



2010 LEGISLATIVE GUIDE

EQUALITY CALIFORNIA is on the front lines working to build a better future for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Californians. By leading the fight to pass legislation adding protections and rights for LGBT individuals, we advance our mission to achieve full equality for LGBT Californians. Over the last 12 years, thanks to the action and support of our members, more than 60 pieces of Equality California-sponsored legislation have been passed by the California Legislature. This year we are sponsoring 14 pieces of legislation, eight bills and six resolutions, to advance the freedoms and protections and to improve the health and well-being of LGBT people across the state.



RECOGNIZING OUR RELATIONSHIPS

CIVIL MARRIAGE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT | SB 906

Some opponents of marriage equality have argued that members of the clergy would be required to perform marriages of same-sex couples once we win the freedom to marry. This law will eliminate doubt and confusion by affirming the freedom of clergy to make faith-based decisions regarding which marriages they solemnize. The bill also deepens the distinction between civil and religious marriage and ensures that religious institutions would not lose their tax-exempt status as a result of clergy refusing to perform marriages that are contrary to their faith.



Author: Senator Mark Leno
Co-Sponsor: California Council of Churches IMPACT

SEPARATION EQUITY ACT | AB 2700

Couples who are both legally married and registered as domestic partners who wish to dissolve their legal relationships must go through separate processes for each. AB 2700 would create a consolidated procedure to end both a civil marriage and domestic partnership at the same time. This bill would eliminate some of the hardships same-sex couples face as a result of discrimination by the State of California against same-sex couples.



Author: Assemblymember Fiona Ma
Co-sponsor: Conference of California Bar Associations

STRENGTHENING HEALTH & SAFETY NET

MINOR MENTAL HEALTH CONSENT | SB 543

This bill would expand access to essential mental health services for minors ages 12 to 17, including LGBT and questioning youth, and allow them to obtain counseling without parental consent. LGBT youth are as many as four times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers.* Many youth who want to access mental health services relating to issues tied to their sexual orientation or gender identity are fearful of coming out to their parents and, as a result, they do not obtain the help they need under current restrictions.



Author: Senator Mark Leno
Co-sponsors: National Association of Social Workers – California Chapter, Mental Health America of Northern California, GSA Network

*According to the Massachusetts 2006 Youth Risk Survey, as quoted by the Trevor Project.

REPEAL OF DISCRIMINATORY CODE | AB 2199

AB 2199 would repeal a particularly offensive section of the California Welfare and Institutions code, which instructs the State Department of Mental Health to conduct research into the “causes and cures of homosexuality” with the implication that being LGBT is harmful and should and can be cured – in direct contradiction to an enormous body of research that demonstrates otherwise.



Author: Assemblymember Bonnie Lowenthal

Continued on reverse.

"Health & Safety Net" from reverse.

DATA INCLUSION ACT | AB 1878

This is the first bill in the nation that would require the inclusion of questions about sexual orientation, gender identity and domestic partnership status in the voluntary demographic section of government forms. This legislation will enable the state to gather vital data about the LGBT community's use of public services, such as health care and unemployment, as well as other information about our community. Currently the state collects little data on the LGBT community. With additional data, the state can ensure that LGBT Californians receive the services they need to take care of their families and to lead healthy lives.



Author: Assemblymember Ted W. Lieu

SPONSORED RESOLUTIONS

EQCA is sponsoring a number of resolutions to push the U.S. Congress and President to support the rights of LGBT people. The resolutions put the California Legislature on record in support of overturning discriminatory federal laws and regulations and providing rights and protections for LGBT people at the federal level.

U.S. Blood Donor Nondiscrimination Resolution | AJR 13

Author: Assemblymember Tom Ammiano

Resolution Urging Repeal of the Federal Defense of Marriage Act | AJR 19

Author: Assemblymember Julia Brownley

Uniting American Families Act Resolution | AJR 15

Author: Assemblymember Kevin De León

Domestic Partner Tax Equity Resolution | HJR 29

Author: Assemblymember Mike Feuer

Resolution Urging Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" | SJR 9

Author: Senator Christine Kehoe

Resolution on 2020 United States Census | SJR 28

Author: Senator Christine Kehoe

PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY

LGBT PRISONER SAFETY ACT | AB 633

Sixty-seven percent of LGBT inmates report being sexually assaulted by other prisoners during their incarceration, a rate 15 times higher than the overall prison population.* This bill is designed to stem violence against LGBT individuals in the state prison system by adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the current list of factors to be considered when classifying and housing prisoners.



Author: Assemblymember Tom Ammiano

* California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

HATE CRIMES PROTECTION ACT | AB 1680

The bill would prohibit requiring the waiver of any of the legal rights provided by California hate crimes laws, often included in contracts through arbitration clauses that require an individual to waive their legal rights to go to court if they are the victim of a hate crime. Although California state and civil laws protect people from hate-related crimes, private contracts often require individuals to relinquish their fundamental rights and protections.



Author: Assemblymember Lori Saldaña

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS ACT | AB 2055

Current law extends unemployment benefits to married couples, domestic partners and opposite-sex couples who are engaged or about to get married. AB 2055 would enable same-sex couples who are about to enter into a registered domestic partnership to receive the same unemployment benefits.



Author: Assemblymember Hector De La Torre

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