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## **Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund Files Employment Discrimination Complaint with Florida Commission on Human Relations Against McDonald's for Refusing to Hire Transgender Woman**

McDonald's tells 17-year-old Zikerria Bellamy: "We do not hire faggots."

New York, New York — Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund today filed a Complaint with the Florida Commission on Human Relations against an Orlando McDonald's restaurant for refusing to hire 17-year-old Zikerria Bellamy because she is transgender.

On July 10, 2009, Ms. Bellamy applied online for a job at a McDonald's restaurant in Orlando, Florida. On July 28, after managers at McDonald's learned that Zikerria is transgender, she received a voicemail message from one of the managers telling her, "You will not get hired. We do not hire faggots." She was never allowed to interview for a job.

"Zikerria should not have been denied a job just because she is transgender. Like everyone else, she deserved to be judged on her ability to do the job and not on who she is," said TLDEF executive director and attorney Michael Silverman.

"I just wanted to earn some money and was willing to work hard at this job. In the current economy, jobs are really hard to find. I never expected to be judged on who I am, instead of being judged on whether I can do the job," said Ms. Bellamy.

Transgender people face tremendous discrimination in the workplace. 47% of transgender people report being fired, or denied a job or promotion, just because of who they are.

Few protections exist for transgender people who experience employment discrimination. In 38 states, there is no law protecting people from being fired because they are transgender. Federal law similarly offers no job protection for transgender people.

In Florida, while no law explicitly addresses discrimination based on gender identity, administrative agencies in Florida have ruled that transgender people are protected by the Florida Civil Rights Act's prohibitions on sex and disability discrimination. The Competitive Workforce Bill, which would add gender identity and sexual orientation to the Florida Civil Rights Act, was introduced in the Florida legislature on November 20.

At the federal level, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) (S.1584) would address discrimination in the workplace by making it illegal to fire, refuse to hire, or refuse to promote an employee based on the person's gender identity or sexual orientation.

"Transgender Americans should have the chance to earn a living and provide for their families without being refused a job or fired for reasons that have nothing to do with their ability to do the job," added Silverman.

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Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund is committed to ending discrimination based upon gender identity and expression, and to achieving equality for transgender people through public education, test-case litigation, direct legal services, community organizing and public policy efforts.