



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY LEGISLAUTRE
244 FAIR STREET, 6TH FLOOR
KINGSTON, NY 12401

MEDIA CONTACT INFORMATION

• PHONE 845-340-3900
* EMAIL LegislativeNews@co.ulster.ny.us
• FAX 845-340-3651

Legislature.UlsterCountyNY.gov

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Ulster County Legislature Declares June Pride Month – Celebrates Work of The Trans Closet of the Hudson Valley

(Kingston, NY) – In its June Session, the Ulster County Legislature declared June to be Pride Month in Ulster County. Accepting the Proclamation marking the occasion were Alex and Berrie of The Trans Closet of the Hudson Valley, which provides gender-affirming clothing and accessories to individuals at no cost. Additionally, speakers unanimously gave public comment in favor of Proposed Local Law No. 5 of 2023, also known as the Drag is Not A Crime Law, which would add a person's gender expression to the list of considerations which shall be free from discrimination under the Ulster County Human Rights Law.

"As we see increased blatant displays of intolerance and hate legislation targeting LGBTQ+ people passing around our country it's clear we need strong gender expression protections here in our county", said **Peter Criswell (District 7 – City of Kingston), Vice Chair of the Ulster County Legislature and author of the Drag is Not a Crime Act.** "We must codify gender expression into our human rights laws so that drag performers, and anyone of any gender expression expressing any gender, is protected. I'm confident we will pass this into law at our next session," continued Vice Chair Criswell.

Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual+ (2SLGBTQIA+) individuals have fallen under attack with introduction of discriminatory legislation across the United States. The American Civil Liberties Union has identified the introduction of nearly 500 anti-2SLGBTQIA+ bills in 2023 endangering the health, safety and well-being of non-heterosexual and gender non-conforming individuals, including but not limited to legislation that would limit their First Amendment right to expression.

Once adopted, Proposed Local Law No. 5 will add gender expression to the existing Ulster County Human Rights Law last modified in 2018. With this change, those who believe they are the victim of discrimination based on their gender expression can file a complaint with the Human Rights Commission, which will investigate the claim and could result in an award up to \$20,000 in damages following a determination of discrimination.

"Pride means joy, helping create moments of gender euphoria, even small and fleeting ones, are central to our purpose of facilitating self-actualization. We try to give our community as many chances as possible to be who we are, as we are. We support and celebrate authentic gender expression, whether that takes the form of drag performance or simply moving through our every day lives," said Berrie Sattler of The Trans Closet of the Hudson Valley.

Those who were unable to provide comment during the June 13, 2023 Session will have another opportunity to have their voice heard during the July 18, 2023 Regular Session of the Legislature.



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“I was deeply moved by the personal testimony of so many of our residents. Yesterday’s public hearing perfectly underscored the importance of this critical piece of legislation. With its passage next month, we will send a message to our neighbors that they are seen, valued and protected.,” said **Chair Tracey Bartels (District 16 – Gardiner & Shawangunk)**.

The full text of Proposed Local Law No. 5 of 2023 can be found [HERE](#). More information on The Trans Closet of the Hudson Valley can be found at transclosethv.org.

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