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**MAYOR DE BLASIO LAUNCHES FIRST EVER CITYWIDE AD CAMPAIGN  
AFFIRMING RIGHT TO USE BATHROOMS CONSISTENT WITH GENDER  
IDENTITY**

*New York City first municipality to launch citywide campaign on bathroom use and gender identity*

*Ads will appear in subway cars, bus shelters, phone booths, NYC TV, ethnic and community newspapers, and on social media*



**NEW YORK**— Mayor Bill de Blasio and the New York City Commission on Human Rights today launched the nation’s first government-led citywide ad campaign affirming every New Yorkers’ right to use the bathroom consistent with their gender identity, regardless of their sex assigned at birth.

“No one deserves to be denied access to bathrooms or discriminated against for being who they are. Every New Yorker has the legal right to use the bathroom consistent with their gender identity, no questions asked – and these powerful ads affirm this right,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “New York City has long been a leader in the fight for LGBTQ equality, and these ads are further evidence of the City’s unwavering support of our diverse communities. While other cities and states are legislating intolerance and taking away individuals’ right to use bathrooms consistent with their gender identity, we are proudly standing with our transgender and gender non-conforming New Yorkers.”

“Every New Yorker has the right to use the restroom that matches their gender identity and where they feel comfortable and safe,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray, Honorary Chair of the Commission on Gender Equity**. “No New Yorker should have to worry about hiding their gender identity to take care of basic human needs. Others may advance hateful agendas that discriminate based on gender or gender identity, but that kind of bigotry will never be acceptable here, and we will keep fighting to root it out until no New Yorker feels discriminated against.”

The campaign, which kicks off LGBTQ Pride Month, includes ads and videos featuring transgender New Yorkers and instructs readers to “look past pink and blue” and to “use the restroom consistent with who you are.” The ads will appear in subway cars, bus shelters, phone booths, ethnic and community newspapers, and in ads in digital publications and across social media in English and Spanish. Ethnic newspaper ads will appear in Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Russian and Bengali. Later this month, the Commission will release two digital videos, also featuring transgender New Yorkers, as part of the campaign affirming the bathroom access rights of transgender and gender non-conforming New Yorkers.

The campaign ads and videos were created following audience research with transgender and cisgender New Yorkers and input from transgender community and legal advocates. The ads feature real transgender New Yorkers, including Alisha King, a Bronx resident and full-time mom; Charlie Solidum, a Brooklyn resident and health care professional; Ky Platt, a Bronx resident and technical theatre professional; and Ariel Murtagh, a transgender rights activist and rising high school student. Participants joined this campaign to raise awareness of transgender rights and the legal right to use bathrooms consistent with their identity in New York City.

“Bathroom discrimination is a regular occurrence for the transgender community,” said **Alisha King**. “So much so that many of us avoid even using public restrooms to begin with. I sincerely hope these ads help people understand that transgender people are people just like you. We just want to use the restroom safely and be treated with respect.”

"Given the recent national rhetoric threatening trans peoples' access to public spaces, I feel privileged to live in New York City, where the laws are explicit about protecting us regardless of our documentation, transition status or gender expression", said **Charles Solidum**. “Harassment and discrimination of trans people in bathrooms happen every day, especially for trans women and gender non-conforming folks. These ads help to ensure trans New Yorkers know that the city stands with us and supports our access to the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.”



## Leading the Nation

New York City continues to lead the nation in protecting the rights of the transgender and gender non-conforming community. In December 2015, the NYC Commission on Human Rights issued [legal enforcement guidance](#) defining specific gender identity protections under the City Human Rights Law, including equal bathroom access. In March, Mayor de Blasio issued an executive order requiring City agencies to ensure that employees and members of the public are given equal access to City single-sex facilities without being required to show identification, medical documentation or any other form of proof or verification of gender. Today, New York City becomes the first municipality to launch a citywide campaign specifically affirming the right of transgender individuals to use the bathroom consistent with their gender identity or expression.

The City's campaign ads come at time when many cities and states continue to deny transgender and gender non-conforming people the right to use bathrooms consistent with their gender identity or expression. At last count, 11 states are suing the U.S. Department of Justice following a letter from the Obama administration directing schools to grant transgender students equal access to bathrooms and locker rooms. To this day, more than 200 bills have been introduced in 32 states this year that would deny LGBT individuals the same rights as everyone else, according to the [Human Rights Campaign](#).

In New York City, equal bathroom access has been policy for years, including in New York City public schools. Despite the often-cited myth that these policies encourage bathroom attacks, there has been no reported incidence in New York City. The New York City Human Rights Law has protected gender identity and expression since 2002 when then-Council Member Bill de Blasio co-sponsored an amendment to add it to the law as a protected category.

Studies show that transgender and gender nonconforming people routinely experience gender identity discrimination in the workplace, at school and in public accommodations. In a [nationwide survey](#) conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 63 percent of participants said they have experienced a serious act of discrimination, including bullying, loss of job due to bias and physical or sexual assault. Roughly 90 percent reported discrimination in the workplace, including denied access to appropriate bathrooms at work, and 26 percent reported being denied access to bathrooms in an educational setting.

