



DISCRIMINATION IN PA

Where is it occurring?

[Pennsylvania Equality Project, Inc.](#)

This study serves as a guide to determine where discrimination is happening in Pennsylvania.

David Moore
dmoore@paequality.com

Abstract

Certain classes of people are protected from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations in Pennsylvania. Under the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, people cannot be discriminated against because of “race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age or national origin, handicap or disability, use of guide or support animals because of the blindness, deafness or physical handicap of the user or because the user is a handler or trainer of support or guide animals is a matter of concern of the Commonwealth.”[1] The law does not expressly cover people based on sexual or gender identity, expression, or orientation. The law known as the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955 as amended in 1997, prohibits discrimination for employment, housing, and public accommodations, while federal and Pennsylvania education law covers discrimination at school.

This study serves as a guide to determine where discrimination is happening in Pennsylvania. As such, we define “discrimination” as any form of intimidation, bullying, segregation, harassment, or denial of service. In terms of employment, we also consider discrimination to consist of refusal to hire, discharge from employment, or harassment during the course of one’s employment, such that said discrimination occurs or has occurred on the basis of one’s sexual or gender identity, expression, or orientation. The survey also considers discrimination, bullying, and hazing that happens during the course of one’s education. As such, we consider Pennsylvania education law which says the following: [2]

“Bullying” shall mean an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of acts:

- (1) directed at another student or students;*
- (2) which occurs in a school setting;*
- (3) that is severe, persistent or pervasive; and*
- (4) that has the effect of doing any of the following:*
 - (i) substantially interfering with a student’s education;*
 - (ii) creating a threatening environment; or*
 - (iii) substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school; and*

“school setting” shall mean in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

24 P.S. § 13-1303.1-A (2008)

Responses to the survey are confidential, and throughout this report, we share anecdotal evidence based on the respondent's entry number without divulging any of the respondent's personal information beyond the county of residence, sexual orientation, gender identity, race (for demographic purposes), and age range.

We have discovered that Pennsylvania's statistics are comparable to other surveys conducted nationally regarding discrimination. We further find that most discrimination occurs at school (for people under 18 through 29), and at places of employment for people between the ages of 18 and 39. We will continue to conduct this survey in future years to compare results over time. We anticipate releasing similar reports every mid-September for at least the next five years.

Methodology & Limitations

Methodology

The Pennsylvania Equality Project conducted an online survey between June 14, 2019 and August 31, 2019. The survey was open to all Pennsylvania residents at least 13 years of age. The survey consisted of a series of questions related to demographic information, followed by a series of questions to determine where discrimination is actively happening in Pennsylvania. Survey respondents were asked to answer whether they faced discrimination at school, work, public accommodations, within a medical setting, within a governmental setting, or at some other location. Respondents were asked to provide details about all affirmative answers.

Limitations

1. Some of the survey responses included affirmative responses to questions; however, the anecdotal information was either not provided or lacking in details about specific occurrences of discrimination.
2. The survey ran for over two months. Typically survey respondents have considerably less time to submit responses to surveys. According to SurveyMonkey, surveys with between 50 and 500 responses receive 80% of all responses within the first 7 days of the survey release. [3]
3. Pennsylvania Equality Project, Inc. spent \$100 in advertising to promote the survey. Of that money, \$50 was spent in June, while \$25 each was apportioned for July and August.
4. Some respondents reported no discrimination at all. Of 150 responses, 121 reported some form of discrimination, while 29 reported none.

Confidence Interval and Margin of Error

Given the 121 responses reporting discrimination, the confidence interval for this survey was 95% with a margin of error of +/- 6.0%.

