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## Transgender Discrimination At The Workplace

In today's society, transgender people are more highly discriminated than any other group in the LGBTQ+ community. Throughout the past couple of decades, the term gender identity has come to the forefront and people are becoming more aware of the meaning behind. Acceptance of someone who identifies as the opposite sex from which they are biologically born, is another story. Many people believe that gender is static and cannot be determined by anything other than biological sex. Gender identity becomes problematic to those who believe in a heterosexual relationship with a cisgender couple as a means of procreation (McGinley, 2010). A transgender person can face many obstacles in their everyday life; from work discrimination, marriage discrimination, healthcare, and overall policy differing from state to state.

Transgendered people in the workplace can face discrimination from the point of filling out an application, to working with others, and even being unjustly fired. When it comes to laws about discrimination, transgendered people are often overlooked. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, protected individuals against sex-based discrimination for employment (McGinley, 2010). The problem transgender people can face with this law is that it does not protect them based off of gender identity (McGinley, 2010). In fact, before 2012, only one federal court has looked at this type of case and found that the person was in fact being wrongfully discriminated against (McGinley, 2010). The Equal Opportunity Employment Commission began taking a stance for the law to cover any and all persons regardless of gender identity (Cruz, 2014). They believe that the law states any persons who are discriminated based on their sex have the right for a case. Since the word sex is ambiguous and can be interpreted as sexual identity versus sexual orientation versus biological sex, any person can fall under the category of sexual discrimination.

Many transgendered people also face discrimination by coworkers due to masculinity differences. According to masculinities research, women to male and male to women face the same harassing issues (Cruz, 2014). Transgender females have a harder time in the workplace due to their biological sex of being a male. Masculinity is often self-challenged by the harasser them self; a question comes into play as to whether or not the harasser feels the need to emasculate an individual due to their own insecurities (Cruz, 2014). In a San Francisco study, half of the participants stated that they faced gender discrimination in the workplace (Taylor, 2007). Moving forward, policies should implement the term gender identity to ensure all persons are covered for employment discrimination protection.

One policy that I would want to change, is the overall federal law regarding unisex/single sex bathrooms. In many states, transgendered people are not allowed to use public restrooms of the opposite sex in which they were biologically born. When this policy was looked at a few years ago, I remember many people making absurd comments about what would happen if transgendered people were allowed to use the restrooms in which they gender-identified with. The largest accusation that stuck out to me was the cry out over potential sexual harassment in the restroom. Many people made comments about whether a cisgender predator would cross-dress to seemingly identify as transgender to assault someone in the restroom.

Working for Starbucks, I was excited to find out that as a company we would be accepting of all

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individuals in any restroom of their choice; then going further down the message, I noticed that there was a hyperlink. The link led to a list of states in which the policy wouldn't be implemented due to state law; my state, Louisiana, being one of them. The steps I would take to implement this policy change would eventually lead to a written letter to my local state politicians. I would begin by doing research and pulling numbers together to see how many assaults in a public restroom were done by a cisgender vs transgender person. Transgender people also have a difficult time coming to the forefront and being open about their gender identity due to fear. I would also go to social media and try to search for people who are interested in telling their stories. A lot of people relate more to someone when they can hear the individual's journey and what they have experienced. There is not enough research on the trans community in general; having more people feel comfortable to come forward would help aid in the data that is collected.

## Reference

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