



The Leadership Conference
on Civil and Human Rights

March 24, 2021

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 220 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we urge you to support the Equality Act. The Equality Act would ensure that LGBTQ people are protected against discrimination in housing, credit, education, and employment, and it would clarify and strengthen public accommodation antidiscrimination laws for all people. This bill is a top priority for our coalition.

The Leadership Conference firmly believes that passage of the Equality Act is a crucial step in fulfilling our nation's commitment to the civil and human rights of all people. Despite the great strides in LGBTQ rights in recent decades, millions of LGBTQ individuals are still subject to discrimination and uncertainty over whether their rights will be protected. Our work is not complete until every person in America is able to earn a living, further their education, put a roof over their heads, and engage in public life without the fear of harassment or discrimination based on who they are or who they love. Currently, there is a patchwork of different state laws with varying levels of protections against discrimination. Congress must act to pass the Equality Act because no one's civil rights should depend on their zip code.

In *Bostock v. Clayton County* and two related cases, the Supreme Court found that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity “necessarily entails discrimination based on sex.”¹ That decision, and President Biden's subsequent executive order directing federal agencies to implement that finding, are welcome and historic developments.² However, these actions do not obviate the need for Congress to pass the Equality Act. Only the Equality Act contains the comprehensive federal antidiscrimination protections that LGBTQ people – like all people – deserve. The Equality Act would also strengthen current civil rights laws for everyone, ensuring that antidiscrimination protections extend to public spaces and critically-needed services, including transportation and financial services.

As the Senate Judiciary Committee considers this important bill, we are committed to ensuring that the Equality Act does solely what it is intended to do: clarify and strengthen existing federal civil rights laws for every person in America. We will strongly oppose any effort to weaken either the Equality Act or any existing law that it would amend.

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¹ *Bostock v. Clayton County, Ga.*, 140 S.Ct. 1731, 1747 (2020).

² E.O. 13988, 86 FR 7023 (Jan. 20, 2021).

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We urge you to support the consideration and passage of the Equality Act. No person should face discrimination simply because of who they are or who they love, and it is time for Congress to make that abundantly clear. If you have any questions, please reach out to Rob Randhava at randhava@civilrights.org or 202-466-3311.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
Interim President & CEO