

PUBLICATION

Louisiana Governor Institutes Sexual Orientation and Transgender Protections for State Workers and Contractors

April 14, 2016

On April 13, 2016, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards signed [Executive Order No. JBE 2016-11](#) prohibiting discrimination or harassment by Louisiana state agencies against individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. While the Executive Order also prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, disability or age, this Order is the first time Louisiana has instituted a directive including protections for individuals based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Executive Order prohibits discrimination or harassment against individuals in these protected categories in employment by the State, including but not limited to hiring, promotion, tenure, recruitment or compensation. The Executive Order also directs that all contracts for services by any state agency shall also require that the private contractor likewise prohibit such conduct. The only exception is for religious entities that provide contractual service to the State.

Companies who contract with the State of Louisiana or any of its agencies, departments, offices, commissions, boards or offices should immediately review their employment policies and ensure that they include provisions that prohibit discrimination based sexual orientation and gender identity. Companies should also educate and train their human resources professionals and managers on how to avoid claims of discrimination or harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The non-discrimination mandate applicable to state contractors goes into effect on **July 1, 2016**, while the state agency mandate goes into effect immediately.