



American Restroom Association

America's Advocate for Clean, Safe, Well-Designed Public Restrooms

An independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2004 - EIN # 20-3581202.

ARA "Comfort Press" eZine

The newsletter for people who use public restrooms (everyone) and the organizations, companies, innovators, and entrepreneurs who strive to make them better.

August 2021

**CBS Sunday Morning - 1 Year Later | Some "Gig"
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CBS Sunday Morning - 1 Year Later

by Tim Pyle, Executive Director

Who remembers . . . ?

"There's great room for improvement. And in this era of covid, it's more and more important that we have clean, safe restrooms to go to." A year ago, ARA Vice President and Professor of Architecture, Kathryn Anthony made that statement on the widely viewed "CBS Sunday Morning" program. [Click on the thumbnail to watch (6 min.)] A year on from that statement, what's changed?



I'd say, it's a mixed bag. Many locales took our advice and closed off some stalls and urinals to improve social distancing. Reminder signage about hand washing and distancing have proliferated. However, some establishments have leveraged their concerns about covid into more "restrooms closed" or "employees only" situations. Frankly, that's just lazy. With proper ventilation and cleaning protocols - just as before covid - the availability of public restrooms for all who need them is possible.

The mission of the American Restroom Association remains relevant. We'll

endeavor to continue to advocate for improvement in every environment outside of the home so that all people can fully participate in society regardless of when or where "the need" arises. Read on America!

Some Gig: Mobile Workforce Has "No Where to Go"

The ARA continues to receive reports that many in the mobile workforce still struggle to take care of their personal needs! Here's roundup of a few articles that show it has been a longstanding problem and that continues today.*



- ["Brake for Bathroom Breaks"](#) (theringer.com, January 2016)
- ["Gig Workers Have Nowhere to Pee"](#) (Vice.com, January 2020)
- ["Gig Workers' Only Chance to Pee is Apparently an App"](#) (Vice.com, October 2020)
- ["Amazon apologizes for denying that its drivers pee in bottles"](#) (CBS News, April 2021)

Who has oversight on workers' restroom rights? That would be OSHA (US Occupational Safety and Health Administration). Interested in learning more? Try these links: Human Resources experts [SHRM](#) and [OSHA](#) itself.

* Image credit: CHRISTIAN PEREA/DAVID PAUL MORRIS-BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES courtesy of vice.com.

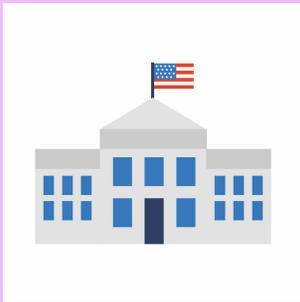


Gender-Neutral Legislation and Orders Gain Momentum

Municipalities and organizations across the US are joining Baltimore, Philadelphia, Washington, and New York in banning gender-specific single-use bathrooms, issuing executive orders for government properties, changing policies, or passing wide-spread legislation to that effect. While the American Restroom Association prefers the more welcoming and inclusive terminology "All-Gender Restroom," we applaud this widespread change for "potty parity." A few highlights:

- Atlanta, GA: ["Atlanta mayor signs order to make 100 'all-gender' city restrooms"](#) (AJC, June 2021)
- Jersey City, NJ: ["Jersey City City Council Passes Gender Neutral Bathroom Ordinance"](#) (tapinto.net, July 2021)
- Grand Rapids, MI: ["Spectrum Health to add gender-neutral bathrooms in Grand Rapids hospitals"](#) (June 2021)

- Statesboro, GA: "[All campus' single-stall bathrooms become gender neutral](#)" (Georgia Southern University/The George-Anne, August 2021)



Who are we talking to? We talk to "the Man!"

One of our missions at the American Restroom Association is to represent you in bringing public restroom issues to those in local, state, and federal government. While government can seem monolithic at times, the career public servants that we interact with are very interested - for the most part - in learning from us and in looking for ways to solve problems. Yes, there is still a long way to go (we're talking to you Secretary Pete - call us!), but feel confident that our recent contacts with the **Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, the Department of Labor, and Massachusetts Department of Public Health** show that real people looking for real solutions do work there. Keep the faith! Click the graphic above to go to an easy tool at govtrack.us for learning about your representatives and senators and legislation that affects you.

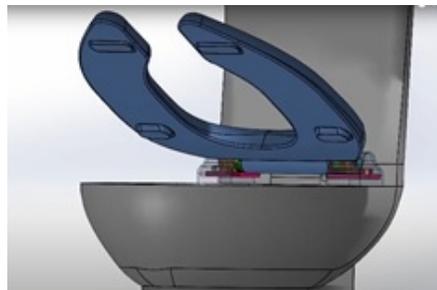
And . . . let us know what issues are important to you by using our [Contact the ARA](#) form. We'd love to hear from you so we can represent you to the fullest.

Volunteers Needed!

Interested in helping the ARA in our mission? Fill out our [Contact the ARA](#) form, and we'll be in touch. Efforts include tracking restroom legislative activity and issues, as well as identifying funding opportunities. Get involved!

Innovation Station - "The Clean Seat"

"Really? Come on. Keep it clean people!" In terms of the gross out factor in public restrooms, the peed-on seat ranks right up there. Boston University business student Kevin Tang and colleagues are on target to make it a thing of the past. Click on the graphic to see his 2-minute video introducing their award-winning invention "The Clean Seat." [Ed. note: I had the chance to take a peek at how their proprietary mechanism works, and it's ingenious and practical.] There are plumbing codes and rules that regulate against what are called "highly sprung" toilet seats - think stadium and movie theater seating - that snap up quickly. No one wants that fast an action, and it has to be somewhat accommodating to "hoverers." The Clean Seat team has taken a mindful and scientific approach to their design. Keep an eye out for it as they roll it out in nationwide pilot programs.



Now Trending:

Fresh stuff from the web and interesting items from the ARA Inbox.

Old Jewish Men say . . .

We think these guys have the right idea. Posted June 21, 2021, on Instagram and now approaching half-a-million views . . .



LA Times Article: Seeking Caregiver Restrooms

Jeanette Marantos from the LA Times contacted us on the lead up to her impending road trip recounted in her article "[5 tips for safe and sane travel with someone who has dementia.](#)" When a caregiver/family restroom is a necessity, finding where to stop can be a huge challenge.



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Watch this space for more innovations for both consumer and commercial applications.
Have a new solution? [Contact us!](#)

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[Pinterest now on air!](#)



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About American Restroom Association (ARA): a nonprofit founded in 2004, ARA advocates for the availability of clean, safe, and well-designed public restrooms. Accomplishments include successfully advocating for enforcement of and revisions to the International Plumbing Code, congressional testimony on gender equity in public restrooms in US Federal Buildings, and representing the USA in educating international audiences at Summits and Conferences of the World Toilet Organization (WTO). ARA brings together an independent and multidisciplinary team from architecture, engineering, education, academia, business, and social work. Learn more at <https://americanrestroom.org/>.

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