



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## State Senators Brad Hoylman and Daniel Squadron Submit Comments in Support of Proposed Federal Rule Guaranteeing Transgender Individuals Equal Access to Emergency Shelters

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL January 19, 2016

| ISSUE: **HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDA, LGBTQ**



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*Transgender homelessness is a national crisis. It is imperative that HUD formally adopt this proposed rule.”*

NEW YORK - Today, State Senators Brad Hoylman (D-Manhattan) and Daniel Squadron (D-Manhattan/Brooklyn) submitted public comments to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in support of proposed rule 2506-AC40, which would prohibit emergency homeless shelters that receive federal funding from discriminating on the basis of gender identity and provide transgender persons with services and accommodations consistent with their gender identity.

In their comments, Senators Hoylman and Squadron call on HUD "to formally adopt the proposed regulations." The Senators, co-sponsors of the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act, note that "nearly one-third of all transgender people who try to access homeless shelters in their lifetime are turned away on the basis of their gender identity," forcing them "into shelters where they face violence, or onto the streets, where they face increased risks of incarceration, contracting HIV, and suicide."

"Transgender people are more than twice as likely as others to have a history of homelessness," **said State Senator Brad Hoylman.** "It is unacceptable for shelters - which are tasked with caring for our most vulnerable citizens - to engage in the type of discriminatory and bigoted behavior that further endangers the lives of transgender New Yorkers. As we enter another winter season it is imperative that HUD promptly adopt rules to ensure that no one in need of a warm bed or secure environment is turned away solely because of who they are."

"Nobody should be denied housing and emergency accommodations because of who they are," **said State Senator Daniel Squadron.** "As we mark progress on the state level towards basic protections for transgender New Yorkers, it's critical this progress also occur nationwide. I thank Senator Hoylman for his leadership on this issue, and will continue to push for a statewide Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act, along with colleagues."

See the full letter below and attached:

January 18, 2016

Hon. Julián Castro

Secretary

Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

451 7th Street S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Secretary Castro:

As elected officials representing New York City, we are writing to express our unequivocal support for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s proposed rule FR-5863-P-01 to ensure that no one is turned away from emergency shelters on the basis of their gender identity.

Transgender homelessness is a national crisis. Because of the compounded effects of discrimination, family rejection, harassment, and violence, nearly one in five transgender and gender-nonconforming adults have been homeless at some point in their lives, two and a half times the rate of the general population. The National Center for Transgender Equality

estimates that more than one in ten transgender people in the United States have been evicted from their homes on the basis of their gender identity; nearly one in five report being denied housing for the same reason. These trends are closely mirrored in our own New York communities – where the average age a transgender youth becomes homeless is an alarming 13.5.

These facts merit urgent action – yet as a country, we are failing to provide transgender homeless youth and adults with safe emergency shelters that are governed by appropriate and respectful regulations pertaining to gender identity and expression. Nearly one-third of all transgender people who try to access homeless shelters in their lifetime are turned away on the basis of their gender identity. More than 40 percent report being forced to stay in facilities designated for the wrong gender, where they face violence and harassment, and nearly half of formerly homeless transgender people surveyed reported leaving a shelter because of harassment or assault. Further, they are disproportionately likely to be transgender people of color.

In light of this, we believe it is imperative that HUD formally adopt this proposed rule, which would ensure that emergency shelters receiving federal funding provide transgender persons with services and accommodations consistent with their gender identity unless that person clearly requests otherwise. Discrimination by providers has forced many homeless transgender people into shelters where they face violence, or onto the streets, where they face increased risks of incarceration, contracting HIV, and suicide. Ensuring that transgender people have access to shelters matching their gender identity is critical to their health, safety, dignity, and empowerment.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and your attention to these comments.

Best,

Brad Hoylman

New York State Senate

27th District

Daniel Squadron

New York State Senate

26th District