

Georgina Beyer
Labour List MP

Human Rights Act clarified to include gender identity

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Labour MP Georgina Beyer is welcoming news that a legal opinion from the government's Chief Legal Advisor has clarified that transgendered people are protected from discrimination by the Human Rights Act.

Ms Beyer says now that the coverage of the Human Rights Act has been clarified by the Solicitor-General to include transgendered New Zealanders, she intends withdrawing her Human Rights (Gender Identity) Amendment Bill from Parliament's Order Paper.

Ms Beyer's Bill currently before Parliament was designed to clarify that transgendered people are covered by the Human Rights Act because this was previously unclear.

"Transgendered people do experience discrimination in New Zealand. My Bill sought to have transgendered people protected from being kicked out of their houses and jobs just because of their sex, in the same way all other New Zealanders are protected.

"The Solicitor General is the government's top law officer and his opinion clarifies that transgendered people are already covered by the Human Rights Act, on the grounds of sex. This opinion will achieve the purpose of my Bill. Until now, there was no authority supporting this view, other than a number of comments from an increasing number of lawyers.

"I am pleased that the forthcoming Parliamentary debate on my Bill has helped to bring about this clarification. When the House returns I intend seeking leave to have the Solicitor-General's opinion tabled.

"I would like to thank the Attorney-General, Hon Michael Cullen, and the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Helen Clark, for their strong support for human rights.

"I would also like to thank the many members of Parliament who had indicated their support for my Bill. I know they will also be pleased that the issue has been clarified once and for all. My soundings indicate that the Bill would have had the support of Parliament to be passed were it still necessary."

Media Statement



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Ms Beyer said she was certain that clarification of the coverage of the Human Rights Act to include transgendered New Zealanders has only been possible because of the Labour-led Government's commitment to human rights.

“Labour Governments always stand for improving the lives of all of our people, including those who are a bit different from everyone else. The Government I am proud to be a member of was prepared to support the legislation and to seek the opinion of the Solicitor-General on this issue. Fairness in the workplace, equal treatment under the law – these are important principles for every society, and the Labour-led government is showing its commitment to them,” said Ms Beyer.

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