

Equality New York (EQNY) is an advocacy organization that unites and amplifies the social and political voices of the LGBTQI communities throughout New York State. EQNY is the largest LGBTQI statewide coalition with 90+ organizations & 5,500 members & counting.

INTERSECTIONAL COMMITTEES & POLICY PLATFORM

This year, we launched five new committees which meet monthly to advocate for inclusive legislation. Each committee focuses on different statewide strategies that include legislation and budget items that will lead to advancing the lives of all LGBTQI New Yorkers and their families.

- **Bodily Autonomy & Reproductive Justice**
- **Disability Justice & Mental Health Access**
- **Racial Justice**
- **Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming, & Non-Binary Equity**
- **Youth, Families & Agine Communities Protections**

Bodily Autonomy & Reproductive Justice

Promote Comprehensive Sex Ed in Schools S2584 (Brouk) / A6616 (Nolan)

This bill requires that comprehensive, age-appropriate, medically accurate sex education be taught in public schools.

Comprehensive Sex Education is a rights-based approach that seeks to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they need to determine and enjoy their sexuality—physically and emotionally, individually and in relationships. It is important that young people navigate the difference between gender and sex; exploring gender roles and attributes; society's changing norms and values; gender bias, stereotypes and inequality (including self-stigmatization).

Decriminalizing Sex Work Bill S3075 (Salazar) / A849 (Gottfried)

This bill relates to the decriminalization of sex work; repealer.

The decriminalization of prostitution and related acts can be viewed through many lenses, including: labor rights, sexual freedom, bodily autonomy, gender justice, racial justice, gay rights, transgender rights, and criminal justice reform. Sex workers' rights is all of these things - and sits at the intersection of so many critical social justice movements. Supporting people who engage in sexual labor is a natural fit for LGBTQI rights. Many sex workers identify as queer, and a disproportionate number of transgender women engage in sex work. Cisgender and transgender women who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) bear a disproportionate brunt of enforcement of New York laws criminalizing sex work, and the adverse consequences that follow. And police mistreatment of LGBTQI people, especially Black and Latinx LGBTQI people, is a persistent problem.

Disability Justice & Mental Health Access

Develop a bill to ban conversion therapy on adults under guardianship.

This bill would ban the use of conversion therapy on those over the age of 18 and under legal guardianship.

The current New York State conversion therapy ban forbids conversion therapy on minors under 18. However, it leaves out adults who are under guardianship because of a mental or intellectual disability. They could be currently forced into conversion therapy. The District of Columbia recently passed such a ban and is the only jurisdiction to do so. New York State would be the second entity and first state to pass this legislation.

Develop a bill to help discontinue the use of police and other armed officers in mental responses.

This bill would stop the abusive force used by police and armed officers in mental response throughout New York State.

A majority of people shot by law enforcement nationally are disabled, often with mental illness. Currently, armed law enforcement is untrained to deal with anyone experiencing a mental health crisis. Inadequate training or understanding of mental health leads to police violence. We must pass reform requiring unarmed crisis personnel to be the response to mental health crises.

Further data collection on Kendra's Law and involuntary commitments based on LGBTQ identity.

This change will enhance and support better data collection on Kendra's Law.

We know that outpatient commitments due to mental illness authorized under Kendra's Law are racially biased and impact disproportionately New Yorkers of color. We need to know more about whether LGBTQ people are being disproportionately targeted by the mental health court system.

Racial Justice

An act to amend the executive law, in relation to establishing the office of racial equity and social justice.

S3468A (Kennedy)/A02358 (Peoples-Stokes)

This bill relates to creating an office of racial equity and social justice

An act to amend the penal law, in relation to individuals engaged in prostitution who are victims of or witnesses to a crime. S2233A (Sepúlveda) / A255A (Gottfried)

This bill relates to individuals engaged in prostitution who are victims of or witnesses to a crime

An act relating to requiring home health aides and nurse's aides to receive training in working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals. S2534 (Rivera) / A1880 (Dinowitz)

This bill relates to the creation of LGBTQI curriculum for health aides and nurses.

An act to amend the criminal procedure law and the penal law, in relation to granting certain individual youthful offender status; to add a new category of individuals eligible for young adult offender status; and to repeal certain provisions of the criminal procedure law relating thereto. S5749 (Myrie) / A3536A (O'Donnell)

This bill relates to the granting of some youthful offender status or young adult offender status.

Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming, Non-Binary, & Intersex Equity

TGNCNB Anti-Discrimination Requirements in Schools S369 (Hoylman) / A840 (Gottfried).

This bill relates to schools adopting policies and procedures that ensure that schools and their employees treat students consistent with their gender identities or expressions.

Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming, and Non-Binary (TGNCNB) students are routinely misgendered and denied equal opportunities in educational settings. While some, but very few, large New York school districts have policies to ensure equal participation for all young people without regard to gender identity and expression, many school districts do not. Even within large school districts, where there are existing policies, adherence is often shoddy and inconsistent. Affirming schools empower TGNCNB students and help their academic performance and social integration.

Gender Identity Respect Dignity and Safety Act S6677 (Salazar) / A7001-A (Rozić)

This bill relates to the treatment and placement of incarcerated people based upon gender identity.

The New York State criminal justice system often refuses basic rights to TGNCNB individuals who are incarcerated. Incarcerated TGNCNB people face much higher rates of violence, extortion, discrimination, lost opportunity, access to medications and basic needs. This bill ensures that correctional officers and staff address people by their names and pronouns; guarantees people access to commissary items, clothing, hygiene articles and other materials that are consistent with their gender identities; and establishes a right to be searched by officers of the same gender identity. It will make it unlawful to refuse or remove placement based on gender identity, or for disciplinary reasons, and strictly limit the length of involuntary protective custody. If an incarcerated person has overriding safety concerns, this bill will also enable them to opt-out of being housed consistently with their gender identity.