“Safe and equal bathrooms access is essential for everyone,” said **Human Rights Commissioner and Chair Carmelyn P. Malalis**. “And in New York City, it’s the law. We created these ads to remind every New Yorker, cis and transgender alike, that the City protects your right to live and work according to your gender identity and expression, including your right to use bathrooms consistent with their gender identity. Far too often, transgender people suffer bullying, harassment and violence for being who they are. These ads show that transgender people, like everyone else, have the right to use the restroom in peace.”

"In the 14 years that New York City has protected equal access to bathrooms, we know of no incidents where this policy has presented a public safety concern," said **Police Commissioner William J. Bratton**. "The NYPD protects the safety of all New Yorkers."

“New York City is a safe and fair City. Safety and fairness include access to bathrooms. These new ads make clear that gender fairness extends to our City facilities to improve the lives of all New Yorkers,” said **Counsel to the Mayor Maya Wiley**.

“Whether in the bathroom or elsewhere, every person – regardless of their gender identity – has the right to freedom from harassment of any kind, be it insults, bullying or assault,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams**. “By affirming that all New Yorkers have the right to use the bathroom consistent with their gender identity, as the law requires, this campaign continues our City’s tradition as a leader in protecting the right of each individual to full and equal participation in our civil society.”

"All New Yorkers should have access to the bathrooms, locker rooms and other single-sex facilities they feel are most appropriate to them without the risk of shaming, baseless policing or an unjustified invasion of their privacy," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “Sending that message loud and clear is the right thing to do.”

"New York values mean basic fairness for all," said **State Senator Daniel Squadron**. "As we continue to make progress for transgender and gender non-conforming New Yorkers throughout the state, I thank the City for this step, and continue to urge the state to pass GENDA and codify basic protections for all."

**Assembly Member Felix W. Ortiz** said, “I am proud that New York City is leading the way to ensure that everyone, regardless of their sexual identity, will have equal access to restrooms throughout the five boroughs. A successful advertising campaign will let everyone know that diversity and equality matter. There is no room in New York for the hatred or divisiveness we’ve seen elsewhere.”

"Discrimination against transgender and gender non-conforming people has no place in our city," said **Council Member Daniel Dromm**. "As a Council Member representing one of the largest transgender communities in New York City, I applaud Mayor de Blasio for launching this historic ad campaign which affirms the right to use the bathrooms consistent with one's gender identity. I will continue to support this trailblazing campaign and work to enhance protections for all transgender and non-confirming individuals across the five boroughs."

“This campaign reaffirms our commitment to equality as New Yorkers,” said **Council Member Corey Johnson**. “When civil rights are under attack around the country, we in New York emphasize the importance of inclusion and diversity. That’s exactly what this campaign is all about. By bringing exposure to this important citywide policy, we are building a culture of acceptance and proclaiming our values as New Yorkers. I thank Mayor de Blasio and NYC Human Rights Commissioner and Chair Carmelyn P. Malalis for this important campaign.”

"Once again, New York City continues to be a leader in ensuring rights for all people are protected and enhanced. This campaign is a clear message that our City will protect the right of transgender people to use facilities that are in line with their gender identity and expression. It is

an important and visible campaign that speaks loudly to our City's values," said **Council Member Ritchie Torres**.

**Council Member Carlos Menchaca** said, "Every New Yorker deserves equal access to public accommodations. I am proud my city upholds the right of everyone to define their own identity. As the nation's leader in LGBT equality, we share an expectation of safe and equal bathroom access. Now, New York City is showing the nation how to promote equality using an ad campaign featuring authentic individuals. The transgender and gender non-conforming people who have experienced discrimination and faced danger have much to teach us about securing equality for all."

"At a time when transgender people face staggering rates of discrimination and violence, it's critical that they receive the same protections as everybody else, including the basic right to use the bathroom that matches who they are," said **GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis**. "With this groundbreaking ad campaign, New York City and Mayor de Blasio continue their strong legacy of support for LGBT New Yorkers."

"The Center stands firmly behind this powerful ad campaign to reinforce what Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Malalis stated last March – that all New Yorkers deserve the same rights and protections, including our transgender and gender nonconforming community members," said **Executive Director of The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center Glenda Testone**. "New York has long been a proud leader in protecting our citizens' rights, and we're thrilled to see the city stepping up to ensure that every person has the freedom to use the bathroom consistent with their gender identity."

"It's so heartening that Mayor de Blasio has consistently shown true leadership in making sure that all of New York City's residents can participate fully in public life," said **Executive Director of the National Center for Transgender Equality Mara Keisling**. "Many Americans still don't know who transgender people are, which can lead them to form inaccurate conclusions. This ad campaign not only reaffirms that transgender people's safety and well-being are a priority for the Mayor, but will also help people realize that transgender New Yorkers are just New Yorkers."

### **Reporting Discrimination**

If a member of the public believes they have been discriminated against on the basis of gender or gender identity at work, in housing, or in public accommodations, they should call 311 and ask for the Commission on Human Rights. Individuals also have the opportunity to go to court and file a claim under the New York City Human Rights Law. For more information, please visit [nyc.gov/humanrights](http://nyc.gov/humanrights) and follow [@NYCCHR](https://twitter.com/NYCCHR) on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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