

U.S. Public Attitudes to Transgender

According to a September 2002 Survey

by [H.R.C.](#)

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In September 2002 the Human Rights Campaign

announced the findings of a poll that focused on public perception of transgender issues. The poll showed that while most people accept that a person can be transgender, more education is needed. Seventy percent of Americans have heard the word transgender and a majority have, on some level, contemplated the issue.

Transgender individuals also face the same problem as gay and lesbian Americans, in that a great number of people believe that the law already protects these groups.

Most people accept that it is possible for a person to be "born as one sex but inside feel like the other sex" but many are confused about what transgender

means, and who should be considered transgender.

Respondents overwhelmingly favoured transgender students attending public schools and there is a strong consensus that no one should be subjected to violence and discrimination because of who they are. There are, however, differences on how to address these issues.

The poll found that sympathizers who believe in transgender equality favour transgender-specific laws and opponents prefer using what they erroneously believe to be existing laws to protect transgender people. Additionally, there is conflict in the public view on transgender as a moral issue and whether people have a choice about being transgender.

"Three-quarters of those who say being transgender is a choice, also see it as a moral issue," said a spokesperson for the [H.R.C.](#), "while two-thirds who do not see it as a moral issue say people are born transgender." The majority favour laws to protect transgender people's rights. Transgender individuals also face the same problem as gay and lesbian Americans, in that a great number of people believe that the law already protects these groups.

"The data clearly suggests that a strategic, step-by-step educational campaign that focuses on broadly supported issues - such as hate crimes and discrimination protection — are the best place to start on the road toward equality," said the [H.R.C.](#) spokesperson.

Among other findings:

- 61 percent believe the country needs laws to protect transgender people from discrimination.
- 57 percent incorrectly believe that it is not legal to fire a person just because they are transgender.
- 67 percent agree that it is possible for a person to be born as one sex, but inside feel like another sex.
- 53 percent believe it is "all right" for a person to be transgender, while 37 percent believe that it is wrong.
- 77 percent of people believe that transgender students should be allowed to attend public schools.
- 48 percent of Americans would have "no problem" working with a transgender person, while only 8 percent claim they "would not" be willing to.

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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.