



April 25, 2011

[www.theTaskForce.org](http://www.theTaskForce.org)

**Washington, DC**  
1325 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 202.393.5177  
Fax: 202.393.2241

**New York, NY**  
80 Maiden Lane  
Suite 1504  
New York, NY 10038  
Phone: 212.604.9830  
Fax: 212.604.9831

**Los Angeles, CA**  
8704 Santa Monica Boulevard  
Suite 200  
West Hollywood, CA 90069  
Phone: 310.855.7380  
Fax: 310.358.9415

**Cambridge, MA**  
1151 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
Phone: 617.492.6393  
Fax: 617.492.0175

**Miami, FL**  
3510 Biscayne Boulevard  
Suite 206  
Miami, FL 33137  
Phone: 305.571.1924  
Fax: 305.571.7298

**Minneapolis, MN**  
810 West 31st Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55408  
Phone/Fax: 612.821.4397

James Skinner  
Chief Executive Officer  
McDonald's Corporation  
2111 McDonalds Drive  
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Dear Mr. Skinner,

As the executive director of the oldest national organization addressing the needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, I write to you with a heavy and troubled heart. Like hundreds of thousands of other McDonald's customers, I have viewed the shocking video tape of the attack of Chrissy Lee Polis at the McDonald's store in Rosedale, Maryland, on April 18, 2011 and I am appalled.

While I support Mitchell McPherson's apparent sincerity and good intentions to address this matter, I urge that McDonald's corporate leadership become much more actively involved in efforts to ensure that such an attack never occur again at one of your stores.

Mr. McPherson correctly has fired the employee who callously videotaped the attack and warned the attackers that the police were on the way, even while Ms. Polis lay on the floor suffering through an epileptic seizure brought on by the attack. But more work is necessary with your staff and with your franchise owners, to ensure that nothing like this tragedy ever happens again.

Chrissy Lee Polis became a victim of an appalling, brutal physical and emotional attack because she attempted to use the women's restroom at the Rosedale store. Ms. Polis, as a transgender woman, would not be welcome in the men's restroom, nor would that be the appropriate restroom for her to use. Like many people who are transgender and/or gender non-conforming, Ms. Polis appropriately chose to use the restroom that matches her gender identity. For the simple act of taking care of a basic human need, Ms. Polis was subjected to a punishing and vicious physical assault. I cannot emphasize enough how critical it is that McDonald's take the appropriate action to ensure that something so brutal and traumatizing never again occurs in one of its stores. Ms. Polis has stated in recent interviews that she now fears even leaving her own home, out of concern of another possible attack. This incident has laid bare not only the need for change, but has provided an opportunity for a company such as McDonald's to truly live up to its own standard, as a model, and demonstrate its genuine ongoing commitment to diversity and respect.

Your web site now states:

*There's no room for violence under the Golden Arches. We strongly condemn the videotaped assault in one of our Baltimore franchised restaurants. Working with the authorities, we now have more facts, and we want to share our actions with you.*

*First and foremost, our thoughts are with the victim during this time.*

*Our franchisee is investigating the behavior and response of his employees. Action has been taken, and the crew member who made the video is no longer employed by his organization. Appropriate action regarding other employees will take place as warranted.*

*We want to reassure our customers that your neighborhood McDonald's is a safe, welcoming place for everyone. We share our customers' concern. We are doing everything possible to make sure the right thing is done.*

These sentiments are laudable, but more is needed to ensure adequate measures are taken to address the critical issues presented here. I write with specific recommendations for you and your corporate leadership, your franchise owners, and each of your 1.7 million employees.

1. Become more familiar with the lives of transgender people. Please read and distribute to your corporate leadership, your franchise owners and your 1.7 million employees our report: *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*. The report is available for full reading at: [http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports\\_and\\_research/ntds](http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/ntds).
2. Take immediate steps to train and instruct your corporate leadership, your franchise owners and your 1.7 million employees in the many concrete ways they can make McDonald's a welcoming place for everyone, including transgender customers.
3. In particular, ensure that your corporate leadership, your franchise owners and your 1.7 million employees feel a sense of shared responsibility for the safety of each and every one of your millions and millions of customers, no matter how they look and no matter what your corporate leadership, your franchise owners and your 1.7 million employees may think of them in the privacy of their own minds. As you know, customer service demands that we each extend to every person with whom we relate and interact, the fundamental benefits of human dignity.
4. Engage with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force as a partner in a corporate responsibility program to ensure that your corporate leadership, your franchise owners and your 1.7 million employees continue to be educated about the lives of transgender customers.

I also want to make you aware that our **24<sup>th</sup> National Conference on LGBT Equality: Creating Change** will be held at the Hilton Baltimore January 25 – 29, 2012. We anticipate hundreds of attendees who are transgender and/or gender non-conforming, along with over 2,000 other attendees at our annual organizing and strategy-making event for the LGBT political movement. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force has a history of nearly 40 years of leading the LGBT community to greater dignity and respect, and working with its corporate partners to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves to move forward in creating greater respect for LGBT people and their families. As an historical corporate model and leader we seek to work with McDonald's to help ensure that another tragedy such as this never again occurs in one of your restaurants. It is a critical need for both our community and for McDonald's as a model corporation with a history for a respect for diversity. We hope that you seize this moment to do the right thing and stand on the side of respect and dignity.

I look forward to your response. I can be reached at 202-639-6302 or at [rcarey@thetaskforce.org](mailto:rcarey@thetaskforce.org).

Best regards,



Rea Carey  
Executive Director

CC: Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, City of Baltimore  
Police Commissioner Frederick H. Bealefeld, III, City of Baltimore  
Executive Kevin Kamenetz, Baltimore County  
Chief Jim Johnson, Baltimore County Police Department