



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

# **THE EQUALITY ACT**

## **FACT SHEET**

---

*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, including 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, including 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, including any establishment that provides a good, service, or program including but not limited to retail stores, transportation, healthcare, adoption, and youth services.

### ***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  
Sarah Trister with Mr. Cicilline's office: [Sarah.Trister@mail.house.gov](mailto:Sarah.Trister@mail.house.gov), 54911***

### ***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, 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                      | National AIDS Housing Coalition                                  |
| ACRIA  | National Association of County and City Health Officials         |
| ADAP Advocacy Association  | National Association of School Psychologists                     |
| Advancing Justice -- Asian American Justice Ctr                  | National Black Justice Coalition                                 |
| Advocates for Youth  | National Center for Lesbian Rights                               |
| AIDS United  | National Center for Transgender Equality                         |
| American Civil Liberties Union                                   | National Coalition for LGBT Health                               |
| American Federation of Teachers                                  | National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs                     |
| American Psychological Association                               | National Council of Jewish Women                                 |
| amfAR, Foundation for AIDS Research                              | National Council of La Raza (NCLR)                               |
| Anti-Defamation League   | National Education Association                                   |
| Association of Flight Attendants - CWA                           | National Employment Law Project                                  |
| Athlete Ally   | National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce                       |
| Bend the Arc Jewish Action                                       | National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund                            |
| Center for Inquiry   | National Organization for Women                                  |
| CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers                        | National Partnership for Women & Families                        |
| Central Conference of American Rabbis                            | National Women's Law Center                                      |
| Community Access National Network (CANN)                         | NEAT - National Equality Action Team                             |
| Equality Federation  | NMAC   |
| Family Equality Council  | People For the American Way                                      |
| FORGE, Inc.  | PFLAG National   |
| Forward Together   | Physicians for Reproductive Health                               |
| Freedom for All Americans  | Planned Parenthood Federation of America                         |
| Freedom to Work  | Population Connection Action Fund                                |
| Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC)                                   | Pride at Work  |
| Generation Progress  | Reconciling Ministries Network                                   |
| GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality               | Religious Institute  |
| GLSEN  | Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition                           |
| Guttmacher Institute   | Secular Coalition for America                                    |
| Harm Reduction Coalition   | Secular Policy Institute   |
| Hindu American Foundation  | Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE)                     |
| Hispanic Health Network  | Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS) |
| HIV Medicine Association   | Southern HIV/AIDS Strategy Initiative (SASI)                     |
| Human Rights Campaign  | The AIDS Institute   |
| Interfaith Alliance  | The Center for American Progress                                 |
| International Association of Providers of AIDS Care              | The Trevor Project   |
| JWI  | Transgender Law Center   |
| Lambda Legal   | Treatment Action Group   |
| Latino Commission on AIDS  | Union for Reform Judaism   |
| League of United Latin American Citizens                         | URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity                     |
| Lesbian and Gay Veterinary Medical Association                   | Witness to Mass Incarceration                                    |
| Muslim Public Affairs Council                                    |  |
| NARAL Pro-Choice America   |  |
| NASTAD (National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors) |  |

## 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

