

H.R. 5, the Equality Act

Today the House will vote on H.R. 5, the Equality Act, introduced by Rep. David Cicilline (RI-01). This bill protects lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans from discrimination in employment, public education, housing, public accommodations, and other areas of life.

ABOUT THE EQUALITY ACT

In numerous states throughout the country, members of the LGBT community lack basic legal protections against discrimination and harassment. Our nation's existing federal civil rights laws do not protect LGBT individuals, exposing them to discrimination that affects their livelihoods, personal safety, and everyday activities. [According to the Human Rights Campaign](#):

- LGBT people are at risk of being fired, refused housing, or denied services **in thirty states**, and
- Nearly **two-thirds of LGBT Americans** report having experienced discrimination.

The Equality Act would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other statutes to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, public education, access to credit, jury service, federal funding, housing, and public accommodations.

BROAD SUPPORT FOR THE EQUALITY ACT

The American people overwhelmingly support the Equality Act. Polling from the Public Religion Research Institute (PPRI) has shown that [71 percent](#) of Americans favor laws protecting LGBT people against discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations – a figure that has remained stable for the past several years.

Civil rights groups strongly support the Equality Act:

Hillary Shelton, Washington Bureau Director at the NAACP: “For 110 years, we have struggled for the equality of all Americans, regardless of who they are or what they look like. As such, we strong[ly] support and urge swift passage of the Equality Act and urge its immediate enactment.” [Remarks, [4/1/19](#)]

Vanita Gupta, President and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights: “We need clarity in federal civil rights statutes that help ensure equal opportunity and dignity for all LGBTQ individuals in America... We urge Congress to pass the Equality Act.” [Statement, [3/13/19](#)]

The Equality Act also enjoys strong support from the business community. Over 200 major companies across the country have joined the [Human Rights Campaign's Business Coalition for the Equality Act](#), including:

Kevin Walling, Chief Human Resources Officer at The Hershey Company: “... We must foster a business culture that is welcoming to all, regardless of sexual orientation, or gender, or race, or other status... Our federal laws must ensure that all employees are treated with the same respect.” [Statement, [3/8/19](#)]

Jacqueline Williams-Roll, Chief Human Resources Officer at General Mills: “All Americans expect to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect, in the workplace and in their communities. General Mills is proud to support the Equality Act...” [Statement, [3/8/19](#)]

Mark King, Global Head of Diversity & Inclusion at Kellogg Company: “Supporting the Equality Act demonstrates our continued commitment to creating an environment in which all employees are included, treated with dignity and respect, and are empowered to achieve their full potential.” [Statement, [3/8/19](#)]

Christy Pambianchi, Executive Vice President at Corning Incorporated: “LGBTQ people are our innovators, our friends, our family members, and our neighbors, and they deserve to be able to live their lives free from discrimination or harassment.” [Statement, [3/8/19](#)]

Following House passage of the Equality Act, the Senate ought to take up this legislation and send it to the President to ensure that no American is discriminated against based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.