

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

Student Government Association

To: Dr. Richard Walker
Vice Chancellor / Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services

CC: Keith Kowalka
Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs - Student Life

From: Shaun Smith
Speaker of the Senate

Date: 16 February, 2015

Subject: Josephine Tittsworth Act

The Student Government Association Senate proposed this legislation in the Student Life committee in the 50th administration. An individual had approached a Senator about their treatment on campus as a transgender student and the resources available to them. The student had raised the awareness of how a student who adopted another first name beyond that which is on their birth certificate would still be referred to as their birth name in the system and thus by teachers in class during roll call. This presented a potential situation in which a student could be "outed" by this action. The Senate developed a measure to request that the administration make modifications to its system such that a student may indicate their preferred name and gender in the administrative records (beyond those legally obligated to bear the student's legal name).

The adjustment of the way the university handles a student's choice to protect their gender expression and identity in the institutional database was deemed a matter of keeping the university's policy of non-discrimination. In this policy, both gender identity and expression are provided equal opportunity and treatment.

This measure was called to question on 16 April, 2014 and passed with a majority from all present and voting members. Any further questions or inquiries regarding the nature or process of this legislation can be directed to myself. Thank you for your time in reviewing this measure.

All my best,



Shaun Smith
Speaker of the Senate

HOUSTON'S CARNEGIE-DESIGNATED TIER ONE PUBLIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

Label: UB51001

Date Introduced: April 2, 2014

Date Passed: April 16, 2014

Author(s): President Charles Haston, Sen. James Lee, Guillermo Lopez

Sponsors: Sen. Clint Kirchhoff, Sen. Brianna Mills, Sen. Max Ballands, Sen. Ahren Esquenazi, Sen. Charlotte Christian, Sen. Matt Ramirez, Sen. Tatiana Lutomski, Sen. Jessie Smith, Sen. Trent Fuller, Sen. Enrique Martinez, Sen. Pooja Magadi, Sen. Breanna Larson, Sen. Nelson Grajales, Sen. Issam Kadiwala, Sen. Sebastian Agudelo, Sen. Nestor Garcia, Sen. Varun Sreenivas, Sen. Geordie Daniel, Sen. Clement Agho-Otoghile, Gregorio Ayala-Guerra, Carol Ann Ross, Yesenia Chavez, Tanzeem Chowdhury, William Lambert

Committee: Student Life

Draft: Final

The Josephine Tittsworth Act

Whereas, the Nondiscrimination Policy of the University of Houston Student Handbook states “The university provides equal treatment and opportunity to all persons without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status except where such distinction is required by law. Additionally, the System prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression;” and

Whereas, gender identity is an individual’s discernment that they are man or woman, or non-conforming; and

Whereas, gender expression is the external characteristics presented by an individual such as masculine or feminine features displayed in mannerisms, speech, social environments, or attire; and

Whereas, the terms gender identity and gender expression represent Trans, Transgender, and Gender Non-conforming students, faculty, and staff; and

Whereas, Trans students, faculty, and staff are often misgendered by the pronouns, names, or titles identified in their official university documentation; and

Whereas, this improper identification can be detrimental to an individual’s pursuit of education, compromise their safety, and interfere with their participation in campus life; and

Whereas, the use of improper identification of an individual’s gender identity negatively impacts academic achievement, affecting retention and graduation rates; and^{1, 2}

Whereas, the use of improper identification of an individual’s gender identity can consequentially lead to high rates of harassment, physical assault, and sexual violence³

HOUSTON’S CARNEGIE-DESIGNATED TIER ONE PUBLIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITY


**THEREFORE BE IT ENACTED by the 51st administration of the University of Houston
Student Government Association:**

That the University of Houston will fulfill its existing Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity policy by allowing students, faculty, and staff **to apply their preferred first name, title, and personally discerned gender in all applicable standard forms of documentation or record keeping** such as PeopleSoft and all other university documents that require persons to designate their gender regardless of the individual's biological or birth-determined sex.



Shaun Smith
Speaker of the Senate
University of Houston – Main Campus

Date of Senate Approval: 16 April 2014



Charles Haston
Student Body President
University of Houston – Main Campus

APPROVED

Date of President's Approval: 4/17/14

Pursuant to Student Government Association Constitution Article IV, § 11, Clause 2, this legislation will be presented to the President of the University. Approval or disapproval by the President of the University, and their response, will be recorded in the Senate Journal on additional signature attachments to be included with this legislation.

- ¹. <http://transequality.org/Issues/education.html>
- ². <http://lgbtq.sdes.ucf.edu/docs/campuspride2010lgbtreportssummary.pdf>
- ³. http://transequality.org/PDFs/NTDS_Exec_Summary.pdf

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.