



MASSACHUSETTS
TRANSGENDER
POLITICAL
COALITION

**Fact Sheet on S.1045 | H.1973:
An Act Protecting Personal Security**

An Act Protecting Personal Security, presented by **Sen. Joanne Comerford, Rep. Jack Patrick Lewis, and Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa**, will modernize the security and safety of the legal name change process for residents of Massachusetts.

When people legally change their names in Massachusetts, [they're currently required to publish an announcement](#) in a local newspaper as assigned by the court. This is not only a privacy concern for anyone who changes their name, it is also an outdated and unnecessary process. All legal name changes [require a background check](#) that includes criminal records and open or outstanding warrants. Historically, publication was also required to prevent individuals from changing their names to escape debts. This is no longer necessary as financial institutions and credit agencies can track this information using Social Security Numbers. Finally, this is also an additional expense for someone changing their name as they must pay both a citation fee to the court and a publication fee to the newspaper.

Additionally, A public record of name changes is currently available for anyone who requests it from the court. While anyone may request this record to be impounded, it is rare for the courts to grant impoundment. This means that anyone's name change could be easily available to anyone who knows or suspects that someone has changed their name. This especially puts transgender people, survivors of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and stalking at risk of having their identities revealed leading to violence or discrimination.

Bills H.1973 (House of Representatives) and S.1045 (Senate) will...

- Remove the publication requirement for all people seeking name changes in MA
- Keep name changes private if the court finds that there is a threat to their safety. The bill explicitly names gender non-conformity and status as transgender and/or survivor of domestic violence as examples of appropriate circumstances for impoundment.

Nearby states that do not require publication for legal name changes include: Maine, Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut, and Vermont.



Supporters include:

- Family & Community Resources
- Fenway Health
- GLAD Law (GLTBQ Legal Advocates & Defenders)
- Human Rights Campaign New England
- JALSA
- Jane Doe, Inc.
- Keshet
- Mass NOW
- Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth
- Massachusetts Office of the Child Advocate
- Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition
- MassEquality
- National LGBTQI+ Cancer Network
- Nehar Shalom Community Synagogue
- Progressive Massachusetts
- REACH Beyond Domestic Violence
- Religious Action Center of Massachusetts
- Reproductive Equity Now
- Rosie's Place
- SpeakOut Boston
- The Network/La Red
- Transgender Emergency Fund of Massachusetts
- Transhealth