

January 12, 2015

Dear Colleague,

We invite you to join the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus. Founded in the 2008, the Equality Caucus provides resources to Members of Congress and their staff on issues relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals and their families. During the 113th Congress the Equality Caucus had a record 114 Members, hosted nearly two-dozen briefings for Members and staff, drafted sign-on letters, and tracked more than two-dozen bills impacting LGBT individuals and their families.

In the 114th Congress the Equality Caucus will continue to offer the benefits it provided previously; additionally, the Caucus will begin offering exclusive access to issue area memos to help Members develop LGBT policy initiatives, assist with drafting talking points and press releases, and provide resources to all Members of the Caucus to help promote their efforts on LGBT issues. With such a valuable array of benefits, the fee for membership to the Equality Caucus is \$400 per year for the 114th Congress.

Acceptance and support for LGBT issues has grown dramatically in recent years, though full equality and opportunity under the law remains elusive for many in the community. More than 60 percent of Americans live in a state with marriage equality, and 92 percent of LGBT Americans feel that society is more accepting than it was 10 years ago.

Despite this progress, many LGBT people continue to face disadvantages and discrimination relative to their non-LGBT peers. While LGBT people are diverse, appearing in every community throughout the United States, on average they fare worse in nearly every socioeconomic and health measure compared to non-LGBT people. And while LGBT individuals have made great strides here in the U.S., we are increasingly seeing the institutionalization of anti-LGBT sentiment abroad. In fact, there are 10 countries, including Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Iran, where LGBT people face the death penalty simply for being who they are.

According to the Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network more than thirty percent of LGBT students missed a day of school in the last month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. Nearly forty percent of homeless youth are LGBT. Despite higher rates of college completion, LGBT people have higher rates of unemployment. Older LGBT adults are more likely to live in poverty than their non-LGBT counterparts. For individuals and families living at the intersection of multiple minority identities, these disparities are even greater.

During the 114th Congress the Equality Caucus will provide information on these and other issues assist Members in promoting education and awareness to create positive change for their LGBT constituents. For more information on the many benefits awarded to our Members or to join the Equality Caucus please contact Brad Jacklin at brad.jacklin@mail.house.gov or (202) 226-7572.

Sincerely,

Rep. Jared Polis (CO-02)
Member of Congress
Equality Caucus Co-Chair

Rep. David N. Cicilline (RI-01)
Member of Congress
Equality Caucus Co-Chair

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (NY-18)
Member of Congress
Equality Caucus Co-Chair

Rep. Mark Pocan (WI-02)
Member of Congress
Equality Caucus Co-Chair

Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (AZ-09)
Member of Congress
Equality Caucus Co-Chair

Rep. Mark Takano (CA-41)
Member of Congress
Equality Caucus Co-Chair