

Street Harassment Prevention Act of 2018

- Overview of the Law -



Elements of the Street Harassment Prevention Act of 2018

The Street Harassment Prevention Act of 2018 (SHPA), is a first of its kind legal measure in the United States that: (1) creates a legal definition of street harassment; (2) establishes a community-based Advisory Committee to study street harassment and develop model policies and trainings; and (3) requires a public information campaign on street harassment. It was designed to uniquely focus on prevention through education instead of criminalization.

Definition of Street Harassment

Street harassment is any disrespectful, offensive or threatening statements, gestures or other conduct directed at an individual in a high-risk area without the individual's consent and based on the individual's actual or perceived protected trait identified in the DC Human Rights Act of 1977.

What is a high-risk area?

A high-risk area includes all public spaces and entities outside of a private residence. These areas include but are not limited to the following:

- Enclosed area within any Metrorail car, Metrobus, MetroAccess vehicle, DC Circulator bus, DC Streetcar or any other commercial vehicle capable of carrying more than 6 passengers;
- Food service entity;
- Any school, library or other building primarily used for instruction of students;
- Any bank, health care facility, laundromat, retail store, shopping mall, sports arena, music venue and theater;
- All publicly-owned property, including any roadway, sidewalk or parking lot; and
- All buildings or land owned, leased or occupied by District government.

Street Harassment Prevention Advisory Committee

The SPHA Advisory Committee (ACSH) is appointed by the Mayor and chaired by the DC Office of Human Rights (OHR). At this time, it is slated to sunset on October 1, 2020. The ACSH consists of a mix of 17 government and advocacy community members including representatives from the following entities:

Government Members

- DC Office of Human Rights
- Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants
- Mayor's Office on LGBTQ Affairs
- Department of Transportation
- Metropolitan Police Department
- DC Council
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
- Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration

Advocacy Community Members

- Street Harassment Prevention
- Gender-Based Violence Prevention
- Gender Equity
- LGBTQ Rights
- Racial Equity
- Religious Tolerance
- Poverty/Homelessness Prevention
- Immigrant Rights

Role of OHR

The Act specifically requires the Office of Human Rights (OHR) to conduct the first citywide survey on street harassment; develop model policies and awareness training, in consultation with the advisory committee; monitor government agencies on implementing the policies; and launch a public information campaign about street harassment.

Released March 2019