Findings

Demographics

As of August 31, 2019, the Pennsylvania Equality Project concluded its survey about where discrimination is happening in Pennsylvania. We received a total of 121 responses out of 150 submitted indicating some form of discrimination by the respondents. Of those reporting, people responding classified by sexual orientation identified as follows: 19 identified as gay, 27 identified as lesbians, 28 identified as bisexual, 21 identified as pansexual, 7 identified as asexual, 12 identified as heterosexual, 3 identified as demisexual, and 4 responded that they are of some other sexual orientation. (See Table 1)

Sexual Orientation	Number	Percentage (121)
Gay	19	15.7
Lesbian	27	22.3
Bisexual	28	23.1
Asexual	7	5.8
Pansexual	21	17.4
Demisexual	3	2.5
Heterosexual	12	9.9
Other	4	3.3

Table 1: Number of respondents to the survey based on sexual orientation

When sorted by age, our respondents reporting discrimination included: 13 people under age 18, 70 people between 18 and 29 years of age, 21 between 30 and 39 years of age, 8 people between 40 and 49 years of age, 7 people between 50 and 59 years of age, and 2 people who were 60 years of age and older. (See Table 2)

Age	Number	Percent (121)
Under 18	13	8.7
18 - 29	70	46.7
30 - 39	8	14.0
40 - 49	8	5.3
50 - 59	7	4.7
Over 60	2	1.3

Table 2: Number of respondents to the survey based on age.

When sorted by gender identity, our respondents reporting discrimination included: 23 people identify as cis-male, 44 people identify as cis-female, 17 people identify as non-binary, 11 identify as genderfluid, 9 people identify as transgender (male to female), 16 identify as transgender (female to male), and 1 identified as a some other form of gender identity. A redacted copy of our demographic material is listed on this page. Throughout the results portion of this study, whenever referring to a respondent in the third person, we use the gender pronouns we were given within the survey.

Gender Identity	Number	Percentage (121)
Cis-Male	23	19.0
Cis-Female	44	36.4
Non-binary	17	14.0
Genderfluid	11	9.1
Transgender (Male to Female)	9	7.4
Transgender (Female to Male)	16	13.2
Other	1	0.8

Table 3: Number of respondents to the survey based on self-reported gender identity.

Results

At School

Overall, most reports of discrimination are taking place at school with 68% of all respondents telling us that they hear name calling, verbal assaults and threats, and physical altercations happening on their campus grounds. While some events took place years ago, 100% (13 out of 13) of all the under 18 group reported some form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying happening within their schools. Entry 7 from Cambria County said he faced bullying on a consistent basis.

Consistently being bullied by peers over liking both and for identifying as a male. When going to the Principal, I was brushed off and told it was “The area.” And there was nothing she could do. I can’t go to gym class because they refuse to find a reasonable compromise even though I have been threatened that I Will be harmed if I go into the girls locker room. And they are worried something Will happen if I go in the male locker room.

Evidence of bullying is not limited to rural areas of Pennsylvania. In cities such as York, Erie, and Philadelphia, respondents reported verbal intimidation. Entry 20 from Erie County said that kids frequently yelled profane language and that “all gays should die.” In Philadelphia, Entry 59 commented that people “constantly harass (me) when walking through the halls because of what people assume my sexuality is.” In the case of Entry 111, the harassment consists of mis-identifying her sexual orientation, “I always get told because I’m dating a male, I’m straight. I’m not straight. I fall in love with people. not gender.”

Respondents who range in age from 18 to 29 made up the largest portion of the sample group, and within their age group 69% (48 out of 70) reported incidents of bullying or harassment at school. Entry 5 from Schuylkill County provides significant insight into what bullying took place within his Catholic high school:

Throughout my entire childhood, being gay was always a joke to my bullies. I went to a Catholic school where our priest gave lectures on how being gay was a sin and all the while, I was looking across class at all the boys I started to have feelings for. I was severely bullied throughout my whole childhood and my school didn’t care that the word gay was being used as an insult. Although I didn’t come out until much later, I know this is much of the reason why I stayed in the closet so long. Then in high school, we had one boy who was out and he was pretty badly bullied and had to sit alone everyday at lunch so I sort of knew the effect it would take on me if I came out.

Some respondents reported issues with using locker room and restroom facilities at school. Entry 12 from Lancaster County reported being hit, slapped with sticks, and having rocks thrown at them. Although recent court precedent on the subject of bathroom use may change eventual treatment at schools, Entry 13 from Butler County, reported having a knife pulled on him for “using the wrong bathroom.” Entry 15 from

Wayne County reported, “I was bullied throughout my whole school experience. It became based on my sexuality when I came out in middle school as bi, then fully when started when I came out as lesbian in my sophomore year. I couldn’t even enter the locker rooms because girls thought I was looking at them.”

