

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 25, 2023

Ajay Banga  
President, World Bank Group  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20433

Dear Mr. Banga,

As Members committed to protecting the rights of LGBTQ+ people globally, we urge you to immediately postpone and suspend all current and future lending to Uganda until the recent Anti-Homosexuality Act, signed by President Yoweri Museveni on May 29, 2023, is struck down.

While we undoubtedly support efforts to promote long-term economic development and poverty reduction in Uganda, the recent law mandates state-sponsored discrimination and violence against LGBTQ+ individuals, creating a humanitarian crisis that plainly violates World Bank stated policies. We join more than 170 international organizations in urging you to act swiftly so that the World Bank is a leader among multilateral development banks (MDBs) in condemning this egregious and unjust law that threatens LGBTQ+ people across Uganda.

The Anti-Homosexuality Law 2023 (AHA) requires all people in Uganda to report to the police any person reasonably suspected of engaging in the “offense of homosexuality.” It significantly increases already harsh criminal penalties to life in prison or death and also criminalizes those who advocate for and provide certain forms of social support to LGBTQ+ people. It disqualifies LGBTQ+ people from certain types of employment and prohibits landlords from renting housing to LGBTQ+ people. In response, the World Bank issued a brief statement saying that “the Act is not consistent with the values of non-discrimination and inclusion that the institution upholds.” Given these egregious human rights violations against LGBTQ+ people and allies outlined in the AHA, the World Bank’s initial response is insufficient.


This law starkly contradicts the World Bank’s stated values of inclusion and shared prosperity. In 2016, the World Bank approved a new Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) that included provisions on inclusion and non-discrimination. However, the AHA goes against the principles and requirements of this policy by prohibiting LGBTQ+ people from sharing in the benefits and opportunities of Bank-financed projects. Further, the law even directs those implementing these projects to report any beneficiary they have reason to believe may be LGBTQ+ to the police.

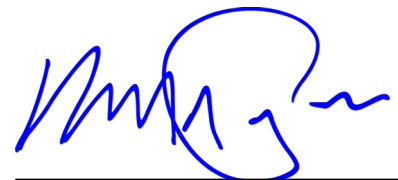
Actively promoting the protection of LGBTQ+ communities is beneficial for the economic and social development of countries and regions, opening further investment opportunities. Studies conducted at both the international and country-specific levels have shown that greater inclusion of sexual and gender minorities in the workforce benefits the economy at large. However, regardless of economic outcomes, the World Bank is a global standard-setter among MDBs and should promote the highest levels of inclusivity and equity in its projects and policies, including in countries where LGBTQ+ individuals face repressive legal and social conditions. We urge you to demonstrate that under your leadership, the Bank will prioritize the protection of LGBTQ+ individuals and will not tolerate draconian laws that degrade their rights.

We stand with Ugandan activists, international humanitarian organizations, and the LGBTQ+ community and insist that the Bank take swift action to postpone and suspend all lending to Uganda until the law is struck down. Continuing to lend money to Uganda and implement projects in the country would signal to the Ugandan Government, other governments considering similar laws, and LGBTQ+ people around the world that the World Bank does not truly value inclusion and that its commitments to non-discrimination are disingenuous. The World Bank can and must do better. We urge the Bank to stand up for the principles and values it claims to uphold by swiftly and publicly suspending all forms of financing, current and future, to the Government of Uganda pending the outcome of legal challenges to the law.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

  
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Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress

  
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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



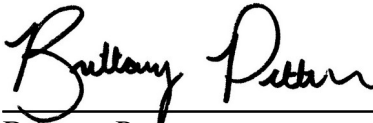
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Al Green  
Member of Congress



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Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress



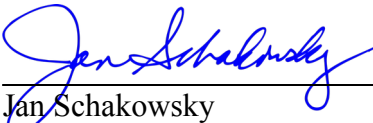
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Brittany Pettersen  
Member of Congress



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Wiley Nickel  
Member of Congress



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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



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Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress