



November 1, 2013

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of members of People For the American Way, we write in strong support of the important, bipartisan civil rights legislation known as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) (H.R. 1755 & S. 815).

In most states, employers can fire or refuse to hire someone based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. 29 states lack employment non-discrimination laws that protect lesbian, gay, and bisexual Americans. 33 states' laws lack gender identity protections.¹ These civil rights gaps leave far too many people vulnerable to workplace discrimination, and the terrifying threat of being unable to financially support themselves and their families.

American principles of fairness and equal opportunity should be extended to all in the workplace. Passage of ENDA would be a major step in the right direction by ensuring that current federal protections against employment discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, age, and disability are extended to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

Public support for ENDA has remained strong over the years. A September 2013 poll conducted by Target Point Consulting's Alex Lundry for Americans for Workplace Opportunity found that 68 percent of voters, including 56 percent of Republicans, believe that the rights of gay men and lesbians and transgender employees should be protected by federal law.² Additionally, nearly 90 percent of Fortune 500 companies have included sexual orientation in their workplace policies, and 57 percent also provide protections based on gender identity.³ Corporate America is leading the way toward workplace fairness, and Congress needs to act to level the playing field for all.

ENDA is commonsense legislation that says no to anti-gay extremists,⁴ addressing injustice with a sensible solution. As we have noted, it would extend protections that some states and many large corporations already provide – without disruptive business consequences.

We strongly support ENDA.

Sincerely,

Marge Baker
Executive Vice President for Policy and Program

Jen Herrick
Senior Policy Analyst

¹ <http://www.workplaceopportunity.org/the-facts>

² Poll release, <http://www.workplaceopportunity.org/press/republican-pollster-supermajority-of-voters-support-employment-non-discrimi>. Poll memo, <http://www.workplaceopportunity.org/ENDApoll>.

³ <http://www.workplaceopportunity.org/broad-support>

⁴ <http://www.pfaw.org/press-releases/2013/10/enda-near-top-ten-religious-right-claims-about-employment-non-discrimination->