Experiences related to mis-naming individual respondents and using incorrect gender pronouns were frequently reported. Entry 6 from Butler County did not fare much better. “I’ve been tailgated on my campus for having a Pride bumper sticker, been called slurs, and had my pronouns deliberately ignored by other students after clearly stating what they were.” Entry 22 from Cameron County reported that other students frequently used his birth name and gender, despite being corrected to the contrary. He also reported being called derogatory names.

When we examined the number of respondents reporting discrimination at school based on sexual orientation, we found that people who are bisexual indicated more incidents of discrimination than any other group. Of the 28 bisexual people who reported experiencing discrimination of some kind, 24 of them said their experiences were in a school environment. Gay youth, lesbians, and pansexuals reported incidents of discrimination in excess of 65% of their respective peer groups. The following tables indicate the number of respondents who reported discrimination at school based on their sexual orientation:

Sexual Orientation	Number	Percentage
Bisexual	24 out of 28	85.7
Gay	14 out of 19	73.7
Lesbian	18 out of 27	66.7
Pansexual	14 out of 21	66.7

Table 4: Number of respondents reporting discrimination at school based on sexual orientation

Examples of the types of discrimination, bullying and harassment include Entry 103, who reported, "Having faced verbal attacks, such as being called a faggot or dyke." Other gay youth faced physical confrontation simply for using the bathroom; entry 13 reported the following: "In my old school I had a knife pulled on me for "using the wrong bathroom" Other than that, light verbal abuse from a few ignorant peers." Some reported that the incidents of name calling and slurs began as young as middle school. Entry 134, a gay and gender non-binary respondent reported, "In middle school and high school, I had people who would shout slurs at me after I came out as gay." The harassment and name calling is not limited to coming only from other students; rather, teachers sometimes become part of the problem. Furthermore, evidence of name calling and harassment continue beyond the K-12 years and into college. Entry 145, a gay and transgender man reported,

In middle school and high school, I was bullied by both students and faculty. In high school, I even had a special education teacher call me gay in a derogatory way. I also experienced casual verbal bullying in college. Usually someone calling me a faggot from their car or dorm, to which I reply, 'I am, thanks.

Reports of name calling and use of slurs came not only from youth identifying as gay, but also from those who identify as either lesbian or pansexual. Entry 14 a current student who identifies as a lesbian, reported, "People make fun of gay kids behind their backs, say derogatory terms such as faggot, use gay as a negative insult, and while doing opinion activities in class, often choose against rights for gay people." Entry 55, also a current student who identifies as a lesbian, reported: "I and many others at my school are bullied not only for LGBTQ+ reasons. I was dating a girl and people kept saying lesbian And laughing. More has happened but that is the most specific one I can think of." Entry 12, a pansexual gender non-binary student mentioned being hit with sticks and having rocks thrown at them. Entry 20 reported that the verbal abuse included generic death threats in the form of "All gays should die!" What remains unclear is how frequently these events occur, and whether teacher or administration within the schools are adequately addressing the bullying, name calling, and harassment.

We also examined the number and percentage of respondents who reported based on their gender identity. Of the respondents, 44 are cis-female, 23 are cis-male, and 54 are non-cisgender people identifying as transgender, genderfluid, or gender non-binary. As a percentage of the total number within each gender identity grouping, more cis females reported harassment, bullying, or discrimination than any of the other groups. As a percentage of the total number with the cis male category, 70% (16 out of 23) reported discrimination, while 77% of cis females (34 out of 44) reported similar claims, and 59.3% of non cis-gender people (32 out of 54) reported discrimination.

At work

Approximately half of all respondents (60 out of 121) regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity reported discrimination while at work. According to The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender survey, 80% of the transgender population who were employed reported harassment or mistreatment while on the job or took steps to avoid it. [4] According to a 2018 report from the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 93% of Fortune 500 companies have non-discrimination policies in place protecting workers based on sexual orientation, and 85% of all Fortune 500 companies have non-discrimination policies in place based on gender identity.[5] While these numbers are great for the large corporations, according to Fortune.com, 28 Million people are employed with the Fortune 500 companies [6], but according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the total number of workers currently employed is close to 158 Million. Thus, roughly 17% of the employed population in the United States works for one of these large corporations. Most employees lack adequate protection in the work force. At this time, federal law offers tenuous protection at best for people based on sexual orientation or gender identity. By June 2020, the United States Supreme Court will weigh in on

three crucial cases which will determine whether sexual orientation and gender identity are protected classes under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Pennsylvania offers protection through the Human Relations Commission, but the cost of pursuing a case of the HRC is often burdensome for the employee, and many discrimination complaints are never brought to the HRC. We examined the numbers from our survey based on both sexual orientation and gender identity. Table 5 considers the total and percentage of employees who have reported discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Sexual Orientation	Number Reporting Discrimination	Percentage
Asexual	4 out of 7	57.1
Bisexual	12 out of 28	42.9
Demisexual	1 out of 3	33.0
Gay	11 out of 19	57.9
Heterosexual	7 out of 12	58.3
Lesbian	12 out of 27	44.4
Pansexual	12 out of 21	57.1
Other	1 out of 4	25.0

Table 5: Number and percentage of each sexual orientation that reported discrimination at work

People who identify as bisexual, lesbian, pansexual, or gay are the four main groups from which we will examine the anecdotal evidence of what type of discrimination is happening at work. For more anecdotal evidence from the other sexual orientation categories, refer to the Download button at the top of this page. For this section, we sorted the data for each category by sexuality first, then by gender.

First, of the 28 people who identify as bisexual and responded to our survey, 12 reported discrimination or harassment while on the job. Most of the reports involve verbal abuse. Entry 71, a bisexual non-binary person reported that they had faced discrimination while working at a local area college. They claim to have repeatedly faced erasure while at work and referred to as "lady" despite the fact that they expressly said they did not like that term. For some respondents such as Entry 118, a Cis-Female who identifies as bisexual reported that her coworkers used verbal slurs, but that neither the establishment nor her immediate supervisor did. Entry 143, a bisexual gender non-binary individual also reported verbal abuse by being referred to with the pronoun, "it."

Second, of the 27 people who identify as lesbian, 12 reported discrimination or harassment while at work. Among the 27 people who identify as lesbians, 20 are Cis-Female, and only 9 of those 20, reported discrimination. Entry 29 refers to gay jokes told by her co-workers and in her own words, "tons of questions about my sexual history." Entry 45 reported, "Many of my jobs I've had people tell me that I'm going to hell or that they'll pray for me to be fixed." Entry 75 reports that in her line of work, "[a]s a bartender, I experience this from bar patrons but rarely from coworkers and management, although it has happened." As for entry 104, she has overheard upper level management at her corporation telling derogatory jokes about LGBTQ people, but

she is relieved that her immediate supervisor is supportive. Unfortunately for entry 104, her immediate boss will be retiring soon.

Third, of the 19 people who identify as gay, 11 reported discrimination while at work. Entry 5, a gay cis-male, mentioned that while his work environment has improved in recent years, he once faced discrimination from the owner of the company at which he worked. "[Y]ears ago I used to work for a local lighting and sound company as their general manager and everyday, I would go into work and my boss (there were only three of us in the whole company) would make fun of another business owner who is gay and threatened both myself and the one employee under my leadership that if we ever came out as gay that we could find a new job somewhere 'more queer'." Some instances at work are less obvious than Entry 5. Consider Entry 32, who notes that, "Other cooks in my restaurant called me faggot but under their breath quietly." Still others noted that discrimination doesn't always come from a boss or co-workers. Frequently customers make derogatory comments, as is the case with Entry 51.

I was openly gay at that time and a woman who was very religious was promoted to my boss. She claimed to be tolerant, but was secretly trying to "save my soul" by converting me. She attempted to disrupt my home life with my partner as much as possible through scheduling. She assigned me to work with females that were encouraged by her to attempt to have workplace romances with me, including unwanted advances. Under the guise of friendship and as part of my work duties, she pressured me to accompany her to her church functions. I was unaware of how devious she was at first, but once I knew, I tried to ignore it, set boundaries, and do my job well. When none of her many plans "cured" me of my sinful ways, she fired me, privately telling me it was because I refused her help and was damned to hell, but publicly making it about job performance. In spite of being the most successful member on her team, no one in the company questioned her and I was let go.

Fourth, of the 21 people who identified on the survey as pansexual, 12 reported that they had faced discrimination in the workforce. While verbal abuse is one form of harassment at work, being denied a position with a company based on sexual orientation is equally discriminatory. Entry 59 was "denied a job at Popeye's despite having past retail experience as well as an internship at Peco [and] despite experience working with Comcast." Entry 129 remarked that filing a discrimination complaint with her bosses at the various jobs they had was a waste of time. "Most jobs I've worked have openly homophobic employees on payroll and submitting complaints is ineffective at best," according to Entry 129. Sexual harassment and unwanted sexual advances in the work place are grounds for dismissal. However, according to Entry 135, "I'm a female who often chose harder laboring jobs which led me to be not chosen in electrical field. [B]ecause I'm pansexual I must be confused and they will help me figure it out. Other words I was unwantedly groped." All three of these people are not only pansexual, but also genderfluid.

For people who are gender non-binary, such as Entry 137, pronouns are a significant issue, especially when they are misused deliberately or ignored altogether. Entry 85 pointed out that a previous employer had a space on their application for "preferred name," but the employer refused to use the preferred name and refer to them as such. The situation is made more difficult

when the employee is transitioning from female to male while working for a company. According to Entry 100,

At my previous job, I was: 1. Outed at work on several occasions 2. My boss never used my proper name, even after I started hormones, and right up until my top surgery. Also never used the right pronouns, even in front of customers. 3. When I was on medical leave for top surgery, my transness and my surgery was often discussed in negative light both to customers and between the employees. Customers that I was friends with would hear the remarks and tell me about it.

Public Accommodations

Under Pennsylvania law, it is illegal to deny anyone a public accommodation based on the individual's "race, color, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, disability, known association with a person with a disability, use of a guide or support animal due to blindness, deafness or physical disability or because the user is a handler or trainer of such animals." [7] At no point within the law are the explicit terms, *sexual orientation* or *gender identity* mentioned. Thus, it is still legal in Pennsylvania to deny an individual a public accommodation on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. What is a public accommodation? According to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission and Pennsylvania state law, a public accommodation is, "[a]ny facility, accommodation, resort or amusement which is open to, accepts or solicits the patronage of the general public, including government services." [8] For the purposes of this survey, we deliberately made government its own category to consider for discrimination. Our survey found that of the 121 people who reported discrimination, 31 faced said discrimination in a public accommodation.

In terms of discrimination based on gender identity, Entry 76 mentions that she faces harassment when she goes with her partner to night clubs, bars, and restaurants. Entry 29 told us about a generic incident in which she claims, "[p]eople asking where my husband is. Then after I write wife 50 times on an application, they still don't apologize." Entry 75 explained that most of the bullying and intimidation events happen "on public transportation, mostly in the form of unwanted comments." Entry 57 an at the time pre-op transgender person referred to pat downs by the TSA agents at airports. Unfortunately, the remainder of the respondents who reported that they faced discrimination within public accommodations left their answers blank. While some issues with discrimination based on sexual orientation are not readily resolved, one particular case shows that we can fight against the discrimination when it impacts us individually. Entry 11, a gay cis-male reported an issue involving a rental car and his perceived sexual orientation.

I had a rental car, tire pressure light came on. I stopped at an Avis branch and asked them for assistance. Representative told me to go to air machine at a convenience store to fill it (no manual in car so no idea how much to put in or if there was another issue with tire). I mentioned this to her and she said a real man would know how to put air in tire. Manager was of no assistance. Filed

complaint with corporate and made complaint with Human Relations. Manager was also the owner of that franchise location agreed to make donation equal to rental contract price to a LGBT organization which I chose.

