



MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL

16 November 2015

The Honorable Charlie Baker
Governor of Massachusetts
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Mr. Baker:

We write to you regarding Bill H.1577, *An Act relative to gender identity and nondiscrimination*, and Bill S.735, *An Act relative to transgender anti-discrimination*.

The MIT Graduate Student Council (GSC) represents the 6,800 graduate students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in all matters, both within and outside the institute, concerning their welfare and academic opportunities. GSC firmly supports all measures that protect the rights of all students, regardless of gender identity. Therefore, **we strongly support Bills H.1577 and S.735**.

Members of the GSC Legislative Action team had an opportunity to meet several of our legislators in a Statehouse Visit on October 27th. This visit enabled us to learn a great deal about the details of business in the General Court and about the prospects for passage of these bills. As a result of that visit, we have learned that H.1577 may come to the floor of the House for a vote this week. We also learned that several legislators, both supporters of the bill and not, are concerned that you might veto this bill if it were to pass.

Governor Baker, we urge you to publicly state your support for Bills H.1577 and S.735 and sign them if they reach your desk. Protecting the civil rights of people of all gender identities in all settings, including public accommodations, is an important step toward safeguarding the rights 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. These laws have not caused any negative impacts or hurtful incidents.

We recognize that some business owners believe that they will have to install new restrooms to accommodate this law and that this concern has led to changes to previously proposed laws protecting gender identity. This is simply not true: Patrons of Massachusetts businesses already use the restroom of the gender with which they most closely identify. This practice will continue after passage of this law. **We urge you to reject this false argument and help provide accurate information to business owners in Massachusetts.**

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

Best regards,

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MIT Nuclear Science and Engineering

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MIT Civil and Environmental Engineering

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