

Amendments to Human Rights Code

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On June 19, 2012, Bill 33, Act to amend the *Human Rights Code* with respect to gender identity and gender expression received Royal Assent. As a result, the *Human Rights Code* is amended to specify that every person has a right to equal treatment without discrimination because of gender identity or gender expression with respect to services, goods and facilities; accommodation; contracting; employment; and membership in a trade union, trade or occupational association or self-governing profession.

The Bill also amends the Code to specify that every person has a right to be free from harassment because of sexual orientation, gender identity or sexual expression with respect to accommodation and employment.

The terms “gender identity” and “gender expression” have not been defined in the legislation. However, the Ontario Human Rights Commission has defined “gender identity” as being linked to a person’s sense of self, and the sense of being male or female, which may be different from one’s birth-assigned sex. The overall aim of these amendments is to deal specifically with discrimination and harassment faced by transgendered individuals.