

May 6, 2021

The Honorable Bill Lee
Office of the Governor
1st Floor, State Capitol
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Lee:

On behalf of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), which represents more than 48,000 association professionals and 7,400 organizations and industry partners nationwide, I respectfully request that your office veto legislation (House Bill 1182) awaiting ratification that would require businesses and public facilities in the state to post signs indicating that they allow transgender and other non-binary people to use the restroom in their establishment that matches their gender identity.

This bill promotes mistreatment of a targeted LGBTQ population and threatens to give rise to state-sanctioned discrimination in Tennessee.

ASAE stands strongly in support of diversity and inclusion practices not only within the association sector, but in the various municipalities and states in which associations operate. We are deeply opposed to any laws that permit or even give the appearance of tolerating discrimination. In addition to being regressive, bills such as HB 1182 damage Tennessee's image as a welcoming destination for businesses, meeting and convention delegates, and tourists.

Associations plan and host meetings and conventions in destinations all over the country, including throughout Tennessee. ASAE held its own Annual Meeting & Exposition in Nashville in 2014, contributing \$16 million to the Nashville economy over four days and up to \$500 million in future business for the city. ASAE is scheduled to host its 2022 Annual Meeting in Nashville again.

Laws like HB 1182 put that type of economic gain in peril. Proponents of this bill may believe it is narrowly focused, but the reality is that it has garnered national attention and broadcasts an unflattering message about the state and its treatment of all individuals who reside in or visit the state.

For these reasons, I urge you not to sign this bill and instead work with state lawmakers to affirm the fundamental rights and protections all Tennesseans and visitors to the state deserve.

Respectfully,



Susan Robertson, CAE
President and CEO