



New York City Comptroller
Scott M. Stringer

NEWS

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COMPTROLLER STRINGER PROPOSES LEGISLATION TO EXPAND PROTECTIONS FOR TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING COMMUNITIES

Council Member Daniel Dromm to sponsor bill to require single-occupancy restrooms to become gender-neutral

New York, NY – In an effort to reduce harassment faced by transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, on Friday, New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer outlined proposed legislation that would require all publicly-accessible single-occupancy restrooms to become gender-neutral and change City codes to allow building owners to designate more gender-neutral restrooms.

The proposed legislation, which will be introduced by Council Member Daniel Dromm, is outlined in Comptroller Stringer's new [report](#), "Restrooms for All: A Plan to Expand Gender-Neutral Restrooms in NYC." The report highlights the difficulties faced by many transgender and gender non-conforming individuals when using public restrooms and what steps other cities and states have taken to protect these communities.

"We cannot wait to ensure that all New Yorkers, regardless of their gender identity or expression, are able to access a safe restroom anywhere in the five boroughs," Comptroller Stringer said. "This legislation would reduce the potential for harassment and discrimination for the more than 25,000 transgender and gender non-conforming individuals who live in New York City. Expanding the number of gender-neutral facilities is a concrete step that we can take to make our City a more accepting place."

"No one should ever be afraid to go to the restroom," New York City Council Member Daniel Dromm said. "However, due to their gender identity or expression, many New Yorkers often face harassment and violence whenever they try to do what most of us take for granted. In response, I have been working with Comptroller Scott Stringer, Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, and advocates to craft a common-sense bill to address this unacceptable yet very real scenario faced by transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals."

The proposed legislation would:

- **Require existing single occupancy, publically-accessible restrooms to become gender-neutral:** All public buildings and private businesses, with certain exceptions, would be required to designate existing single-occupancy restrooms as gender-neutral with new signage.
- **Amend City codes to give building owners the opportunity to designate additional gender-neutral restrooms:** City laws currently mandate sex-specific restrooms in most buildings. This legislation would modify City codes to give building owners the option of designating gender-neutral bathrooms instead of or in addition to sex-specific facilities.

Several U.S. cities have already taken steps to provide gender-neutral restrooms. In Washington D.C., a non-discrimination bill was passed that included a mandate for businesses to make single-stall restrooms gender-neutral. Philadelphia, Austin, and West Hollywood have also passed legislation to provide safe access to restrooms for transgender persons.

The Comptroller's "Restrooms for All" report and proposal come at a time when transgender rights remain contested in the State legislature. The New York State Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA), a law that would bar discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression in New York State, has yet to be brought to the floor of the State Senate, despite the Assembly having voted in favor of it eight times.

Meanwhile, the need for greater protections for the transgender and gender non-conforming community persists. According to recent surveys by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and UCLA Law School:

- Seventy percent of transgender individuals reported denial of access to facilities, verbal harassment, or physical assault when they sought access to gender-segregated public restrooms;
- Twenty-two percent of transgender Americans have reported being denied access to the restroom at work;
- Over a quarter of transgender students in the United States have been excluded from accessing the bathroom at school; and
- Ninety percent of transgender persons have experienced workplace harassment or have taken steps to hide who they are.

"The Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund (TLDEF) applauds efforts by New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer to bring gender neutral restrooms to New York City," said Michael Silverman, Executive Director of The Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund. "The ability to use a restroom without fear, harassment and discrimination is essential to being able to do things like work or access public places. Transgender people continue to face alarming rates of harassment when accessing public facilities that align with who they are. Everyone should have equal access to public facilities. For some transgender, gender variant, and gender non-conforming individuals, this means having access to gender neutral facilities. This legislation will help ensure that transgender New Yorkers have access to safe restrooms."

"The Center has offered all gender restrooms for years because we know just how vital that is in helping trans and gender non-confirming community members feel safe," said Glenda Testone, Executive Director of The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center. "We're thrilled to see New York City stepping up to set the right example by proposing legislation promoting gender-neutral bathrooms and hope the state will follow suit and do everything they can to protect all New Yorkers."

To read the full report, please click [here](#).