1. Philadelphia’s local laws protect LGBTQ residents. In Philadelphia, it is illegal for employers, housing providers, businesses, providers of public accommodations and city services to discriminate against anyone because of their gender identity, sex, or sexual orientation. People can use any bathroom consistent with their gender identity and any single occupancy bathroom in a retail establishment must have gender neutral signage.

2. In 2014, the City of Philadelphia passed an ordinance to recognize attacks based on gender identity or sexual orientation as hate crimes, and to offer specific guidelines on sentencing and fines for those found guilty of these crimes. The legislation calls for up to 90 days in jail, and a fine up to $2,000 for those found guilty. The state of Pennsylvania has no such law, despite various attempts to pass legislation to recognize hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

3. The Fair Practices Ordinance (FPO) is the city’s local anti-discrimination law. The FPO was enacted in 1963 to prohibit discrimination in Philadelphia in employment, housing and places of public accommodation. Philadelphia’s law is strong and covers over 16 protected categories such as race, religion, national origin, age, sex, and disability. Significantly, Philadelphia has been protecting people from discrimination based on their sexual orientation since 1982 and their gender identity since 2002.

4. The LGBT Equality Bill added new protections throughout the Philadelphia Code to protect LGBT people, particularly transgender and gender nonconforming people. Introduced by then Councilman Jim Kenney in 2013, the bill reinforced protections for equal access to public accommodations for transgender individuals; provided for gender neutral language in certain City forms; provided for gender-neutral bathrooms in newly constructed or City-controlled buildings; reinforced the right of people to dress consistently with their gender identity; ensured the right of transgender individuals to request name and gender changes on pertinent records; and established tax credits to encourage employers to expand medically necessary health benefits to their transgender employees.
5. All single occupancy bathrooms in Philadelphia must have gender neutral signage that clearly indicates that they may be used by anyone, regardless of their gender identity thanks to the **Gender Neutral Bathroom Law** passed in 2016 by City Council. Enforced by the City’s Department of Licenses and Inspections, the law covers all retail establishments in Philadelphia open to the general public for the sale of goods or services.

6. In Philadelphia, all schools must allow transgender students to use bathrooms and locker room facilities that are consistent with their gender identity. The School District of Philadelphia has adopted a policy and will retain federal Title IX recommendations which protect transgender students in schools.

7. While federal protections in schools for trans youth are disappearing, the Philadelphia School District and the City of Philadelphia are committed to protecting all of our kids, no matter how they identify. Transgender students are more likely to face pervasive harassment and discrimination in schools. Nationwide, **approximately 1 in 6 out transgender K-12 students have been forced to leave school because of discrimination.** On February 22, 2017 the Trump Administration rescinded guidance from the Departments of Education and Justice that helps schools ensure equal access to educational programs for all students, including transgender students. Soon after this action by the White House, on March 6 The United States Supreme Court said it would not hear the case of Gavin Grimm, a transgender boy whose school singled him out and forced him to use a separate restroom from all other students for over two years. The case is being sent back to be heard again in the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia, which in April 2016 ruled in favor of Grimm based on the Obama administration’s interpretation of Title IX.

8. On April 4th, the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit ruled that the Civil Rights Act applies to employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. Previous courts have ruled that sexual orientation is not covered by the Civil Rights Act, meaning this case could eventually see a decision by the Supreme Court.

9. Philadelphia’s current protections are important, particularly in light of recent attempts in state legislatures to use religious freedom to allow discrimination in public places. In recent years, there has been an influx of “Religious Freedom” Bills introduced in state legislatures nationwide, like **HB2 in North Carolina**, which allows discrimination in public places like stores, restaurants, and doctor’s offices based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression under the guise of freedom of religious expression.

10. The Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations is the agency for the City that will review and investigate complaints of discrimination. Any cases of discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity can be reported to the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) at 215-686-4670 or pchr@phila.gov. The PCHR also resolves community tension after hate crimes
or bias incidents occur. To report hate crimes or bias incidents, contact the PCHR office or its anonymous hotline at 215-686-2856. You can also learn more about hate crimes.

11. The Philadelphia Police Department’s Directive 152 provides guidance for officers’ interactions with transgender individuals to ensure that all people are treated with courtesy and dignity. Directive 152 provides guidelines for appropriate police interactions with trans* individuals, including in media accounts. This Directive is one of only a few of its kind across the nation and represents a significant step forward in the relationship between the police department and the trans* community.