



## MAYOR GINA-LOUISE SCIARRA

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### **City of Northampton Obtains a Perfect Score on the Human Rights Campaign's 2023 Municipal Equality Index for the Sixth Year in Row**

NORTHAMPTON - Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra joins the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) to announce that the City of Northampton has scored a perfect score (100) on the 2023 Municipal Equality Index (MEI). The MEI is the nation's premier benchmarking tool designed to inform municipal officials, policymakers, and business leaders on how well cities across the nation embody LGBTQ+ inclusion in their laws, policies, and services. It has been published every year since 2012.

Since 2018, the MEI has evolved dramatically by instituting new benchmarks ensuring equal access to single-user facilities in public spaces, requiring trans-inclusive health benefits, as well as protecting LGBTQ+ youth from bullying in city services and from dangerous so-called "conversion" therapy. However, even with these more stringent MEI requirements, Northampton has again achieved a perfect score and is the only community in western Massachusetts that continues to receive this important distinction.

"The City of Northampton and the Mayor's office have worked hard to institute the changes necessary to raise its MEI from 89 in 2017 to attain a perfect score for the past six years," shared Court Cline, Northampton's Executive Office LGBTQ+ Liaison, "I'm incredibly proud of these efforts as they reflect Northampton's core values."

Since the MEI's debut in 2012, the number of cities earning perfect scores has increased more than sevenfold, with more than 129 scoring a perfect score in 2023. The City of Northampton is honored to be considered part of this number as it remains resolute in its commitment to championing inclusivity, equality, and justice in the face of the unprecedented and dangerous anti-LGBTQ+ assaults and legislation occurring around the country.

The MEI rated 506 cities, including the 50 state capitals, the 200 largest cities in the United States, the five largest cities or municipalities in each state, the cities home to the state's two largest public universities, 75 municipalities that have high proportions of same-sex couples and 98 cities selected by the HRC and Equality Federation state group members and supporters. It assesses each city on 49 criteria covering citywide nondiscrimination protections, policies for municipal employees, city services, law enforcement, and city leadership's relationship with the LGBTQ+ community.

MEI's full report, Northampton's scorecard, detailed scorecards for every city, and a searchable database is available online at [www.hrc.org/mei](http://www.hrc.org/mei).

For more information, contact the Mayor's Office at 413-587-1249 or [mayor@northamptonma.gov](mailto:mayor@northamptonma.gov).