

Uruguay in TRANSformation: *Advances in the guarantees for trans peoples' rights*

Uruguay was the first Latin American country to regulate a **Comprehensive Gender Identity Law in 2009**. Since then, the individuals that looked to change their name had to face a long and costly legal and administrative procedure, which not everyone could access, in addition to the stigmatization of those who tried to fulfill this right.



After this huge step, in May 2016 the Ministry of Social Development carried out a census to identify how many trans people lived in the country. With the results from this census, the **Bill for Trans People** was presented before the Uruguayan parliament in August. The bill looks to reverse discrimination mechanisms and advance guarantees for trans peoples' rights. Five civil society organizations carried out important advocacy efforts and verified that all the procedures were carried out appropriately and according to the law.

The bill was presented with four focuses: **1.** Employment inclusion, **2.** Comprehensive healthcare, **3.** Education, and **4.** Reparation based support for older victims of human rights violations. It is a comprehensive and complete bill to guarantee that the rights of individuals with dissident sexual and gender identities are not violated.

The executive branch's will is evident, but some anti-rights groups collected 40,000 signatures during the bill's debates to stop it from moving forward. At that time, **ATRU "Asociación Trans de Uruguay" (Trans Association of Uruguay)**, a national civil society organization that defends trans people's rights, collected **60,000 signatures** insisting that the debate continues in parliament.

For two years, members of ATRU carried out verification efforts, accompanied the debates, organized demonstrations, collected signatures, and did advocacy so that the bill would become law. The **Urgent Action Fund-LAC** supported the organization's resistance and advocacy efforts.

In October of 2018 the bill was **PASSED!** in an extraordinary session that lasted over **10 hours** in the Senate, and later in the debates in the House of Representatives, it passed with a total of **62 votes in favor**, out of 88 votes.



The final approval of the *Law for Trans People* means that Uruguay continues to promote options for a more participatory and just society, where trans people are not victims of discrimination and violence. However, more than anything, it is a step forward so that Latin America doesn't face setbacks in the rights already achieved.

We celebrate this huge advancement for TRANS people in Uruguay and the new law that guarantees the rights of all people, as it makes the struggles of trans people in the region more visible.