

  
CONGRESSIONAL  
LGBT EQUALITY CAUCUS

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**MEMORANDUM**

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Date: January 15, 2015  
To: Members of Congress, Staff  
From: Equality Caucus Co-Chairs  
Re: Equality Caucus Guide for the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress

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**Leadership:**

The Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus is led by a board of Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs. Co-Chairs consist of openly LGBT Members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

This Congress, the Equality Caucus will have Task Forces to provide issue specific information and opportunities to members. Additional Task Forces may be created as needs are identified – any member may propose to the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs a new Task Force by contacting the Equality Caucus staff.

114<sup>th</sup> Task Forces:

- |                         |                            |                                |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Aging & Older Adults | 5. Employment              | 9. Immigration                 |
| 2. Civil Rights         | 6. Health & Human Services | 10. International Human Rights |
| 3. Criminal Justice     | 7. HIV/AIDS                | 11. Youth & Families           |
| 4. Education & Schools  | 8. Housing                 |                                |

**Eligibility & Dues:**

Any current sitting Member of the U.S. House of Representatives committed to the full enjoyment of human rights and equality under the law is welcome to join the Equality Caucus as a general member. **General member dues for the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress are \$400 per year**, and they will come from each office's Member Reimbursement Account (MRA).

**Benefits of Membership:**

*Briefings*

Last Congress, the Equality Caucus held an average of one briefing per month. Topics ranged from the Supreme Court's *Windsor* decision to the ongoing need for LGBT workplace non-discrimination legislation.

- Most briefing will continue to be available to the public. However, dues paying members will have exclusive access to briefings with special guests from federal agencies and outside organizations.

*Talking Points & Speeches*

The staff of the Equality Caucus has drafted talking points and speeches for LGBT-focused events that Members attend.

- The Equality Caucus will circulate talking points on a monthly basis, only to dues paying members.

*Briefing Memos*

The Equality Caucus provides briefing memos to Co-Chairs on a variety of policy areas affecting LGBT individuals and families.

- Future briefing memos will be circulated only to dues paying members.
- Any dues paying member may request a topic be covered.



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- Requests will be handled only on a case-by-case basis, depending on volume of work and other commitments.

#### *Press Releases & Media*

The Equality Caucus occasionally sends out press releases to LGBT-focused media and journalists.

- Only Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs are eligible to speak on behalf of the Equality Caucus.
- Task Force Co-Chairs have say over whether to do publicity on an event or development for issues that fall under their specific Task Force.
- Task Force Chairs have discretion to include a general member(s) in a press release or public event.

#### *Newsletter*

The Equality Caucus sends out a monthly newsletter to its email and media list. The newsletter highlights:

- News articles of particular interest from the last month
- Legislation impacting LGBT individuals and families
- International LGBT rights updates
- A section promoting the LGBT-relating activities of Members. Eligibility to be highlighted in this section is exclusive to dues paying Members.

#### *Equality Caucus Email List*

The Equality Caucus sends out weekly emails to Member offices with the latest information on legislation, opportunities for sign-on, news, and upcoming events.

- Any Equality Caucus Member may request that their LGBT-related letter, bill, or briefing be included in the weekly email.
- Only in limited circumstances, up to the discretion of the Equality Caucus staff, will additional emails be sent to the entire Equality Caucus list.
- A circulation request will be denied if Equality Caucus staff determines it contrary to the priorities of the Equality Caucus. In such an event, Members may appeal to the Equality Caucus Co-Chairs.

#### **History:**

Established in 2008 by Representatives Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Barney Frank (D-MA), the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus was created to provide a place for Members of Congress committed to achieving full enjoyment of human rights and equality under the law for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals in the United States and around the world.

In 2013, when a record 4 openly-LGBT freshmen joined the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Equality Caucus hired an Executive Director, tasked with formalizing procedures of the Equality Caucus, namely coordinating LGBT policy work of the Co-Chairs, working with Vice-Chairs, and providing ongoing educational opportunities and feedback to Members of the Caucus.

#### **Questions:**

For any questions about procedures or issues not covered in this memo, contact the Equality Caucus staff. If the staff is unresponsive, please contact the Chief of Staff of one of the Co-Chair offices.