

April 30, 2019

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Doug Collins
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515



ACLU Urges Support for H.R. 5, Opposition to Amendments

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Dear Chairman Nadler, Ranking Member Collins, and Members of the Committee on the Judiciary:

As the Committee prepares to markup H.R. 5, the Equality Act, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) strongly urges you to support the bill and oppose any and all amendments that may be offered other than an amendment in the nature of a substitute from Chairman Nadler.

H.R. 5, the Equality Act, is landmark civil rights legislation. It is grounded in the principle that all people in this country should be able to fully participate in public life and not be judged based on characteristics like sexual orientation or gender identity. Everyone deserves a fair chance to support themselves, provide for their family, and live as their true selves free from the fear of harassment or discrimination. The harsh reality – despite increasing support among the public and representation in popular culture – is that discrimination remains a persistent problem for LGBTQ people across the country. From discrimination and harassment of transgender youth in our nation's schools to older same-sex couples denied housing in retirement communities because of their sexual orientation, this is something that LGBTQ people confront throughout their lives and in every corner of the country.

This is why the Equality Act is so critically important. It would provide LGBTQ people with consistent, explicit, and nationwide nondiscrimination protections across all of the key areas of daily

life, including employment, housing, and access to public spaces and services.

The patchwork nature of current laws has left millions of people across the country subject to uncertainty and potential discrimination that impacts their safety, their families, and their day-to-day lives. Around 50% of LGBTQ people in the U.S. – approximately 8 million people – live in states that still lack explicit statewide legal protections, leaving their residents and visitors at risk of discrimination because of who they are.

The need for consistent, explicit, and nationwide civil rights protections for LGBTQ people – exactly what the Equality Act would provide – could not be clearer. The ACLU urges strong support for H.R. 5, the Equality Act, and opposition to any and all amendments that may be offered during markup other than an amendment in the nature of a substitute from Chairman Nadler.

Please reach out to Ian Thompson, ACLU senior legislative representative, with any questions at (202) 715-0837 or ithompson@aclu.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald Newman".

Ronald Newman
National Political Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian S. Thompson".

Ian S. Thompson
Senior Legislative Representative

Cc: Members of the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary