

Union Resolution on GENDA

GENDA is a bill that adds the category of gender identity and expression to the already existing New York State human rights law.

- *Gender expression* is all external characteristics and behaviors that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine, such as dress, mannerisms, name, physical characteristics and speech patterns.
- *Gender Identity* is a person's innate, deeply felt psychological identification as male or female, which may or may not correspond to the person's body or assigned sex at birth.

The current law makes it illegal in New York State to discriminate on the basis of age, race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, sex, marital status and other categories in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, education and credit. However, the current human right statute does not explicitly ban discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression.

There are however 13 states and DC and over ninety localities across the United States that have passed local gender identity and expression non-discrimination laws, including New York localities like the City of Albany, City of Buffalo, City of Ithaca, New York City, Rhinebeck (city employees only), City of Rochester, Suffolk County, and Tompkins County. Even large unionized companies like AT&T, Liz Claiborne, Corning Inc., General Motors, the *New York Times*, and Xerox have taken a stand against this kind of discrimination.

There are many documented cases where social antagonism against gender variant (including transgender) individuals and their families, has led to employees being denied a job offer, fired from a job, harassed in the workplace, given inadequate medical care and otherwise treated as second-class citizens solely because of their gender identity and expression. As with the rest of the human rights law, all this bill would do is mandate equal treatment and create an equal playing field. There clearly is a need to extend the human rights law to cover gender identity and expression.

Therefore, be it resolved: We affirm the labor movement's commitment to basic civil rights for all union members, including our members not currently protected by New York State human rights laws; and

We support local legislation and will recommend that the NYS AFL CIO support state legislation that extends these basic human rights, regardless of an individual's gender identity or gender expression; and

We recommend that the NYS AFL- CIO call on the New York State legislature and governor to enact a law to ban discrimination based on gender identity and expression, and urge our affiliates to actively work to achieve that goal.

