Monday, July 2, 2018

Dear Friend,

In the three years since the freedom to marry became the law of the land and Freedom for All Americans embarked on its mission, we’ve seen a significant shift in our opponents’ attempts to roll back progress on LGBT equality. As public support for gay and lesbian people has grown, and a greater number of people are citing personal connections and relationships with a gay person, our opponents’ traditional tactics of painting LGB people and their families as disparaging, immoral, or criminal have fallen flat. At the time of FFAA’s formation, nearly two-thirds (65%) of Americans reported having a close friend or family member who is gay or lesbian. Substantially fewer reported having a close friend or family member who is bisexual (35%) or transgender (11%).

Defeated by the knowledge that more and more people’s minds are permanently changing in support of gay people, organizations like Alliance Defending Freedom have hurriedly shifted gears to pinpoint their focus on attacking transgender people and their livelihood on the statewide level, federally, and in the courts. This is an intentional strategy to take advantage of a part of our LGBT movement work where they perceive us to be weak. By exploiting the public’s lack of understanding and familiarity with transgender people, our opponents can mislead the public and dampen support for overall LGBT nondiscrimination protections in a significant way -- while simultaneously, more quietly chipping away at protections for LGB people by pursuing piecemeal pieces of legislation and litigation that create sweeping carve-outs and extraordinary refusals and exemptions from current protections under the thinly veiled guise of religious freedom.
Since FFAA’s inception, we’ve addressed this complicated new landscape head on, catalyzing research and honing best practices to grow public support for transgender nondiscrimination protections. And we’re proud to report that in the past six months, we won several key fights in this area -- often in the toughest local political climates, winning Republicans and unlikely allies. It is without a doubt that our opposition’s agenda is not a laser focus on transgender people. Their goal is to standstill the passage of any new protections and roll back protections for the entire LGBT community that have already been won. We refuse to cede any ground in the fight for comprehensive LGBT nondiscrimination protections nationwide. Our success on transgender nondiscrimination protections this year, as well as our ability to retain the wins we’ve made on the basis of sexual orientation, is the best evidence yet that Freedom for All Americans is living up to its promise to win the full fight -- increasing urgency, driving momentum and clearing a pathway for nationwide protections for the entire LGBT community as soon as possible.

With gratitude,

Masen Davis, CEO of Freedom for All Americans
On June 8, 2018, New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu -- a Republican -- signed into law landmark legislation extending nondiscrimination protections in employment, housing, and public spaces to transgender Granite Staters. This is an important victory for the LGBTQ community - and it was far from a foregone conclusion. In fact, when Freedom for All Americans first got involved in New Hampshire in 2015, the only other national organization that agreed to directly invest was GLAD. Other groups thought a victory in New Hampshire was a long-shot, at best.

Local and state advocates have been mapping out a path to win transgender nondiscrimination protections in New Hampshire for more than 20 years. Three years ago, while re-assessing what progress meant in a post-Obergefell landscape marked by hostile backlashes in state legislatures across the country, Freedom for All Americans recognized an opportunity in New Hampshire. FFAA drew up a plan with local advocates to form Freedom New Hampshire and invest deeply in organizing local and national partners to raise awareness about what it means to be transgender and why nondiscrimination protections are so urgently needed.
The Road to Winning New Hampshire’s Transgender Nondiscrimination Law

April 2015:
FFAA begins assessing the legislative landscape with local partners.

December 2015:
FFAA holds the first meeting with local partners to begin forming the coalition that would become Freedom New Hampshire.

January 2017:
Freedom New Hampshire introduces #TransBillNH (HB 1319) with an unprecedented three Republican co-sponsors.

February 2017:
#TransBillNH (HB 1319) gets a favorable vote in GOP-led House committee.

Summer 2017:
Began hosting “Ask a Trans Person Anything” town halls, providing invaluable public education and advocacy opportunities.

October 2017:
Freedom New Hampshire secures a record 11 Republican co-sponsors for #TransBillNH (HB 1319).

March 2018:
Historic win in the GOP-controlled House: #TransBillNH (HB 1319) clears with a 195-129 vote, including 48 Republicans and three Libertarians.

Summer 2017:
Began hosting “Ask a Trans Person Anything” town halls, providing invaluable public education and advocacy opportunities.

June 2018:
Republican Gov. Chris Sununu signs #TransBillNH (HB 1319) into law; New Hampshire becomes 19th state with comprehensive law protecting all LGBTQ people from discrimination.

FFAA generated more than 26,000 constituent letters from Freedom New Hampshire supporters to their lawmakers over a two-year period.

FFAA grew the Freedom New Hampshire Facebook page from zero to 11,000 likes – with an average of 250 engaged users every day.

