



# TransCentralPA

*Transgender Education Association of Central Pennsylvania*

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August 25, 2010

## For Immediate Release

Today was a hugely successful day for the rights and quality of life of Transgender Pennsylvanians. After months of positive, thoughtful meetings and cooperative effort with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), Equality PA and TransCentralPA are delighted to announce that today marked the implementation of PennDOT's Gender Change on Driver's License and ID Card policy, found at:

[http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/pdotforms/dl\\_forms/DL-32.pdf](http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/pdotforms/dl_forms/DL-32.pdf)

"I want to applaud the Department of Transportation for the careful and intelligent way they have handled this discussion," remarked Equality Pennsylvania Executive Director, Ted Martin. "From the very beginning, they recognized what the American Psychological Association, over 25 other states and the U. S. Department of State has been realizing all along; that this just makes sense and is the right thing to do. This simple and cost-free change in policy will make lives better and that's really the most important point in all this."

The new policy is very similar to that of neighboring states New Jersey & Washington, DC, and removes the ambiguous and painful procedures required in the past of Transgender applicants, which included "proof" that they had, through surgery, changed their sexual designation. Fortunately Pennsylvania shows through its newly adopted policy that it recognizes the difference between sex and gender, and welcomes its Transgender citizens to choose the gender designation that best suits their presentation in their everyday lives with the careful endorsement of licensed medical and mental health practitioners.

"Ted Martin, Executive Director of Equality Pennsylvania and a long time supporter of the transgender community, has been a strident and steadfast partner in his effort to see this issue become a successful reality. Equality Pennsylvania has been a great ally to the transgender community and I am grateful for their energy and support," stated Jeanine Ruhsam, President of TransCentralPA. "It is vitally important that transgender Pennsylvanians have driver's licenses that accurately reflect their lived gender. Having one that misrepresents your lived gender "outs" transgender people in many situations where they need to show their license—if stopped by police, in bars and restaurants, and while filling out forms for employers. This violates their privacy, puts them at risk for discrimination, and even opens them to violence."

The National Center for Transgender Equality and the Gay and Lesbian Taskforce were close, critical allies and supporters in this successful effort. Their work to accomplish similar treatment of transgender citizens in many other states lent expertise and proven methods to the development of PennDOT's just adopted policy.

“This is a great victory for common sense”, added Mara Keisling, Executive Director of the National Center for Transgender Equality and a Harrisburg native. “That PennDOT updated this policy is very helpful for transgender Pennsylvanians”.

Within hours of the quiet implementation of this policy, Pennsylvania’s Department of Transportation had its first applicant.

“I have been waiting my entire life for this moment”, said Danni Finnegan, 65, of Harrisburg, a combat veteran of the Vietnam War and a local business person, her relief and emotion very apparent. “I was the first person in the whole state to go through this process, and I cannot tell you how much this means to me”. At 4:45 PM today she proudly and emotionally walked out of PennDOT Harrisburg with her new driver’s license that reflected her true and lived gender identity.

The mission of TransCentralPA is to promote acceptance of Transgender people through education and visibility. TransCentralPA is a 501©(3) non profit charitable organization, to whom donations are deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.

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