30 May 2016

The House of Representatives
The General Court of Massachusetts
Boston, MA, 02133

Speaker DeLeo and Members of the House of Representatives:

We write to you regarding Bill H.4253, *An Act relative to gender identity and nondiscrimination.*

The MIT Graduate Student Council (GSC) represents the 6,800 graduate students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in all matters concerning their welfare, academic opportunities, and professional development. GSC firmly supports all measures that protect the rights of all students, regardless of gender identity. Therefore, we strongly support Bill H.4253.

Protecting the civil rights of people of all gender identities in all settings, including public accommodations, is an important step toward safeguarding the rights of all MIT students and all visitors and residents of our Commonwealth. Many other governments have already taken this important step, including seventeen states, Washington D.C., and approximately 225 cities and towns across the United States. Right here in Massachusetts, thirteen municipalities, including Cambridge, have enacted local ordinances that protect gender identity in public spaces, all with the support of local law enforcement.

Public accommodations protections were not included in the 2012 Transgender Equal Rights Act because some business owners mistakenly believed that they would have to install new restrooms or make other burdensome changes to accommodate this law. However, this is simply not true: patrons of Massachusetts businesses and public facilities already use the restroom of the gender with which they most closely identify. This law would simply extend protections for them to continue to do so without discrimination. We urge our state representatives to reject this false argument and help provide accurate information to business owners in Massachusetts, and when it comes to the floor on June 1st, we urge you to pass Bill H.4253.

We appreciate the work you do on behalf of all residents of our great Commonwealth.

Best regards,

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