

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
US House of Representatives  
H 232, the Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

Members of the Progressive Caucus thank you for unrelenting support for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community and for making American jobs a top priority for the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. Now is a dire time for the American worker and we believe, H.R. 3017, the Employee Nondiscrimination Act is a vital piece in our economic recovery. With the support of the Democratic leadership and the demonstrated commitment of the Administration, we believe this Congress will finally shut the door on employee discrimination.

For nearly 20 years progressive members of Congress have been fighting to end discrimination and create a fair and equitable workplace for the LGBT community. In a meta-analysis conducted by the Williams Institute, statistics revealed a persistent and unacceptable trend towards open harassment, unfair hiring practices, unwarranted firings and unequal pay. As a caucus concerned with open-minded and progressive views, we take exception to this blatant mistreatment.

As our economy works to recover, now seems the right time to thrust the American workforce into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with legislation that addresses discriminatory workplace practices. Already struggling with an unemployment rate of over 9 percent, the American worker should not need to contend with an employer's personal discomfort or bias against the sexual orientation or gender identity of an employee. States that have adopted anti-discrimination laws report higher employee satisfaction and company morale. Unfortunately, there are only 20 states and the District of Columbia with these policies in place and 12 that also encompass the transgender community.

Employment, promotions and retention should be based on merit and merit alone. For the individual this means a safe and productive work environment where there is a focus on results not a preoccupation with their choice in partner or gender identity. Employers, too, should set their sights on an egalitarian workplace that encourages a sense of community and teamwork. In fact, 94 percent of Fortune 100 companies have antidiscrimination policies protecting lesbian and gay employees and 60 percent protect transgender employees. The best companies hire, promote and retain the best talent, all of which is only made possible by creating a supportive and accepting environment.

ENDA will put the LGBT community on an even footing with every other employee. Turning a blind eye to harassment and discrimination against the LGBT community has too long

been a stain on our otherwise proud record of worker protection. It is imperative to shine a light on this issue and add yet another achievement to this exceptionally accomplished Congress.

We look forward to working with you and to enact ENDA in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Sincerely,

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Raul Grijalva, CPC Co-Chair

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Lynn Woolsey, CPC Co-Chair

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Jared Polis, CPC Member