

Key protections for LGBTQ+ New Mexicans signed into law

Written by gallupsun
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Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed into law two important anti-discrimination bills that were championed by House Democrats March 24.

House Bill 207 extends the scope of the 1969 New Mexico Human Rights Act, clarifying that its discrimination protections apply to all state departments, agencies, institutions, political subdivisions - such as counties and cities, and public contractors. It also revises the definitions for sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disabilities within the Human Rights Act to be more inclusive and better protect all New Mexicans from discrimination.

"No one should be denied public services simply for being who they are," Rep. Kristina Ortez, D-Taos, said. "While hundreds of bills have been introduced across the country to restrict the rights of queer and trans people, New Mexico is committed to making our state a safer place for everyone by closing a loophole to ensure our taxpayer dollars cannot be used to discriminate against our LGBTQ+ friends and neighbors."

House Bill 207 is sponsored by Reps. Ortez, Andrea Romero, D-Santa Fe, Linda Serrato, D-Santa Fe,, Yanira Gurrola, D-Albuquerque, Senate Majority Floor Leader Peter Wirth D-Santa Fe, and Sen. Carrie Hamblen, D-Las Cruces.

House Bill 31, which was also signed into law March 24, removes an outdated requirement that legal name changes be published in a newspaper to protect these individuals' privacy and personal safety. The law will also allow an individual 14 years or older to petition the district court for a name change and prohibit courts from requiring notice to legal parents of the applicant, if the court finds that such notice will jeopardize the applicant's personal safety.

"People seeking name changes are often doing so for reasons of personal safety or so they can live authentically as themselves," sponsor Rep. Christine Chandler, D-Los Alamos, said. "Removing this antiquated publishing requirement protects New Mexicans' privacy and allows them to safely move on with their lives."

Both bills will go into effect June 16.

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