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COUNTY LEGISLATOR HIGGINS TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO UPDATE ALBANY COUNTY'S HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

ALBANY, N.Y. (Jan. 23, 2013) — Today, Albany County Legislator Chris Higgins (D-Center Square) introduced legislation that would update and enhance Albany County's Human Rights Law. This legislation provides greater protections to all individuals in Albany County by ensuring that the county complies with local, state, and federal anti-discrimination policies, and reinforcing the Human Rights Commission's authority to hear disputes referred to it.

"Albany County must encourage programs designed to ensure that every individual has an equal opportunity to participate in an environment free from all forms of discrimination. Updating our anti-discrimination policies as well as emphasizing the importance of this commission will show our renewed commitment to these important issues," said Higgins.

Last year, Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy signed an executive order extending civil rights protections for transgender county employees.

"Ten years is a long time for a commission of this importance to be sidelined. Now is the time to double down on the county's commitment on these issues by moving swiftly to strengthen our anti-discrimination laws and highlight the Commission's significant role in ensuring that these laws are effectively implemented," Higgins continued.

The legislation represents months of collaborative work between Higgins, the Empire State Pride Agenda and the New York Civil Liberties Union.

"Human Rights legislation in Albany County is long overdue. We appreciate Christopher Higgins taking the lead in ensuring that all people in Albany County are protected from discrimination," said Melanie Trimble director of the NYCLU's Capital Region Chapter.

"We are enthusiastic that Albany County has a chance to become the eleventh municipality in New York State to adopt a transgender non-discrimination ordinance. It is high time that people residing in Albany County have basic protections in areas such as housing, employment, public accommodation and credit. No hard working New Yorker, including transgender New Yorkers should live in fear of losing their job based on something that has nothing to do with their job performance," said Nathan M. Schaefer, executive director of the Empire State Pride Agenda.



This local law would codify that protection as well as prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, creed, color, national origin, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, familial status, partnership status, alienage or citizenship status, predisposing genetic characteristic, lawful source of income status, status as a domestic violence victim, or because children are, may be or would be residing with such person or persons, in areas of employment, public accommodations, housing and real property transactions.

The local law will be formally introduced at the Albany County Legislature's February meeting and referred to the law committee for consideration.

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