



National Association of Social Workers

50 Broadway • 10<sup>th</sup> Floor • New York NY • 10004 • Phone: (212) 668-0050 • Fax: (212) 668-0305

Website: [www.naswnyc.org](http://www.naswnyc.org) • E-Mail: [contactus@naswnyc.org](mailto:contactus@naswnyc.org)

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Sandra Bernabei, President  
Candida Brooks-Harrison, President-Elect  
Brian Romero, Chair of LGBT Committee  
Robert Schachter, Executive Director  
NASW-NYC Executive Committee

## NASW-NYC Opposes Anti-LGBTQ Legislation and Calls the Profession to Action

The National Association of Social Workers – NYC Chapter joins the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Committee and the Coalition on Race, Diversity & Intersectionality (CRDI) in denouncing the current wave of oppressive anti-LGBTQ legislation in the United States.

Recently, the state of North Carolina legislature and governor passed legislation that disallows localities to pass anti-discrimination ordinances and which bars transgender people from using bathrooms consistent with their gender identity and expression (“bathroom bill”). Mississippi’s legislature and governor also passed legislation allowing businesses to deny services to same-sex couples on a religious basis. Most recently, the state of Tennessee passed a bathroom bill as well as legislation that would allow mental health professionals to refuse to work with or assist clients who “violate sincerely held beliefs” including LGBTQ social services clients and psychotherapy patients. This particular bill has been vetoed by the governor but nonetheless sends a signal that the human rights of LGBTQ+ individuals can be overlooked and stripped from them at any point.

These acts violate international human rights conventions and are in direct opposition to our profession’s Code of Ethics.

This series of anti-LGBTQ legislation has been the result of a backlash against recent progress in defending and advancing the rights of LGBTQ individuals and communities, and we must resist. The three states mentioned earlier are examples of a larger strategy to oppress and discriminate against those along the gender and sexuality spectrums. According to Jennifer Bendery and Michelangelo Signorile, both writers for the Huffington Post, “there are more than 100 active bills like this right now, across 22 states — but they all have the same goal: legalizing discrimination against queer people.” This legislation cannot be allowed to pass, as it is a

systematic assault on the lives of those most marginalized in our society, many of whom enter our workplaces having suffered trauma, criminalization, violence, and the denial of essential resources needed to survive.

NASW-NYC joins the National NASW and calls on local chapters and NASW members to directly oppose this surge of hatred, of institutional racism, homophobia, transphobia, transmysogny, and heteropatriarchy. We call on you to be in solidarity with LGBTQ social workers and communities. We call on legislators to reject or veto oppressive legislation in their states. We call on human rights groups, activists, businesses and civil society to do what is right; to spread love and to reject bigotry. The time when inaction was acceptable has past and complicity with social injustice continues to threaten real lives today. Organize. Resist. But do it today.

*“It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love each other and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains” – Assata Shakur*

Sources:

Bendery, J and Michelangelo S. (2016, April 15). Everything You Need To Know About The Wave Of 100+ Anti-LGBT Bills Pending In States. The Huffington Post. Retrieved from: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/lgbt-state-bills-discrimination\\_us\\_570ff4f2e4b0060ccda2a7a9](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/lgbt-state-bills-discrimination_us_570ff4f2e4b0060ccda2a7a9)

For more info visit: <http://www.naswnyc.org/?181>