TGNCNBI Protections in Custody Disputes S996 (Hoylman) / (No current Assembly Sponsor)

This bill relates to the prevention of judges considering a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression when determining the best interest of the child in a custody dispute. It will also block judges from interfering with or making prohibitions against a person's desire to undergo gender reassignment for such purposes.

No family's interrelationships should be disrupted or held hostage due to a judge's arcane understanding of gender identity or misconceptions about transgender parents.

Intersex Education Bill Proposed (No Current Sponsors)

This bill relates to the banning of medically unnecessary cosmetic, genital, reconstructive surgery on intersex infants to modify atypical or ambiguous genitalia and other sex characteristics.

Intersex is an umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural variations that affect genitals, gonads, hormones, chromosomes or reproductive organs. Sometimes these characteristics are visible at birth, sometimes they appear at puberty, and sometimes they are not physically apparent at all. By modifying infants' genitalia for the purpose of making their appearance more consistent with antiquated masculine or feminine ideals you risk irreversible damage to their physical and mental well-being. These procedures should be delayed until the individual is able to make an informed decision for themselves.

Loren Borjas Transgender & Gender Non Binary Wellness and Equity Fund. (Cruz)

This fund will focus on and function to end the economic crisis presently facing New York TGNCNB communities. Accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the historical lack of proportionate funding, the TGNCNB community is suffering an ever deepening economic downturn where perpetual cycles of criminalization, unemployment, mental and physical health disparities, and homelessness are defining this already adversely affected and often victimized community.

TGNC/NB Equity in Health Insurance Act. S8061 (Reichlin-Melnick) (Currently no Assembly sponsor).

This is an act to amend the state finance law, in relation to participation in state contracts. Once passed, the state will be prohibited from entering into contracts with contractors who do not provide their employees with insurance that covers services for transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive people.

Many employers, especially large companies, self-fund their health insurance plans and/or keep their headquarter outside of New York. These plans preempt or outright avoid many New York protections, in particular, coverage for medically necessary care for transgender New Yorkers. This measure will make it clear to companies who wish to do business with this huge state that if you have a contract with New York, you must protect transgender New Yorkers.

TGNCNBI Social & Economic Equity Plan of the New York State Cannabis Control Board. S7517(Cooney)

This bill will include transgender and gender-nonbinary individuals in the social and economic equity plan of the New York state cannabis control board relating to the awarding of adult-use cannabis licenses.

Inherent in society is the arrangement of rank, the "haves and have-nots," and there is no greater divide than the difference between those advantaged and that of the transgender, gender non-binary community. This measure will ensure reinvestment within the historically disadvantaged community battered and abused by over policing, over incarceration, poverty and despair.

Youth, Families & Aging Communities Protections

TGNCNB Anti-Discrimination Requirements in Schools S369 (Hoylman) /A840 (Gottfried)

This bill relates to the adoption of school policies and procedures that ensure schools and their employees treat students consistently with their gender identities or expressions.

Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming, and Non-Binary (TGNCNB) students are routinely misgendered and denied equal opportunities in educational settings. While some large New York school districts have policies to ensure equal participation for all young people without regard to gender identity and expression, many school districts do not even within large school districts adherence to existing policies can be inconsistent. Affirming schools empower TGNCNB students and help their academic performance and social integration. Correctly using students' names and pronouns, allowing students to participate in single-sex activities and use single-sex spaces most consistent with their gender identities, and making sure students' records accurately reflect their gender are concrete ways to protect TGNCNB students in school.

Develop a New York State “Every Child Deserves a Family Act” bill patterned off draft federal legislation.

This bill would require non-discrimination in federally funded adoption and foster care services, for pre-adoptive, adoptive and foster parents and children and youth in foster care. We propose spending a year researching how other states have approached the issue, interviewing youth in foster care, holding public forums, and engaging the community generally.

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity has no place in the provision of adoption and foster care services. New York law has led the country in access to the courts on these important family building modes, however some providers continue to impose obstacles on LGBTQI potential parents. LGBTQI youth in foster care are more vulnerable still to discrimination from agencies, social workers, and foster/ adoptive parents. Agencies and county social services departments should be provided with resources outlining legal and practical changes required to ensure equitable treatment of young people in their custody.

LGBTQI-inclusive Curriculum S1929 (Jackson)/ A808 (O'Donnell)

This bill relates to bringing classroom materials into alignment with Core Curriculum Content Standards by ensuring students receive diverse instruction in history and the social sciences which will cultivate respect towards minority groups.

LGBTQI inclusive curricula benefit students of all sexual orientations and gender identities in several key areas. Students gain an unbiased and more thorough understanding of the LGBTQI community while learning how to promote acceptance. Students receive validation of their experiences, sexual orientations and gender identities and find a safe space to express their opinions and values.

Greatest Social Need S78 (Hoylman)

This bill relates to the elder law by clarifying the meaning of the phrase “greatest social need” for purposes of the administration of programs under the federal Older Americans Act of 1965.

In 2012, the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, issued new guidance on the definition of the term “greatest social need,” giving states the discretion to include “individuals isolated due to sexual orientation and gender identity” and other at-risk populations. By legislatively making this designation, LGBTQI elders and older people living with HIV will no longer have to avoid services or care for fear of not being treated and cared for as their true selves.