Housing discrimination is still a problem in Pennsylvania. Entry 147 reports that she believes that she and her partner were denied a rental unit in an apartment complex, but lacks any specific proof. However, Entry 70 reported the following:

I had a small apartment in the only building in town that I could afford at the time. The religious landlord openly told me he did not rent to "faggots," and additionally that he would evict anyone that the super downstairs noticed "having overnight guests that they weren't married to." I had to hide my sexuality completely so I wouldn't be homeless. I couldn't have friends who were openly gay visit me. I couldn't bring any guys I was dating home to my place. It was like living behind enemy lines. It was very stressful, but I knew there was no legal protection and I could be evicted. When I finally met my partner, I had to introduce him to the super as a family member until we could find our own place.

Medical

Medical practitioners require years of academic training in anatomy, physiology, biology, and medicine before they can practice on human patients. They also require what is commonly called "bedside manner," which in this context means how well they interact with their patients regarding their sexual orientation or gender identity. Although the [American Medical Association](#) on their website offers a guide to making a physician's practice more open to LGBTQ+ patients, frequently doctors and other medical staff do not always fully understand the sexual orientation or gender identity of their patients.[9] As a result, some of the respondents in our survey reported that they felt uncomfortable discussing their sexual or transitioning needs.

Some examples of the lack of understanding or acceptance of validity include, Entry 71, a bisexual non-binary individual, reports being uncomfortable discussing care that they need for transitioning. They responded by saying, "I had to explain what a transgender man was to my family doctor and then she repeated kept asking "so, like a girl, right?" due to this I haven't felt comfortable coming out to her yet or discussing options for medical transitioning." Entry 79, a bisexual cis-female, reported that, "[my] physician did not acknowledge my relationship with a trans man as 'valid'." Entry 91 makes a similar claim about the validity of one's identity. In his case, Entry 91 is a bisexual transgender person who is under the age of 18. He responded that, "I'm not correctly looked at because of my identity." Entry 126, a bisexual non-binary individual from York County, responded, "Doctors don't understand it and question everything." Even when the reason for seeing the doctor has nothing to do with sexual orientation or gender identity, medical staff have refused service for one of our respondents. Entry 143, a bisexual non-binary individual from Montgomery County responded, "I was refused care at an urgent care (I went for pain in my hips) because I was trans."

The most egregious example in our survey of a doctor imposing religious beliefs on a patient came from Entry 36, a gay cis-male from Lackawanna County who said:

I went to my doctor in high school for an emergency appointment regarding symptoms of depression. I'd never come out to my doctor before this and so he asked if I was gay, and whether it was a contributing factor to my depression. My doctor was a rather outspoken conservative Republican. He, too, hid behind the guise that my orientation did not disturb him, reasoning with some story of native tribes having men sleep together with men, and women with women so as to prevent overpopulation. Whether or not this was true at all, I shrugged it off, until the end of the appointment when he suggested I simply "pray" at night as part of my general health care and preservation. I could tell this was less about my depression and more a tongue-in-cheek shunning of my gayness. Thankfully, I was still referred to a counselor and eventually given antidepressants I felt I needed.

Government

The lowest reported incident rate of discrimination, harassment, or bullying came from governmental entities. Of the 121 people who reported discrimination on our survey, only 17 said that one of the sources of that discrimination came from governmental employees. Furthermore, of the 17 respondents who reported discrimination, 10 were non-cisgender. For this portion of the report, we will explore discrimination within this category, with the understanding that others reported discrimination based on sexual orientation.

For Entry 129 a pansexual, genderfluid individual from Columbia County, recognition of a third gender was one of the problems they have with the state government. Entry 88, a gay non-binary individual from Lancaster County reported, "There are many situations in which gender is restricted to the binary gender system. It's frustrating, because I'm not on that." Entry 143, a bisexual non-binary individual from Montgomery County responded by saying, "I had my name change denied in a PA court for being trans." Entry 24, a pansexual transgender person from Dauphin County, responded that she "[is] constantly getting misgendered and disrespected by the Pennsylvania state agencies." Entry 99, an asexual transgender person from Montgomery County reported that they work for the Commonwealth and faced verbal abuse from their boss. "I work for the state, where my boss called me a faggot."

