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042409

**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF THE**

**GENDER EXPRESSION NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT**

Interfaith Impact of New York State is a organization of congregations, clergy and lay leaders across the state working for the common good through progressive religious advocacy.

We strongly support the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA), S.2406/A.05710, which provides important protections to New Yorkers.

This bill would prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or expression and includes offenses regarding gender identity or expression within the list of offenses subject to treatment as hate crimes.

We commend the Assembly Members who voted for this bill, which passed by a vote of 97-38. It is currently in the Senate Investigations and Rules Committee.

The state has the responsibility to act to assure that every New Yorker is afforded an equal opportunity to enjoy a full and productive life. Too often persons with gender variant identity and expression are subject to discrimination in employment, housing, and job training and denied other opportunities.

The Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act will ensure that individuals who live in our free society have the capacity to make their own choices, follow their own beliefs, and conduct their own lives as they see fit and as consistent with existing law. IINYS strongly supports this legislation.

We urge the Senate to support this bill and ask the leadership to allow it to go to the Senate floor for a vote during the regular 2009 legislative session.

May 11, 2009