

TLDEF Lauds Inclusion of Trans Youth in Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing on Equality Act

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(New York, NY - March 17, 2021) Today, the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (TLDEF) lauded the Senate Judiciary Committee’s decision to include testimony from Stella Keating, a transgender high school student, in its [hearing](#) on the Equality Act.

“Trans youth are under attack across the country. We are heartened that senators will hear directly from a young trans person about the impact their votes will have on her life,” said Andy Marra, Executive Director of TLDEF. “As the senators of the Judiciary Committee will hear today, there is no time to waste in passing the Equality Act. Trans lives hang in the balance.”

The Equality Act makes explicit that discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation is a form of sex discrimination in violation of federal law. It also extends sex discrimination protections to public accommodations, federal programs, jury service, and credit reporting.

“The Equality Act is designed to once and for all codify basic protections for transgender people nationwide,” said Marra. “Today, Americans in [29 states](#) are lacking explicit, comprehensive nondiscrimination protections. The Equality Act makes crystal clear that LGBTQ people are worthy of protection.”

Over the course of 17 years, TLDEF has represented transgender and non-binary clients who directly experienced incidents of discrimination in education, employment, health care, and public accommodations that would be addressed under the Equality Act, including:

– TLDEF is currently suing on behalf of [Anna Lange](#), a sheriff’s deputy in Georgia. After more than a decade on the job as a Sheriff’s Deputy in Georgia, Anna came out as a transgender woman and later sought gender-affirming surgery. Though she had been paying into her healthcare plan for years, just like all of her colleagues, Anna was denied medically necessary care because she is transgender.

– TLDEF, along with co-counsel, is [suing](#) the state of North Carolina on behalf of eight people who are being denied transition-related healthcare for themselves or for their dependents.

– In 2013, TLDEF represented Coy Mathis, a six-year-old transgender girl who was banned from using the girls’ bathroom at her school in Colorado. [TLDEF secured the first ruling in the nation](#) holding that transgender students must be allowed to use bathrooms that match their gender identities.

– And, in 2006, [TLDEF filed complaints](#) with New York City’s Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and Commission on Human Rights on behalf of Helena Stone, a transgender woman who was arrested three times for using the women’s restroom in Grand Central Station. Ultimately, the MTA agreed to ensure that transgender people could use bathrooms consistent with their gender identity and that the MTA would train its staff to avoid future harassment and arrests of transgender people.

“An overwhelming [majority](#) of Americans on both sides of the aisle support nondiscrimination measures for LGBTQ people. The House has cleared the way for the Senate to do the right thing and secure those protections once and for all by passing the Equality Act,” Marra added. “At TLDEF, we are committed to advancing full and lived equality for transgender people and are working closely with our

partners, community members, and elected officials to build momentum for successful passage of the Equality Act. The Equality Act is a crucial step toward achieving true legal equality for transgender people nationwide and its moment is right now.”

About TLDEF

TLDEF is committed to ending discrimination based upon gender identity and expression and to achieving equality for transgender people through public education, test-case litigation, direct legal services, and public policy efforts. To learn more about TLDEF's work, visit tldef.org.

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