

3339



Michael A. Hellman

May 6, 2022

To: Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission
Reference: Regulation No. 52-013

Dear Commission Members,

My name is Michael Hellman, a resident of Pittsburgh and a gay citizen of Pennsylvania. I am active with the Western Pennsylvania SAGE group at Persad Center. I support the proposed new regulations that would include sexual orientation and gender identity in the list of protected classes under Pennsylvania non-discrimination law. I'm asking for your support.

I feel compelled to write about the importance of including sexual orientation and gender identity in protected classes. I am working for a small non-profit organization. The Shepherd Wellness Community. We service our HIV+ population, including myself, in our 11-county region, including myself. From our beginning in 1987 we have heard stories of discrimination, physical assaults and stigma that have permeated our existence and ability to provide services in a safe environment. We have witnessed assaults outside our dinner locations and, at times, have needed to hire security to protect our members. HIV hit the LGBTQ+ population hard in the 1980s and those lucky enough to have survived are now well over 50 years of age and vulnerable. They are in no shape to defend themselves from discrimination. Please embrace their survival and promise to protect them from discrimination.

We, as LGBTQ+ older Pennsylvanians, have waited too long already for non-discrimination protections. Why should we live in fear of hurtful discrimination simply because of who we love? The answer is clearly that we should not have to live with such fear. Since our Pennsylvania legislature has not acted to pass the Fairness Act, ***I ask you to include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes under Pennsylvania human rights law.***

I am available to discuss this matter further or to testify to the importance of this action to protect all LGBTQ+ citizens in Pennsylvania. Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

1604 Janey St. #1
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

412-760-0560
mr.mike.hellman@gmail.com

Mike Hellman

Pennsylvania LGBTQ+ Legislative Advocate



RECEIVED

MAY 11 2022

Independent Regulatory
Review Commission