



AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION  
of MICHIGAN

ACLU



American Civil Liberties Union  
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ADVOCACY AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE:

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# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

*Although there is no federal or  
state law that expressly forbids  
workplace discrimination  
against lesbian, gay, bisexual  
and transgender people,  
you still have rights.*

American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan

## **ARE LAWS IN PLACE IN MICHIGAN TO PROTECT LGBT EMPLOYEES?**

Sixteen localities in Michigan have passed local human rights ordinances that include civil rights protection for sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. They include Ann Arbor, Birmingham (housing only), Dearborn Heights, Village of Douglas, Detroit, East Lansing, Ferndale, Flint, Grand Ledge, Grand Rapids, Huntington Woods, Lansing, Saginaw (housing only), Township of Saugatuck, Saugatuck, and Ypsilanti.

## **WHAT CAN I DO IF MY EMPLOYER TREATS ME UNFAIRLY AT WORK?**

If you believe the unfair treatment at work is because of your sexual orientation or gender identity you can file a complaint using the grievance procedure in your workplace. Many employers have policies prohibiting sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination. Make sure to document all instances of harassment and abuse in detail. If you are a member of a union, speak to your union.

## **WHAT CAN I DO IF I'VE BEEN FIRED BECAUSE OF MY SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY?**

Terminated employees can fight back. You can complain to your Human Resources Department, particularly the equal employment opportunity officer if your company has one. Send a written complaint that documents your experience in detail. If that doesn't work, you can contact the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan.

## **WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER I AM FIRED?**

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Fighting termination takes time and money and the laws may not be on your side. To ensure your possibility of success DO NOT make any accusations or threats, especially a threat of a lawsuit. Instead, request the reason for termination in writing. You also have the right to review your personnel file.

If you're asked to sign paperwork, consult an attorney first. Severance agreements may include waivers of claims against employers. Signing such documents may leave you with no options later. Also inquire about continuing health coverage under COBRA.

## **WHAT CAN I DO TO ENSURE EQUAL RIGHTS FOR EQUAL WORK IN MICHIGAN?**

1. Urge your congressperson to support passage of the inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act. ENDA is a proposed federal law that would prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
2. Contact your state legislators to support amending the Michigan Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
3. Contact your local elected officials and urge them to adopt a human rights ordinance that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
4. Encourage your employer to adopt an inclusive policy prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.