FFAA grew the Freedom New Hampshire email list from 4,500 in September 2016 to nearly 12,000 by April 2018.

FFAA created the Freedom New Hampshire website, which drew more than 17,000 visitors in the last year.

FFAA profiled 29 transgender Granite Staters and their families online.
The FFAA team approached this campaign differently than other efforts in the past - and the new approach is proving to be a winning playbook.

To win in New Hampshire, the FFAA-led campaign:

- Gave people a chance to not just learn about transgender people but to actually meet them face-to-face. The campaign launched a series of “Ask a Trans Person Anything” town halls that sought to normalize questions about what it means to be transgender and to provide transgender people a rare platform to explain it themselves, rather than having it explained for them by allies. Knowing a transgender person directly correlates to an individual’s support for nondiscrimination protections.

- Addressed opposition attacks head-on. The field team prioritized having very specific conversations about what the law actually means for restrooms, in order to dispel long-standing myths about the implications of treating transgender people fairly. Campaign leadership set up one-on-one targeted conversations and meetings to move legislators essential to passing the bill. And, again, the campaign connected them with local transgender residents in their districts who could speak directly to the issues while familiarizing lawmakers with transgender people.

- Fought for every vote, and picked up dozens of Republicans in the House who had voted against the bill in 2017. The House Libertarian Caucus also publicly endorsed HB 1319.

- Secured and elevated the endorsements from NH Association of Chiefs of Police, NH Women’s Foundation, the Business and Industry Association of NH, numerous faith leaders, and other key influencers.

- Showed that support for nondiscrimination is deep. The campaign prioritized an aggressive media strategy that placed over a dozen op-eds and countless letters from constituents to their local papers in just four months and secured four editorial endorsements from New Hampshire newspapers. The campaign also mobilized more than 3,000 residents to submit letters to their lawmakers, resulting in more than 26,000 letters sent over two years; and identified more than 6,000 residents who signed pledges of support.
So how can the movement leverage this victory in New Hampshire to continue driving progress in other states? It’s becoming increasingly clear. First, **every state is different**. As a national organization, FFAA can be most effective by listening to the expertise of local leaders, sharing best practices earned across many campaigns, and supporting them with the resources needed to succeed, including financial investments to support critical but often under-resourced areas of work like field organizing, messaging research, and compelling digital programs.

Second, **the movement can’t shy away from tackling our opponents head-on**. Campaigns are having enormous success with messages that immediately confront and dispel the opposition’s false rhetoric and scare tactics.

But without a doubt, **the most crucial element to replicating the success of New Hampshire in other states is continuing to create the space for transgender Americans and their loved ones to share their stories and have safe, open dialogues with other community members.**

No one should be naive about the challenges facing the LGBTQ movement. But campaigns and advocates have something now they didn’t have several years ago: a clearer playbook for success that not only creates concrete changes but also changes the climate for the long term. The 2019 legislative session is likely to be defined by divisive midterm elections and the outcome of the Masterpiece case, but this new playbook can help steer the movement toward building stronger partnerships, strengthening communities, and grounding advocacy efforts in the power of personal stories.

**Your support made the victory in New Hampshire possible - and your continued support will allow FFAA to strengthen and replicate these best practices elsewhere, so as many LGBTQ Americans are protected from discrimination as quickly as possible.**
Earlier this summer, the Supreme Court issued a long-awaited ruling in *Masterpiece Cake-shop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* – a case involving a Colorado bakery that refused to serve a same-sex couple. The ruling gave a discrete win to the bakery, but it also affirmed that LGBTQ Americans face discrimination – and that states can and should protect LGBTQ people from discrimination. In the opinion for the majority, Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote:

“Our society has come to the recognition that gay persons and gay couples cannot be treated as social outcasts or as inferior in dignity and worth. For that reason the laws and the Constitution can, and in some instances must, protect them in the exercise of their civil rights. The exercise of their freedom on terms equal to others must be given great weight and respect by the courts.”

It’s not the sweeping victory the movement would have liked, but the Supreme Court rejected any sort of broad right to discriminate – and that’s good news.

