

10 Things Businesses Can Do Right Now to Support People Affected by HB2

If you run a business in North Carolina, here are 10 things you can do to show your support for people affected by House Bill 2.

Not sure what HB2 is? You can start with a summary here:

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/politics-government/article68401147.html>

Or read the full text of the bill here:

<http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2015E2/Bills/House/PDF/H2v0.pdf>

1. **If you have unisex bathrooms**, make sure your signage says they are "all-gender" restrooms. This shows people that you recognize there are many gender identities, and that you are welcoming of all us in your establishment. Here are some great signage options: <http://www.mydoorsign.com/all-gender-restroom-signs>
2. **If you have single-occupancy bathrooms**, make them all-gender instead of women's/men's.
3. **If you have multiple-occupancy, gender-specific (women's/men's) bathrooms**, put up signs to let people know you support everyone using the bathroom that they consider appropriate for their gender identity. HB2 specifies that public agencies and schools must require that usage of multiple-occupancy bathrooms be based on people's birth certificates. The law does not, however, make that same requirement of privately owned businesses. Bathrooms are a site of frequent harassment of and violence against transgender people, so please support our decision to use the one that will keep us the safest.
4. **Educate your employees about respecting everyone's gender identity** and not making assumptions about how people identify. This includes avoiding using gendered honorifics ("sir" and "ma'am"); avoiding referring to a group of people as "ladies," "gentlemen," "guys," etc.; and being careful about assuming which pronouns someone uses (he/she/they/etc.). Transgender and gender-non-conforming people often face interactions like these that invalidate our gender identity many times each day, and it can seriously impact our safety and mental health.
5. **Have a clear non-discrimination policy** that includes sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, and familial status. HB2 keeps NC cities from being able to do so, but as a business you can set your own policy.

6. **Pay your employees a living wage.** HB2 says that municipalities cannot have minimum wages that are higher than that set by the state. Low wages disproportionately affect transgender people and people of color, with transgender people of color in particular reporting extremely high rates of poverty. (Check out the Raise Up initiative: <http://www.raiseupfor15.org/>; and if you're in Durham, the Durham Living Wage Project: <http://www.durhamlivingwage.org/>)
7. **If you are able to provide health insurance for your employees,** try to find an insurance plan that covers medical procedures related to gender transition (such as hormone replacement therapy and gender confirmation surgeries) or advocate that the insurance company includes these in their list of coverage. These procedures can greatly improve transgender people's quality of life, but are often financially inaccessible when paid out of pocket.
8. **If you want to be a family-friendly establishment,** put changing tables in all your bathrooms. Limiting changing table access to women's rooms assumes the gender of who might be caring for small children.
9. **Continue to educate yourself about issues affecting LGBTQ people.** Employment discrimination and bathroom access have both significantly impacted our communities for many years, yet many people have just become aware of them during recent media coverage. We will continue to need your support when the fanfare subsides!
10. **Continue to educate yourself about issues affecting all marginalized populations,** including people of color, immigrants, and people with disabilities. LGBTQ people within these populations feel the impact of combined oppressions at even higher rates. None of us are free until we are all free!



For more information:



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