

NC SOPHE Statement on NCGA House Bill 2
The North Carolina Society for Public Health Education
Opposes Discrimination in all its' Forms



NORTH CAROLINA SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 16th, 2016

Media Contact: info@ncarolinasophe.org

In March of this year, House Bill 2 was passed by the North Carolina legislature in a last-minute session that did not allow lawmakers to consider the evidence regarding the likely impact of the law on North Carolinians and our state. Since that time, the North Carolina Society for Public Health Education, a leading professional home for public health and health education professionals, has remained concerned about how this retrogressive legislation will negatively affect transgender community members in our state, as well as its' impact on socioeconomic mobility, as the legislation places restrictions on any attempts to increase the wages of low-wage workers. NC SOPHE believes this legislation not only stands to bring harm to transgender residents, but also causes damage to the image of our state as a safe and respectful place to live and conduct business.

Charlotte School of Law professor Brian Clarke has stated that “HB 2 affects everyone... It creates a state-wide non-discrimination ordinance and public accommodations which we’ve never had before, which is a perfectly good thing to do... But it, of course, limits the protection categories to race, age, national origin, religion, color and biological sex to avoid any potential expansion of that in the courts.”¹ As such, the hasty legislative debate and proceeding interpretation of the law have created space for arguments suggesting that transgender people should now be forced to use the restroom of the gender they were assigned at birth.

Some individuals have suggested that without this legislation, predatory men would disguise themselves as the opposite sex and commit sexual violence against children and women in public bathrooms. *In fact*, research shows there has **never** been a verifiable reported instance of a transgender person harassing someone who is cis-gender, nor have there been any confirmed reports of male predators 'pretending' to be transgender to gain access to women's spaces and commit crimes against them.² Tragically, transgender people face a uniquely high degree of harassment—53% of over 6,000 transgender people interviewed in one study reported being harassed or disrespected in a place of public accommodation.³ Further, transgender women experience very high rates of sexual violence themselves, as do 1 in 5 of all women⁴, a statistic that is linked to existing gender inequalities and one that cannot in any way be addressed by forcing individuals to use a bathroom that corresponds with their “biological sex.”

Data make clear that transgender people throughout the country face high rates of attempted suicide⁵ and violence⁶, with the murders of transgender people of color being a particularly disturbing pattern that requires a unified, intersectional response. As we become a more inclusive society, it’s clear that legislation like HB2 is bad for business and for the health of our communities. **We at NC SOPHE would like to bring to the attention of policymakers and the public that our organization, along with many of our public health colleagues throughout the state, values justice and common-sense, evidence-based public policy. HB 2 does not align with the history and values of NC SOPHE.**

1 WBTV (2016). NC professor explains implications of HB 2. Retrieved from:

<http://wncn.com/2016/04/07/nc-professor-explains-implications-of-hb2/>

2 Lambda Legal (n.d.). FAQ: Answers to some common questions about equal access to public restrooms. Retrieved from:

<http://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/transgender/restroom-faq>

3 Herman, J. (2013). Gendered Restrooms and Minority Stress: The public regulation of gender and its' impact on Transgender People’s Lives. Retrieved from:

<http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Herman-Gendered-Restrooms-and-Minority-Stress-June-2013.pdf>

4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2012). Sexual Violence: Facts at a Glance

http://www.ovc.gov/pubs/forge/sexual_numbers.html

5 Haas & Herman. (2014). Suicide Attempts Among Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Adults. Retrieved from:

<http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/AFSP-Williams-Suicide-Report-Final.pdf>

6 NCAVP. (2013) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Hate Violence in 2012. Retrieved from:

http://www.avp.org/storage/documents/ncavp_2012_hvreport_final.pdf