The Court’s ruling is having an impact already – just days after the *Masterpiece* decision, a three-judge panel in Arizona rejected an effort to craft an exemption to Phoenix’s nondiscrimination ordinance in *Brush & Nib Studio v. City of Phoenix*. The judges cited the *Masterpiece* ruling, noting that religious exemptions to existing nondiscrimination measures constituted a “grave and continuing harm.” And in late June, the Supreme Court took action in *Arlene’s Flowers v. Washington* -- a case involving a flower shop that turned away a same-sex couple. The court granted a petition for cert, vacating the lower court decision and sending the case back for further consideration in light of *Masterpiece*. It now returns to the Washington Supreme Court, which unanimously upheld Washington's nondiscrimination law in 2017.
With the announcement of Justice Kennedy’s retirement, it’s clear that what happens in the courts will continue to have a monumental impact on the journey to winning full nondiscrimination protections for all LGBTQ Americans. The FFAA team is growing accordingly -- Jon Davidson, one of the nation’s leading legal experts advancing LGBTQ equality, will be joining the team as Chief Counsel this July. Jon has pioneered some of the movement’s most important legal cases - he served as co-counsel in the cases that won the freedom to marry in California and, ultimately, the entire nation; and his legal work has advanced nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ employees, students, consumers, families, prisoners, and immigrants. Jon previously spent more than 20 years at Lambda Legal, most recently as their National Legal Director. Jon will direct FFAA’s support of key legal cases, oversee amicus brief engagement strategy, and lead the development of model policies that will advance LGBTQ nondiscrimination.

The FFAA team played a major role in preparing the LGBTQ movement for a Masterpiece ruling – from developing messaging guidance, to coordinating partner amicus briefs, to ensuring major constituencies like small business owners and mayors were prepared for Decision Day. With Jon’s leadership and expertise, FFAA is well-positioned to grow its involvement in this space. Your support makes all of this work possible, and the FFAA team will share progress with you in the months ahead as Jon settles into his new role and takes the organization’s work to the next level.
Most advocates in the LGBTQ community remember all too well the last time transgender nondiscrimination protections landed on the ballot: It was 2015, when the movement suffered a painful and consequential loss in Houston. Voters overturned the city’s nondiscrimination ordinance by a stunning 62-38 margin following a deceptive campaign that employed fear-mongering and misinformation to demonize transgender people.

LGBTQ advocates and organizations have learned a lot since Houston: the importance of tackling the scare tactics of the opposition head-on, proactively sharing stories of transgender Americans who face discrimination in their daily lives, and creating opportunities for members of local communities to understand what exactly it means to be transgender – and why nondiscrimination protections are so important.

The shift in tactics is working. In April 2018, voters in Anchorage affirmed transgender nondiscrimination protections at the ballot – the first time in the nation’s history that voters in a major municipality upheld protections for their transgender neighbors. Freedom for All Americans was proud to be a leader on the Fair Anchorage campaign. Here’s how FFAA’s leadership – made possible by your support – delivered a historic victory in Anchorage.

Freedom for All Americans was proud to be one of the top national contributors to the Fair Anchorage campaign – a campaign that was intentionally built to reflect those most impacted by the attempts to roll back Anchorage’s transgender nondiscrimination protections. But it wasn’t just the campaign staff that reflected the local community: the FFAA team helped develop and implement a compelling message strategy that put transgender voices front and center, and tackled the opposition’s scare tactics by building powerful partnerships with women’s organizations and safety advocates.
The team at FFAA wrote the scripts for the campaign’s TV ads - the first-ever featuring transgender people and addressing myths about transgender nondiscrimination laws - and produced an online ad that ensured voters knew the process for making their voices heard at the ballot. FFAA staff helped lead efforts to build partnerships with Anchorage’s leading organization doing work to prevent sexual violence; a former lawmaker who worked as a police officer for nearly a quarter-century and served as the safety committee chair in the city’s Assembly; and a former Republican state senator who served for nearly 15 years. **This wide scope of allies and spokespeople ensured the campaign’s most compelling messages reached the audiences critical to victory.**

FFAA’s digital team built a solid, comprehensive digital program—including a state-of-the-art website, a robust social media presence, and an online fundraising program that raised more than $125,000 from small-dollar, grassroots donors for the Fair Anchorage campaign. FFAA also provided significant communications support throughout the campaign; and, in the final weeks before the vote, provided in-kind, dedicated staffers to oversee communications and digital strategy and execution.
The FFAA team also helped drive a field operation that ensured voters all across the city were engaged in a conversation about the importance of transgender nondiscrimination protections. **More than 250 Fair Anchorage volunteers knocked on more than 2,000 doors, made over 66,000 phone calls, and engaged in over 13,000 direct conversations with Anchorage voters focused on introducing them to transgender people and conveying why nondiscrimination protections are so important.**

The face-to-face conversations, the groundbreaking ads, and the messaging strategy built around putting transgender people front and center paid off: in a high turnout election, Anchorage voters stood decisively in favor of affirming protections for transgender residents. Every city and state is different – there’s no one-size-fits-all formula to winning. But the successful Anchorage playbook that FFAA led on developing is helping to crack the code. **Your ongoing support is critical to securing future victories on an even larger scale.**
Since its formation in 2015, Freedom for All Americans has been the leading organization in the country dedicated to winning comprehensive legal protections for transgender people in Massachusetts. Now - two years after successfully leading the charge for the bipartisan passage of a 2016 law doing just that, FFAA is driving the strategy to ensure that law is defended and affirmed by voters at the ballot this November.

