



**Testimony from Jerry T. Jordan, President,  
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers  
Submitted September 25, 2019**

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**In Support of 190558**

**Sponsors: Councilmember Gym, Councilmember Greenlee, Councilmember Squilla,  
Councilmember Green**

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On behalf of the more than 12,000 members of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, I commend Councilmembers Gym, Greenlee, Squilla, and Green for introducing an important, forward-thinking, and standard-setting piece of legislation that will help to combat unlawful discrimination of our young people.

I am pleased to offer our support of this bill, and I also commend the School District and School Board for its adoption of a similar protocol. Policies set forth by the Board and by City Council must be rooted in supporting and serving the most vulnerable among us. Research is clear on the extreme trauma caused by discrimination against LGBTQ youth, in particular, transgender youth.

A 2017 report from the Human Rights Commission identified the following:

- In a 2016-2017 survey from HRC, 28 percent of LGBTQ youth — including 40 percent of transgender youth — said they felt depressed most or all of the time during the previous 30 days, compared to only 12 percent of non-LGBTQ youth (HRC Foundation 2017).
- According to the CDC's 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 60 percent of LGBQ youth reported being so sad or hopeless they stopped doing some of their usual activities (Kann 2016).
- LGBQ young people are more than twice as likely to feel suicidal, and over four times as likely to attempt suicide, compared to heterosexual youth (Kann 2016); the rates may be especially high for bisexual teens (Marshal 2011). According to one study, a third of transgender youth have seriously considered suicide, and one in five has made a suicide attempt (Reisner 2015).
- Basic issues like restroom access have a profound effect on transgender youths' well-being. For instance, one study showed that transgender students denied access to gender-appropriate facilities on their college campuses were 45 percent more likely to try to take their own lives (Seelman 2016).

Source:

[https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Human\\_Rights\\_Campaign\\_Foundation\\_-\\_LGBTQ\\_Mental\\_Health\\_One-Page.pdf](https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Human_Rights_Campaign_Foundation_-_LGBTQ_Mental_Health_One-Page.pdf)

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Since becoming the most unqualified Education Secretary we've ever seen, Betsy DeVos has made it a mission to roll back rights and protections for our most vulnerable students. Once again, it's up to cities like Philadelphia to send a message of love and safety to every child.

We owe it to every single child in Philadelphia and across the country to provide the very basic human rights outlined in Bill 190558. To be sure, the implementation of this legislation will be as critical as its initial passage. But we must support our young people in every facet of their life, and that includes actively confirming their right to exist on the most fundamental human level.

I urge City Council to pass Bill 190558, which would help to expand the protections implemented in School Board Policy 252 to other agencies serving our youth. Following its passage, I urge careful monitoring, implementation, and feedback to ensure that our youth feel welcomed everywhere.