you may seem like a simple gesture of grace, but was in fact also an act of political courage. And I want to acknowledge and thank all of them.

Today would not be possible without the work of the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition made up, as you know, of MassEquality, GLAD, the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, and so many others. All of you embodying that coming together. I want to thank you all for being a symbol of strength, a force to be reckoned with. Remember that because this isn't the last fight. Thank you for being a reminder of the unfinished business in the department of doing right here in the Commonwealth.

I am proud to be here today to celebrate An Act Relative to Gender Identity. This act will extend critical protections, as you all well know, to transgender residents seeking housing, employment, education and protection from hate crimes.

I sign this bill as a matter of conscience. No individual should face discrimination because of who they are. And for that reason, this legislation is an achievement, not only for transgender people, but for all of those who stand up for and care about respect for basic human dignity.

I sincerely want to thank you. I want to thank you for helping to get this bill turned from an idea into law. I want to thank you for being an example for what it means when people decide to make advocacy personal. When they decide that you do in fact have all the power you need to make all the change you want if you work together. That's an enormously important reminder to those of us who work for you in public service.

God bless you all and congratulations.