

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PETITION ON ALL-GENDER RESTROOMS

April 23, 2024

Sponsor(s): Chair Bruns

Whereas, Eastern Illinois University strives to be a leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion, and;

Whereas, access to all-gender restrooms are an essential aspect of the physical, mental, and emotional health of non-binary and transgender students*, and;

Whereas, currently EIU currently has 13 academic buildings without an all-gender restroom option, including the very visible and symbolic Old Main;

Be It Therefore Resolved, that Faculty Senate supports the attached petition letter and urges President Gatrell to take positive steps to improve the support facilities available for EIU's non-binary and transgender students.

*Sources:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1054139X20306534>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1059840516689705>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10964-017-0652-1>

<https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/full/10.1089/trgh.2017.0020>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00918369.2016.1157998>

<https://www.proquest.com/openview/6ebbae07eff8c4f2349657f3b7c86545/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026673>

President Jay Gatrell
Eastern Illinois University

Dear Dr. Gatrell,

We are writing to seek your assistance in making our campus a more inclusive and welcoming environment for Trans/Gender Non-Conforming/Intersex people.

Access to all-gender restroom facilities is a university issue: It's a recruitment issue, it's a retention issue, it's a student health and safety issue. It's a humanitarian issue.

The current political climate across the U.S. for Trans/GNC/Intersex people is fraught with anxiety and uncertainty. Numerous states have passed laws aimed at restricting access to public spaces (including restrooms), participation in sports, access to gender affirming medical therapies and surgeries, and the right to be recognized legally and socially as a gender other than the one assigned at birth. Although some of these efforts have been fought successfully in the courts, other cases in other jurisdictions have not been favorable.

Even though Illinois is a relatively "safe" state for Trans/GNC/Intersex people, we are surrounded by states that are actively trying to make their lives worse. A common method for this is restricting access to restroom facilities that matches their gender identity.

Of 90,000 respondents to the 2022 U.S. Trans Survey, Four percent (4%) of respondents were *denied access to a restroom in a public place, at work, or at school* in the last 12 months. In the same time span, 6% of respondents had been *verbally harassed, physically attacked, or experienced unwanted sexual contact* when accessing or using a restroom.

The 2015 U.S. Trans Survey found that more than half (59%) of respondents avoided using a public restroom in the past year because they were afraid of confrontations or other problems they might experience. Nearly one-third (32%) of respondents limited the amount that they ate and drank to avoid using the restroom in the past year. Eight percent (8%) reported having a urinary tract infection, kidney infection, or another kidney-related problem in the past year as a result of avoiding restrooms.

Eastern Illinois University takes pride in our welcoming and diverse school culture. Yet, 13 academic buildings on campus, including Old Main, do not have all-gender restroom facilities. Students, faculty and staff who need access to an all-gender restroom are left with a harsh choice - hold off until you can leave the building or use a gendered restroom.

As such, we are asking that you begin the process of converting spaces in campus academic buildings that do not currently have all-gender restroom facilities, and to study ways to add more to buildings that currently have only one such facility.

This is a concrete, relatively simple solution that will materially improve the lives of students, faculty and staff.

Thank you