

## **Equal Rights for All**

### **In Support of Bill C-279: An Act to Amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code (Gender Identity)**

Dear Senators,

The following organizations, representing a broad cross section of civil society groups from across Canada, urge the Senate to pass Bill C-279, the Gender Identity Bill, as drafted and without delay, to ensure that the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Canadian Criminal Code protect the human rights of all people in Canada.

We recognize the violence and discrimination faced by the trans/transsexual/transgender/ intersex/two-spirit/gender variant (“trans”) community in Canada. In a recent nationwide survey, 74% of transgender youth reported experiencing verbal harassment in school, and 37% reported experiencing physical violence. Transgender individuals in Ontario face unemployment over three times the national rate and many more are underemployed. As a result of discrimination and bullying, the trans community faces high rates of mental health issues. Rates of depression are as high as two-thirds; 77% of transgender individuals in Ontario report having considered suicide, and 43% have attempted suicide at least once.

Given the extreme vulnerability to human rights abuse faced by trans people in Canada, Bill C-279 will help to prevent discrimination and ensure that those who commit hate crimes are held to account. By amending the Canadian Human Rights Act and Criminal Code to include gender identity, the Bill will be an important step in ensuring that trans people have access to the justice and equality for which Canada is internationally-renowned and for Canada to meet its international human rights obligations.

We support Senator Nolin’s statement that, “if discrimination based on the gender identity of some prevents them from having an opportunity equal to that of other individuals to make for themselves the life that they are able and wish to have, to the extent of being a source of prejudice and causing a strike against the human dignity of those individuals, such discrimination must become prohibited and in so doing guarantee the equality of rights pledged for all by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.” And we stand with Senator Mitchell’s statement that, “these are individuals... They are sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers and they are Canadians and they are our neighbours...[We can respond] by taking a step to change the lives of these important Canadians who have been discriminated against psychologically and brutalised violently all too often. We can stand up and do the right thing.”

We call on the Senate of Canada to pass Bill C-279 to help fully protect the human rights of all people in Canada.

Signed,

519 Church Street Community Centre  
Action Canada for Population and Development  
Action positive VIH/sida  
Affirm United  
AIDS Committee of Newfoundland & Labrador  
AIDS Committee of Simcoe County  
AIDS Community Care Montreal  
Amnesty International Canada  
Amnistie internationale Canada francophone  
British Columbia Services and Employee's Union  
Canadian AIDS Society  
Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange  
Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention  
Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies  
Canadian Association of Social Workers  
Canadian Association of University Teachers  
Canadian Civil Liberties Association  
Canadian Federation for Sexual Health  
Canadian Federation of University Women  
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network  
Canadian Labour Congress  
Canadian Treatment Action Council  
Canadian Union of Postal Workers  
Canadian Union of Public Employees  
Canadian Women's Foundation  
Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation  
Capital Pride  
Catherine White Holman Wellness Centre  
Central Alberta AIDS Network Society  
Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs  
Centre for the Study of Gender, Social Inequities and Mental Health  
CIHR Canadian HIV Trials Network  
Communities Addressing Suicide Together  
Congregation Shir Libeynu  
Council of Canadians with Disabilities  
CUPE Pink Triangle Committee  
Dragonstone Counselling  
Egale Canada Human Rights Trust  
Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa  
First United Church, Ottawa  
Gender Mosaic  
Global Network of People Living with HIV North America  
Greenpeace Canada  
HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario  
HIV/AIDS Regional Services  
Independent Jewish Voices – Canada  
Institute for International Women's Rights - Manitoba

Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development  
Jer's Vision/Day of Pink  
Kids Help Phone  
Kulanu Toronto  
La Ligue  
LGBTQ Jews  
Méta d'Âme  
Metro Toronto Chinese & Southeast Asian Legal Clinic  
Metropolitan United Church, Toronto  
Mouvement d'Aide et d'INformation Sida - Bas St-Laurent  
National Union of Public and General Employees  
Northern Territories Federation of Labour  
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants  
Ontario Federation of Labour  
Ontario Humanist Society  
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation  
Out On The Shelf  
Oxfam Canada  
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Toronto PFLAG  
Parksville/Qualicum KAIROS  
PFLAG Canada  
Pink Triangle Services  
Pivot Legal Society  
Positive Living BC  
Pride Toronto  
Public Service Alliance of Canada  
QMUNITY  
Queer Imaging and Riting Kollektive for Elders  
Queer West  
Saskatchewan HIV HCV Nursing Education Organization  
Saskatchewan Public Health Association  
Shaarei-Beth El Congregation  
South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre  
Stella, l'amie de Maimie  
Ten Oaks Project  
Toronto District Council, Canadian Union of Public Employees  
Trans Lobby Group  
Trans Pride Canada  
TransFamily Kingston  
Transgender Archives, University of Victoria  
UFCW-Canada  
UNIFOR  
United Church of Canada  
University of Guelph  
University Research Chair in Forensic Nursing, University of Ottawa  
Vancouver Island Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Society  
Women of Halton Action Movement  
Xpressions

YMCA