

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Press Contact:

Amanda Cooper  
[pr@naafa.org](mailto:pr@naafa.org)  
917-930-7552

For Dove inquires:

Sherria Cotton  
[sherria.cotton@edelman.com](mailto:sherria.cotton@edelman.com)

## **NAAFA and FLARE Project Launch First of Its Kind Campaign to End Body Size Discrimination**

***Though people of larger size are the majority in America, very few laws protect them against discrimination. Legislators and advocates say it's time for change.***

**February 21, 2023** — The National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA) and Fat Legal Advocacy, Rights, and Education Project (FLARE, a project of the Law Office of Brandie Solovay) are proud to launch the [Campaign for Size Freedom](#), supported by Dove, to end body size discrimination. The campaign seeks to strengthen legal protections and shift cultural narratives about body size through education, advocacy, and corporate social responsibility. The campaign comes as four states (New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Vermont) and New York City are considering legislation that would prohibit discrimination based on height and weight. If these bills are successful, these states will join Michigan and Washington in being the only states in the country with explicit protections against body size discrimination.

Though people of larger size are the majority in America, very few laws specifically outlaw discrimination based on body size. [Research conducted by Dove](#) showed that nearly 90% of women—and 84% of all adults—living in larger bodies have been shamed because of their body size at least once. Many have also been discriminated against because of their body size, with 78% of women and 65% of all adults living in larger bodies experiencing discrimination at least once. Race also plays a key role, with women of color living in larger bodies more at risk of discrimination than white women. Body size discrimination denies people necessary—even life-saving—medical treatment, contributes to financial inequality, and creates serious mental health challenges.

In both pop culture and [news stories](#), fat people continue to be stigmatized and shamed because of their body size. This is adding to an already-hostile cultural environment that is having a devastating effect on higher weight people's mental health and access to opportunities like employment, education and proper medical care free from discrimination.

“Americans know that fat people get made fun of and pressured to change our bodies, but often people don't fully understand the many ways weight bias limits our lives. It doesn't just break our hearts. It also drains our bank accounts and keeps us from participating in our communities. It isn't just personal. It's discriminatory. My body size shouldn't determine whether or not people pay or treat me fairly—no one's should. And 80% of Americans agree! It's time for our laws and policies to catch up to our values,” said Tigress Osborn, Board Chair at NAAFA.

True equality means everyone at every size has the same freedom to thrive. It's that simple. The Campaign for Size Freedom seeks to make the promise of equality a reality for people of all

sizes and from all backgrounds. “We should not need laws to guarantee fair treatment based on body size, but obviously we do. These laws are critical; they make it clear that discrimination and hostility must stop, and that it’s possible to push back if it happens to you,” said Brandie Solovay, Director of her law office’s FLARE Project.

“Dove has been leading conversations around inclusive beauty and representation for nearly two decades, and we believe all body sizes deserve care, love and respect. Dove is proud to support the advocacy efforts of NAAFA and FLARE Project to strengthen legislation that protects against body size discrimination,” said Dana Paolucci, Head of PR & Influence for Dove North America. “For years, activists have fought to legally protect individuals living in larger bodies from discrimination, but have been met with rejection in 48 states. This needs to change. Dove will use its platforms to raise awareness of the injustice of body size discrimination while advancing necessary dialogue around beauty and larger bodies. We hope that through the Campaign for Size Freedom, we will be able to create a world where all bodies are treated fairly under the law.”

This year, the Campaign for Size Freedom is urging legislators to pass bills prohibiting discrimination based on body size in the following states and cities:

- **Massachusetts:** [Bill HD.626/SD.392](#), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of height and weight.
- **New Jersey:** [Bill 2741](#), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of height or weight under New Jersey’s “Law Against Discrimination”.
- **New York City:** [Bill INT 0209](#), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of height or weight in opportunities of employment, housing, and access to public accommodations.
- **New York:** [Bill A801](#), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of weight.
- **Vermont:** [Bill S.23](#), prohibiting certain forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on weight and race-related hair styles and textures.

“In New York City, we pride ourselves on our diversity, we don’t shame people for it. With the passage of our bill, New Yorkers facing height and weight discrimination will finally be safeguarded by the law. Our bill protects workers, tenants, and all New Yorkers who face discrimination in employment, housing, and access to public accommodations. We’re grateful to the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance for their over 50 years of hard work to oppose discrimination and invest in the intersectional fat community. Together, we’ll build an inclusive world that celebrates our diversity,” said New York City Council Member Shaun Abreu.

“Body size discrimination is a widespread and serious issue in our society that disproportionately impacts women and people of color. We cannot continue to turn a blind eye to it,” said Massachusetts State Senator Becca Rausch (D-Needham) “I proudly refiled legislation alongside Representative Tram Nguyen to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on height and weight, because our body sizes should not be determinants of our merit, worth, or humanity.”

Massachusetts State Representative Tram Nguyen (D-Andover) said, “I am proud to sponsor legislation that would protect people in the workplace and places of public accommodation from body size discrimination. This has a disproportionate impact on women in the workplace, gives rise to bullying in schools, and often leads to eating disorders. I look forward to continuing our important work with help from the Campaign for Size Freedom, whose members have already been advocating for our bill.”

**To learn more about the Campaign for Size Freedom, visit [naafa.org/sizefreedom](https://naafa.org/sizefreedom).**

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## ABOUT THE PARTNERS

*Founded in 1969, NAAFA is recognized as the world's first documented fat acceptance organization. It is volunteer-led, dedicated to protecting the rights and improving the quality of life for fat people.*

*FLARE is a project of the Law Office of Brandie Solovay that is dedicated to making the lives of higher-weight individuals better through advocacy, legal action, and education.*

*For 65 years, Dove has been committed to broadening narrow definitions of beauty in the work they do. Dove believes that beauty is for everyone, and is on a mission to ensure a positive experience with beauty is universally accessible to all.*