



The official representative of the
Canadian Jewish community

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July 3, 2013

The Honourable Marjory LeBreton, P.C.
Leader of the Government in the Senate
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4

The Honourable James S. Cowan, Q.C.
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4

Dear Senators LeBreton and Cowan,

On March 20, 2013 Private Member's Bill C-279 - An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code (gender identity) – successfully passed third reading in the House of Commons and is now under consideration in the Senate.

Beyond discrimination faced in employment and other areas, hate crimes against members of the transgendered community tend to be physically aggressive. Once enacted, Bill C-279 will provide members of the transgendered community with enhanced protection under the law equal to that which other vulnerable groups, including the Jewish community, receive. Moreover, past experience suggests that explicit reference in the criminal code will increase the likelihood that an investigating police officer or a crown attorney will identify a criminal act as being hate or bias-motivated.

As a community that unfortunately understands this dynamic only too well, we therefore encourage the Senate to vote in favour of Bill C-279 and formally extend to members of the transgendered community the full protection of the law by including include gender identity as an “aggravating circumstance” under the criminal code and a “prohibited ground of discrimination” under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Sincerely,

David Koschitzky
Chair,
The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs