



Congressman David N. Cicilline
Co-Chair, LGBT Equality Caucus

THE EQUALITY ACT

Ending Discrimination against LGBT Americans in Public Accommodations, Education, Federal Financial Assistance, Employment, Housing, Credit, and Federal Jury Service

The Problem

Despite significant advances, LGBT people across the country remain vulnerable to discrimination on a daily basis and too often have little recourse. With the advent of nationwide marriage equality, in many states, same-sex couples have the right to marry but have no explicit non-discrimination protections. In most states, this means that a same-sex couple could legally marry one day and risk being fired from their jobs, evicted from their apartment, or kicked out of a restaurant the next – simply because of who they are.

The current patchwork of state and Federal protections for LGBT people across the country is inadequate to ensure that everyone is protected from discrimination. While certain non-discrimination protections currently exist under federal law, the Equality Act is necessary to ensure equality for all.

Clear, Consistent Protections Under Federal Civil Rights Law

The Equality Act amends existing federal civil rights laws to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in education, employment, housing, credit, Federal jury service, public accommodations, and the use of Federal funds. In some of these areas, federal law prohibiting sex discrimination has already been properly interpreted by federal courts and administrative agencies to include discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Equality Act affirms that correct understanding of existing law and makes the prohibition against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity explicit, in order to provide greater clarity to members of the public, employers, schools, businesses and other affected parties. In areas where sex discrimination is not already prohibited, the bill amends existing law to bar discrimination on the basis of sex, as well as sexual orientation, and gender identity. In short, the Equality Act ensures that the same protections our nation has already extended based on characteristics like race and religion are equally available to LGBT Americans.

Public Accommodations

The Equality Act amends Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to provide basic protections against discrimination in public accommodations on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity. The Act also expands the list of covered types of public accommodations to be consistent with those providers and establishments prohibited from engaging in disability discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Federal Funding and Education

The Equality Act amends Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to provide basic protections against discrimination by recipients of federal financial assistance on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Together with the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in Title IV of the Civil Rights Act, this provision prohibits discrimination against LGBT Americans in education.

Employment

The Equality Act amends Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991, and the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995, to make explicit protections against workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. The Act does not alter Title VII's existing exemptions for small businesses, the military, and religious organizations.

Housing

The Equality Act amends the Fair Housing Act to make protections against housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity explicit.

Credit

The Equality Act amends the Equal Credit Opportunity Act to make protections against credit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity explicit.

Jury Service

The Equality Act amends the Jury Selection and Services Act to make protections against discrimination in federal jury service based on sexual orientation and gender identity explicit.

For further information or to co-sponsor, contact

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Widespread Support for federal LGBT protections

“It’s time to take action to end this discrimination. It’s time to add concrete protections for LGBT people to existing civil rights law, ensuring that sexual orientation and gender identity enjoy similar treatment as religion, national origin, and race; and guaranteeing nondiscrimination protections in employment, housing, public spaces and services, education, federal funding, and other areas. It’s time for true federal equality: nothing more, nothing less.”

– **Julian Bond, late chairman emeritus of NAACP**

“This [Supreme Court decision] is a major victory—but our efforts are far from over. Strengthened by this triumph, we must now work to ensure fair treatment for LGBT individuals and families at work, at school, in housing, and elsewhere. It is time to embrace true and universal equality.”

- **Marcia Greenberger, President, National Women’s Law Center**

The time has come in this country for comprehensive federal LGBT non-discrimination protections. We now have to work harder than ever before to make sure LGBT Americans cannot be fired, evicted or denied services simply on the basis of the marriage license that they fought so hard to achieve.”

- **Chad Griffin, President, Human Rights Campaign**

Supportive Groups

9to5, National Association of Working Women
ACRIA
ADAP Advocacy Association
Advancing Justice -- Asian American Justice Ctr
Advocates for Youth
AIDS United
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of Teachers
American Psychological Association
amfAR, Foundation for AIDS Research
Anti-Defamation League
Association of Flight Attendants - CWA
Athlete Ally
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Center for Inquiry
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Community Access National Network (CANN)
Equality Federation
Family Equality Council
FORGE, Inc.
Forward Together
Freedom for All Americans
Freedom to Work
Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC)
Generation Progress
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality
GLSEN
Guttmacher Institute
Harm Reduction Coalition
Hindu American Foundation
Hispanic Health Network
HIV Medicine Association
Human Rights Campaign
Interfaith Alliance
International Association of Providers of AIDS Care
JWI
Lambda Legal
Latino Commission on AIDS
League of United Latin American Citizens
Lesbian and Gay Veterinary Medical Association
Muslim Public Affairs Council
NARAL Pro-Choice America
NASTAD (National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors)

National AIDS Housing Coalition
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of School Psychologists
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
NEAT - National Equality Action Team
NMAC
People For the American Way
PFLAG National
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Connection Action Fund
Pride at Work
Reconciling Ministries Network
Religious Institute
Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition
Secular Coalition for America
Secular Policy Institute
Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE)
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
Southern HIV/AIDS Strategy Initiative (SASI)
The AIDS Institute
The Center for American Progress
The Trevor Project
Transgender Law Center
Treatment Action Group
Union for Reform Judaism
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Witness to Mass Incarceration

Select Business Endorsements

Abercrombie & Fitch , Accenture, Airbnb, Amazon, American Airlines, Apple Inc., Best Buy, Caesars Entertainment, Capital One Financial, Chevron, The Coca-Cola Co., CVS Health Corp., Dropbox Inc., Dow Chemical, EMC, Facebook, Gap, General Electric, General Mills, Google, The Hershey Company, Hewlett Packard, Hilton, Hyatt, IBM, Intel, Levi Strauss & Co., Marriott, MasterCard, Microsoft, Nike, Oracle, Orbitz, PepsiCo, T-Mobile, Target, Twitter, Unilever

