

TLDEF Announces Hire of Nationally-Recognized Transgender Litigator Gabriel Arkles as Senior Counsel

Arkles' career of civil rights advocacy expands TLDEF's litigation program



(NEW YORK, NY – December 4, 2020) – The Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund (TLDEF) today announced the hire of nationally-recognized transgender civil rights attorney Gabriel Arkles as Senior Counsel. Arkles joins TLDEF as one of the top transgender litigators in the country after most recently serving as Senior Staff Attorney at the ACLU LGBT & HIV Project. Arkles's career has focused on challenging systems of oppression through legal advocacy to increase access to civil rights, social services, and justice for transgender and non-binary people.

As Senior Counsel, Arkles joins TLDEF's growing legal team focused on state and federal litigation and policy advocacy efforts. In this new role, Arkles work will focus on building upon the precedent established in [Bostock v. Clayton County](#) to expand state and federal protections for transgender people; and working to develop innovative and effective ways to use legal advocacy as a tool for transgender and non-binary equality through enacting nondiscrimination protections and reducing barriers to accessing competent health care and legal name changes.

"Gabriel's resume speaks for itself: he is an accomplished litigator who has worked tirelessly to expand legal protections for transgender people at the state and federal level," said **TLDEF Legal Director David Brown**. "He brings a wealth of experience and perspective to our work, and we look forward to working with him to present transgender experiences in an authentic and accurate way, in and out of court, that moves the law forward."

"I'm thrilled to join the growing team at TLDEF and continue fighting for justice for transgender communities at a time when so much is at stake," said **Gabriel Arkles**. "Now more than ever, we need strong, trans-led legal advocacy to defend and strengthen basic protections for transgender people, and that is exactly what TLDEF delivers."

Most recently at the ACLU, Arkles was part of the legal team that represented Aimee Stephens before the U.S. Supreme Court in [Bostock v. Clayton County](#) that established anti-transgender discrimination is prohibited under federal law. Arkles' litigation experience spans jurisdictions including successfully leading challenges to an anti-transgender ballot initiative in Montana and securing a preliminary injunction to block an anti-trans law from going into effect in Idaho. Arkles has defended the rights of transgender students to ensure school policies grant equal access to school facilities and challenged anti-transgender state policies that attempt to restrict access to identity documents. In New York City, Arkles settled a case on behalf of a transgender Latina woman after she endured police misconduct.

Previously, Arkles spent six years as Staff Attorney and Director of Prisoner Justice Initiatives at the Sylvia Rivera Law Project. During that time, Arkles helped build a groundbreaking and collaborative organization dedicated to creating greater access to social, racial, and economic justice for low-income transgender people of color. As the Director of Prisoner Justice Initiatives, his work focused on reforming prison conditions for transgender people who are incarcerated, including allowing access to medically necessary care and name changes.

Arkles spent seven years in academia, first as an Acting Associate Professor of Lawyering for first-year law students at New York University School of Law and later as an Associate Teaching Professor for legal research and writing at Northeastern School of Law. Arkles' work has appeared in publications, such as the NYU Law Review, Northeastern Law Journal, Southwestern Law Review, and Scholar and Feminist Online. Past commentary has been found in a range of outlets, such as The Advocate, CBS, NBC News, and WNYC among others.

Arkles has received the Dukeminier Award for best sexual orientation law review article in 2009 and the Sylvia Rivera Law Project Award for outstanding pro bono service in 2010. In his free time, Arkles serves on the steering committee for Muslim Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity (MASGD).

Arkles starts in the new position as Senior Counsel on December 7, 2020.

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