

LEGAL DISCRIMINATION

No one should be denied a job, a place to live, or access to a public place or business simply because of who they are. Unfortunately, these kinds of rejection are all too common for transgender people. At the ACLU, we're committed to passing federal, state, and local laws that protect people from discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression, and we're also fighting in court to get justice for people who have experienced these kinds of discrimination.

There are no state laws in Mississippi that protect anyone from discrimination, especially those who identify as LGBT. What does that mean? This means that people could be terminated from jobs, denied housing, asked to leave a public facility, and denied access to adequate healthcare and equal educational opportunities, simply for being who they are. The only way that this will change is with the assistance of people who demand equal rights for all Mississippians!

At this current moment, Jackson and Magnolia are the only two cities in Mississippi with non-discrimination ordinances. The fully-inclusive non-discrimination ordinance (NDO) protects people from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations, based on real or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, marital status, familial status, and veteran status. The measure also expands the Jackson's hate crimes statute to include tougher penalties for perpetrators who commit crimes motivated by the victim's real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.

The new, inclusive hate crimes provision equips Magnolia to better address hate crimes within the city by requiring policies for identifying, investigating, and documenting hate crimes. The provision, which includes the same classifications protected under the NDO, also mandates that the city report hate crime statistics to the FBI.

Mississippi is one of 34 states that do not have statewide hate crime laws explicitly covering sexual orientation and gender identity, and one of 31 without fully-inclusive, comprehensive LGBTQ non-discrimination protections.