

9 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES WILL SOON BE CONSIDERING AN AMENDMENT TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1981 TO ADD SEXUAL ORIENTATION AS A PROTECTED CATEGORY OF DISCRIMINATION. HERE'S WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

1 **NON-DISCRIMINATION IS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLE**

Freedom from discrimination is a basic human right, as enshrined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various international human rights treaties.

2 **93% OF BERMUDA RESIDENTS BELIEVE THAT SEXUAL ORIENTATION DISCRIMINATION IS WRONG**

According to polling conducted by Research Innovations in 2007, Bermuda residents do not support discrimination based on sexual orientation. Additionally, a poll commissioned by the Royal Gazette in September 2012 found that 75% of respondents agreed that the Human Rights Act should be amended to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

3 **SEXUAL ORIENTATION DISCRIMINATION CAN BE HARMFUL**

Losing one's source of income or housing because of one's actual or perceived sexual orientation causes obvious economic and, possibly, psychological harm. A number of Bermudians have even decided to leave their country because of sexual orientation discrimination. This is a loss to Bermuda as a whole.

4 **SEXUAL ORIENTATION DISCRIMINATION IS OCCURRING IN BERMUDA**

According to the 2007 Research Innovation poll, 16.3 % of Bermudians stated that they had been treated differently because of their sexual orientation. Let's not forget, we ALL have a sexual orientation.

5 **BERMUDA OFFERS NO LEGAL PROTECTION FROM DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT ON THE BASIS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

The Human Rights Commission has repeatedly stated that there is no protection from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation under the Human Rights Act 1981, a position supported by Bermuda's legal community. Complaints regarding sexual orientation discrimination are beyond the HRC's remit and therefore, may be logged, but not pursued.

6 **PROTECTING PEOPLE FROM SEXUAL ORIENTATION DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT IS NOT AN ENDORSEMENT OF HOMOSEXUALITY**

Your support for this amendment is not an endorsement of homosexuality. By supporting this amendment you are simply indicating that you don't believe that any individual should be denied employment, kicked out of or denied a home, or refused services and goods normally available to members of the public, simply on the basis of their sexual orientation. You are taking the stand that such discrimination is wrong.

7 **IT WILL NOT PLACE UNDUE RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION**

Freedom of religion is constitutionally protected in Bermuda and the Human Rights Acts protects residents from discrimination based on their religion.

8 **IT WILL NOT LEGALISE SAME-SEX MARRIAGES**

The Marriage Act 1944, governs matrimonial affairs. This Act (as well as additional acts) would require significant modifications in order to legalize same sex marriages. An amendment to the Human Rights Act would simply ensure that individuals have a course of legal redress should they be fired, refused a public service or denied accommodation based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

9 **IT WILL BENEFIT EVERY BERMUDA RESIDENT**

Human rights issues do not stand in isolation. The persistence of discrimination undermines progress in all other areas. Adding sexual orientation to the Human Rights Act is one very important and long over-due step towards making Bermuda a more just and tolerant society.

YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED. IT'S TIME TO INCLUDE.

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