



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
NEW HAMPSHIRE

www.LWVNH.org

4 Park St. Room 200
Concord, NH 03301

February 2017

re **HB 478—adding gender identity to the non-discrimination statutes**

To the chair and members of the House Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee:

As you know, the League of Women Voters is a non-partisan grassroots organization that has been working for 97 years to protect the rights of all citizens. We believe in equality and good government. Thus **we urge the committee to vote Ought to Pass on HB 478.**

The issue of gender identity was not a topic openly discussed when the legislature passed RSA 354:A. (1992, amended 1997 and 1998). But clearly the legislators then valued the principles of our democracy in protecting its people from discrimination in those areas where the government has the power to do so. HB 478 simply adds two words to this otherwise powerful message:

“The general court hereby finds and declares that practices of discrimination against any of its inhabitants because of age, sex, gender identity, race, creed, color, marital status, familial status, physical or mental disability or national origin are a matter of state concern, that such discrimination not only threatens the rights and proper privileges of its inhabitants but menaces the institutions and foundation of a free democratic state and threatens the peace, order, health, safety and general welfare of the state and its inhabitants.”

Some of the characteristics in the list are under the power of the individual to change--marital status and familial status and creed, for example. Most are not, even if some of us might like to change the age part. But they have not been sorted by “inherent” or “under the individual’s control.” All in the list in the current RSA are protected from discrimination. We urge the committee to ignore sensational statements in the public and social media about gender identity issues in other states and act in the best tradition of the New Hampshire way, to protect the rights of all.

The League urges a vote of “Ought to Pass” on HB 478.

Respectfully submitted,

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