FFAA knew from the outset that Massachusetts presented one of the best opportunities for the LGBTQ movement to make forward-progress on securing state-level protections. The 2016 victory was a decade in the making, starting in 2007 and culminating in the passage of a transgender rights bill in 2011 in areas of housing, employment, education and credit -- but lawmakers stripped public accommodations from the bill at the last minute, forcing advocates to return to pass a standalone bill.
FFAA has always drawn the best talent from the movement - so it’s no surprise that FFAA’s President of Strategy, Kasey Suffredini, was uniquely positioned to lead the movement to victory in Massachusetts. Suffredini has led the charge for comprehensive transgender nondiscrimination protections in Massachusetts since 2010, when, as executive director of MassEquality, he and local advocates mounted a successful campaign to secure employment, housing, and education protections. Upon joining FFAA in March 2015, Kasey oversaw FFAA’s work to launch Freedom Massachusetts, a broad-based bipartisan coalition drive to update the law to include public accommodations protections. After agreeing to a request from local partners to co-chair the coalition, Kasey’s leadership and guidance over the following year contributed to the campaign’s successful recruitment of endorsements from:

- The state’s Republican Governor Charlie Baker
- Bipartisan leadership in the House and Senate, including public endorsements by the House Speaker and Senate President
- Every major professional sports team in New England
- More than 250 businesses
- More than 350 clergy and congregations across the state
- 11 labor unions representing more than 750,000 families
- 16 statewide advocacy groups doing work to support women and survivors
- The state’s leading law enforcement associations, including the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association
- The entire Massachusetts congressional delegation and the state attorney general

In addition to Suffredini’s leadership, the FFAA team oversaw daily earned media efforts, ran a strong and engaging digital media program for the campaign, and provided support to lobbying and field organizing efforts. The bill passed by a bipartisan supermajority vote in both chambers and was signed into law by Governor Charlie Baker.

But in October 2016, anti-LGBTQ opponents reached the very low threshold of signatures necessary to force the public accommodations law onto a statewide ballot measure on Election Day 2018.
Since then, the FFAA team has continued driving the campaign to protect this historic law. By creating a strong infrastructure early, the team has been able to successfully build on early work and ensure a diverse array of messengers are voicing their support of the law. By early May 2018, the Freedom Massachusetts campaign included more than 1,000 coalition partners across the state. FFAA and other coalition leaders seized this milestone moment to publicly launch the campaign, and released the first campaign video framing the significance of the fight ahead. FFAA is leading the development and deployment of a strategy that is rooted in recent successes: elevating the voices of transgender people themselves.

With less than six months to go until Election Day, the stakes couldn’t be higher. The work to win in Massachusetts will serve as a blueprint for campaigns going forward. It’s critical that the LGBTQ community wins this fight - not just because so much is at stake for transgender people in Massachusetts, but also because a victory in the Bay State would mark the first time voters affirmed transgender nondiscrimination protections at a state-level ballot. Your support in securing victory in Massachusetts is critical, and is so important to the movement’s longer-term work of advancing comprehensive nondiscrimination protections for every single LGBTQ American.
Thank you for your generous support of Freedom for All Americans Education Fund (FFAAEF) and Freedom for All Americans (FFAA). Your generosity is critical to securing explicit and comprehensive nondiscrimination laws that ensure all LGBTQ Americans are treated fairly and equally under the law.

We share your commitment to and passion for this work - we put every dollar you give to good use, fighting to secure a future in which no one faces discrimination because of who they are or who they love, regardless of where they live.

In supporting this work, you may designate your tax-deductible donations to FFAAEF (to support our public education and litigation programs that build support for LGBTQ nondiscrimination nationwide) or your non tax-deductible gifts to FFAA (fueling our legislative and lobbying campaigns to secure nondiscrimination policy at municipal, state, and federal levels).

For assistance with your giving, or with any other inquiries, please contact C. Nathan Harris, Vice President of Development at nharris@freedomforallamericans.org. You can also make donations by visiting our website at www.freedomforallamericans.org and clicking “Donate”.

Save the Date!

You are cordially invited to a conversation with Freedom for All Americans concerning the future of the LGBTQ movement:

Fort Lauderdale, FL - Sunday, September 16, 2018
San Francisco, CA - Thursday, October 11, 2018
Los Angeles, CA - Thursday, October 25, 2018