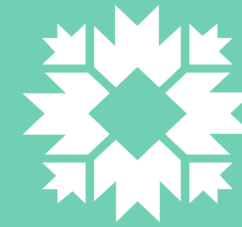


RIGHTS STUFF

A Publication of The City Of Bloomington Human Rights Commission



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

Bills Targeting LGBTQ Community Signed into Law in Tennessee

Bill Lee, governor of Tennessee, has signed into law four bills that target the LGBTQ community.

The first bill would require businesses and government facilities open to the public to post a sign if they let transgender people use multi-person restrooms, locker rooms or changing rooms associated with their gender identity. The sign would have to say "This facility maintains a policy of allowing the use of restrooms by either biological sex, regardless of the designation on the restroom." The Human Rights Campaign, a national LGBTQ advocacy group, called the bill "offensive and humiliating."

The second bill puts public schools and their districts at risk of losing civil lawsuits if they let transgender students or employees use multi-person bathrooms or locker rooms that do not reflect their sex at birth. Several courts have ruled that not letting students or employees use the restroom

that matches their gender identity violates laws against discrimination in education and employment on the basis of sex.

The third bill requires school districts to alert parents thirty days in advance before students are taught about sexual orientation or gender identity. Parents could opt their student out of the lesson.

And the fourth bill bans gender-affirming medical treatment for transgender minors, including the use of puberty blockers and hormone therapy.

All four new laws seem likely to be challenged in court.

If you have questions about laws affecting the LGBTQ community, please contact the BHRC.

(Article based on "Tennessee bill mandating bathroom signs called 'humiliating' for transgender people," by Kimberlee Kruesi and Jonathan Mattise, AP, published at www.tennessean.com, May 20, 2021.)

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Black Woman Alleges Race Discrimination in Home Appraisals

Carlette Duffy is a Black woman who lives in Indianapolis. In 2017, she bought her house for \$100,000. In early 2020, she wanted to refinance her mortgage on that house so she could buy her grandmother's house. She knew the housing market was hot and was surprised when the appraisal came back at only \$125,000. When she questioned the appraisal, which came from CityWide and Pierce Appraisal, she was told to provide comps to challenge their figure. She purchased a market analysis, which said the value of her home was \$187,000. CityWide refused to make any changes.

A few months later, Duffy tried again, this time with Tim Boston of the Appraisal Network. Boston valued her home at \$110,000, only \$10,000 more than her purchase price three years earlier.

So she tried a third time. But on her third attempt, she did not include her race or gender on the application process as she had before. When she communicated with the new appraiser, she interacted with him only through email. Before the appraiser came to look at her house, she took down photos of herself and her family. She removed African American art and books that could identify her race. She said she "staged my home to look as ethnically neutral as possible." She told the appraiser she had to work when he was coming, and had a white male friend pose as her brother and show the appraiser her home. This time, her home was valued at



\$259,000, more than twice her highest earlier appraisal.

She is now working with the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana, filing fair housing complaints against the mortgage lenders and appraisers she accuses of undervaluing her home because of her race. The lenders and appraisers deny that they discriminated against Duffy on the basis of her race.

If you have questions about fair housing, please contact the BHRC.

(Article based on "Black homeowner had a white friend stand in for third appraisal. Her home value doubled," by Alexandria Burris, published in the Indianapolis Star on May 13, 2021.)

RIGHTS STUFF'S MISSION

The purpose of Rights Stuff is to provide information about civil rights litigation as a way to encourage adherence to best practices for landlords, providers of public accommodations and employers. We do this by publishing relevant and timely articles from around the country. Please see the reports in this issue to learn more.

Employers Must Act on Harassment Complaints

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), a woman who worked for a Menards store in Wisconsin complained to an assistant manager that another assistant manager was sending her pornographic video clips and photos via text. That manager reported the allegations to the department manager. The department manager did not investigate the allegations or discipline the offending assistant manager.

About a year later, another female employee complained to the department manager that she, too, was receiving offensive texts. Again, the department manager did nothing. The woman then complained directly to the general manager and showed him the texts. He investigated and the offending assistant manager was fired, a year after the store received the initial complaint.

The two women filed a complaint with the EEOC, and the EEOC announced a settlement in April, 2021. Under the terms of the consent decree, Menards will pay the two women \$25,000. Menards also must providing live training to its employees and



managers. In addition, Menards agreed to send annual reports to the EEOC about any sexual harassment complaints it receives and create a private space where employees may speak to managers and/or make complaints.

Miles Uhlar, trial attorney for the EEOC's Detroit field office, said, "Employers must understand that

even lower-level department managers have a duty to report and stop sexual harassment when they become aware of it. Companies like Menards should bear this in mind as they select and train management candidates."

If you have questions about harassment, please contact the BHRC.



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City of Bloomington, IN - Human Rights Commission

BLM Mural Installed on Sixth Street



Photos courtesy of the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department