At the federal level, Entry 31 a gay transgender individual from Philadelphia experienced discrimination from the TSA at an airport, but he did not divulge specific information about a particular event. Entry 52, an asexual transgender person from Lancaster county was removed from the military when DADT was still the law. She said, "I was discharged under Don't Ask Don't Tell. I rejoiced when that ban was lifted and again when transgender people were given a path to service under the Obama administration. To see that path removed and the ban on transgender once more

instituted was disheartening." One person, Entry 145 a gay transgender person from Erie County simply said, "I don't think this needs any explanation, LGBTQ+ rights are still relatively new and leaving much to be desired."

Other

When the survey was designed, we intended to consider primarily the first five aforementioned categories. However, we expected to receive some feedback in the "other" category, which allowed respondents to report about discrimination, verbal abuse, intimidation, and harassment in places such as home settings with other family members. Of the 121 people who reported discrimination on our survey, 78 said that it happened in places other than school, work, public accommodations, medical, and governmental settings. This was the second most common place from which discrimination was reported, surpassed only by schools. What follows are some of the remarks from a few of our respondents. For the sake of brevity, further examples are listed on the anecdotal evidence report, which redacts the personal information for each respondent.

Entry 6, a bisexual transgender individual from Butler County said, "I have been at Pride events before where people will walk or drive by and yell slurs and threats." Some respondents did not provide precise locations where such discrimination took place. Entry 12, a pansexual non-binary individual from Lancaster County said he experienced "[n]ame calling everywhere, sometimes threatened to be hurt." Many of the cases involved discrimination from family members who deny and refuse to validate the sexual orientation, gender identity, or partner of the individual respondent. Entry 16, a genderfluid bisexual from Pennsylvania said:

While in public with my significant other a woman approached me to let me know that I was going to hell and that "the devil has this country in his grip" I have also faced a great deal of difficulty in family situations because my family does not support me, I am not even allowed to say that I am a lesbian in family settings.

Entry 20, a pansexual non-binary individual from Erie County, and Entry 21 a pansexual cis-female from Centre County both reported that family members are homophobic, transphobic, and make fun of the LGBTQ+ community. Entry 22, a pansexual transgender person from Cameron County reported that his family deadnames him. Entry 23, a gay cis-male from Philadelphia reported having his window smashed when he put up his Pride flag. In the case of Entry 52, an asexual transgender person from Lancaster County, housing discrimination meant that she has frequently been dismissed by potential landlords as soon as they know her gender identity. In her own words, she says, "I struggled to find an apartment. I'm open and visible as a transgender woman and many conversations with potential landlords would end unexpectedly despite the property remaining available. In one case the property was removed from the listing site and put back at a price point above what I could afford only to have it return to the office listing price a month later." We conclude our findings section with one more anecdote from an over 60 transgender person from Bedford County. Entry 25 said without any editing on our part:

