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AJR 45: Resolution in Support of The Equality Act

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Sponsor: Equality California

In Brief

The Equality Act will ensure that vulnerable communities have equal protection from discrimination under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Equality Act updates the federal definition of public accommodation, and expands the current prohibited categories of discrimination. The act ensures that all individuals in the United States are free to access and use public resources, no matter their gender identity, sex, or sexual orientation. AJR 45 calls upon Congress to pass this act.

The Issues

The majority of states currently lack explicit and comprehensive nondiscrimination protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans. Because no federal law enumerates discrimination protections for LGBT people, many LGBT Americans still face daily discrimination and remain at risk of being fired or denied services because of who they are. To make matters worse, a growing number of states are invoking Religious Freedom Restoration Acts or similar legislation to justify discrimination against the LGBT community. In addition, disadvantaged groups including women and people of color continue to face discrimination in areas of public accommodation.

The Solution

The Equality Act updates the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, public education, federal funding, credit, and the jury system. To cite one of example of the importance of these protections, updating the federal definition of public accommodations would ensure that all individuals will be able to access and use social and public spaces.

The Equality Act would maintain exemptions that religious organizations and schools currently enjoy, but would make clear that religion cannot be used to justify refusal of service based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity. This resolution calls upon Congress to pass The Equality Act.

Background

While the US Supreme Court's ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* solidified marriage equality in all 50 states, many LGBT Americans still face discrimination in their daily lives. Some states have invoked Religious Freedom Restoration Acts or similar legislation to discriminate against the LGBT community, and women and people of color continue to face discrimination despite enumerated protections in federal law.

The Equality Act would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to expand protections based on gender identity, sex, and sexual orientation, assuring that all are offered equal protection from discrimination. This resolution would exemplify California's dedication to strong nondiscrimination protections for the LGBT community, and urge Congress to take action in support of equality.

Support

Equality California (Sponsor)
AIDS Project Los Angeles
American Civil Liberties Union of California
Anti-Defamation League
Asian Americans Advancing Justice, California
API Equality – LA
Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center
Bakersfield LGBTQ
Bienestar Human Services
California National Organization for Women
California Voices for Progress
California Young Democrats
Courage Campaign
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Los Angeles Unified School District, District 5
Board Member
LGBTQ Center of Long Beach
Mexican-American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF)
Our Family Coalition
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California
Sacramento LGBT Center
Transgender Law Center
The Trevor Project
The Wall Las Memorias Project