When I lived in Mann's Choice, Pa I was assaulted, I had bottles thrown at me, called foul names. I moved to Hyndman, Pa in the late 90s. We have a post office that we must pick up our mail from. My sister went to pick up the mail a week after we moved in. The state of Pa had sent my drivers license renewal in both my old name and my legal name. The post office people asked who this other person was my sister answered it's my sister Kathys old name. Several people with trucks gathered in front of my apt later that day and one stepped forward threatening to kill me. I called the mayor who said things were fine until I arrived. Called the state police who came to my apt and told me to move. The town thugs destroyed my 1991 Chevy Lumina. They shot out the tail lights, slashed two sets of tires, then hit the hood so hard with something it broke a part on the engine. I ended up selling it for junk. I have been disabled since the late 80s and on a fixed income. I have been shot at several times, had firearms pointed at me as I walked down the street near my home at Harcelode Apts in Hyndman. I have had people threaten me to my face. Fireworks thrown on my porch late in the evenings. Rifles pointed at me as I sat on my porch in the early morning and late evening. When I heard a man shouting back in 2008 Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve at my late evangelical neighbor I shuddered. I cannot afford to move or I would have decades ago. After the mayor got involved because these thugs were destroying others property, one even bragged at the HS about his deeds, no arrest were ever made. MD state police helicopter flew over the town for several nights while there was a PSP presence. The vandalism stopped briefly. 14 years they terrorized me and then stopped. I believe this has something to do with them leaving HS and going to college. Still I am left looking over my shoulder every time I step outside. I avoid the people of Hyndman. My neighbor gets my mail and scripts. I pass and have passed for over 25 years. I finished my therapy in Pittsburgh in the late 90s and received my first referral letter. Sadly I became ill and did not proceed further. Today I have CKD3, A-Fib, a controlled seizure disorder no seizures in decade's. COPD, Emphysema and lost part of my right lung in 2009. Was treated horribly in a Maryland Hospital. I do not announce being Transsexual to people and the term is only used in a clinical setting. With the current presidents fear mongering and hate I fear the bigots in Hyndman may be emboldened to harm me, if they remember who I am.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Discrimination against people based on sexual orientation and gender identity happens all across Pennsylvania. Our anecdotal section has reported from 46 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Harassment and bullying are significant problems in Pennsylvania's schools, as all 13 of our under 18 year old respondents reported issues at their schools. Equally troublesome is that the problem has existed for many years, as evidenced by the fact that 2 out of 3 people who reported discrimination claimed it happened at school. Discrimination in the workforce was reported by half the respondents who claimed to be impacted. Although many larger corporations have nondiscrimination policies in place, as does the state government, nothing in Pennsylvania law nor in federal law expressly protects people from work place discrimination based on *sexual orientation* and *gender identity*. Unless the US Supreme Court intervenes and rules in favor of the appellants in the cases presently pending before it, the legislature must act to assure that LGBTQ+ people are not relegated to second class citizen status.

Medical personnel need additional training on how to operate a safe space environment within their private practices. The American Medical Association has provided guidance for physicians and other staff to better serve their LGBTQ+ patients. However, without additional training on how to avoid issues such as dead-naming their patients, or ignoring issues related to their sexual orientation and gender identity. According to our survey, one out of every five patients report some form of LGBTQ+ discrimination at Pennsylvania's medical offices.

Based on the results of the survey, and a careful analysis of the respondent's comments, the Pennsylvania Equality Project makes the following recommendations to leaders in state government, in schools, and in the medical profession.

1. Pass the Pennsylvania Fairness Act to end discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations.
2. Pass tougher anti-bullying laws, and enforce policies through the Pennsylvania Department of Education to provide training for school administrators and staff.
3. Require medical personnel to receive training about LGBTQ+ issues as part of their ongoing continuing education.
4. Require all municipal, county, and state agencies to receive training about LGBTQ+ discrimination and its impact on the Commonwealth.
5. Provide additional resources for LGBTQ+ community resource and drop in centers across Pennsylvania.

Although Pennsylvania's numbers are comparable to other states, we can and must do better for our LGBTQ+ communities across the Commonwealth. Pennsylvania Equality Project remains committed to ending legal discrimination in the Commonwealth, and we will conduct a follow-up study about where discrimination is occurring in Pennsylvania in the summer, 2020.

References

1. http://giampololaw.com/docs/Human_Relations_Act.pdf Giampolo Law Firm, Search September 21, 2019
2. <https://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/pennsylvania/index.html>, Search September 21, 2019
3. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/curiosity/time-to-respond/>, Search September 21, 2019
4. Sandy E. James, Jody L. Herman, Susan Rankin, Mara Keisling, Lisa Mottet, and Ma'ayan Anafi, [*The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*](#) (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016): p. 155.
5. Human Rights Campaign Foundation, [*Corporate Equality Index 2019: Rating Workplaces on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Equality*](#) (2019): p. 7
6. <https://fortune.com/2017/06/07/fortune-500-diversity/>, Search October 20, 2019
7. <https://www.phrc.pa.gov/About-Us/Publications/Documents/Required%20Posters/Public%20Accommodations.pdf>, Search, October 20, 2019
8. [Pennsylvania Humans Relation Commission website](#), Search October 20, 2019
9. [American Medical Association](#) website, Search October 21, 2019