

March 18, 2014

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you to fulfill the promise in your State of the Union address to make this a “year of action” and build upon the momentum of 2013 by signing an executive order banning federal contractors from engaging in employment discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans. As you have said before, “now is the time to end this kind of discrimination, not enable it.”

As we continue to work towards final passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) with strong bipartisan support, we urge you to take action now to protect millions of workers across the country from the threat of discrimination simply because of who they are or who they love. We are committed to doing all that we can in Congress to get ENDA to your desk this year; however, there is no reason you cannot immediately act by taking this important step. This executive order would provide LGBT people with another avenue in the federal government they could turn to if they were the victim of employment discrimination by a federal contractor. When combined with ENDA, these non-discrimination protections would parallel those that have been in place for decades on the basis of race, sex and religion.

An executive order covering LGBT employees would be in line with a bipartisan, decades-long commitment to eradicating taxpayer-funded discrimination in the workplace. In 1941, President Roosevelt prohibited discrimination in defense contracts on the bases of race, creed, color, or national origin. In subsequent executive orders, Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson expanded these protections to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not used to discriminate.

In addition, most of the largest government contractors – companies like Boeing, Raytheon, and Lockheed Martin – have LGBT non-discrimination policies in place. They adopted them because business leaders recognize that discrimination is bad for the bottom line.

Finally, time is of the essence. Even with an executive order in place, full implementation of these protections will require regulations to be developed and finalized, a process that will take many months, if not longer, to fully put in place.

Issuing an executive order prohibiting discrimination against LGBT workers in federal contracts would build on the significant progress for LGBT rights made during your time as President and would further your legacy as a champion for LGBT equality. We urge you to act now to prevent irrational, taxpayer-funded workplace discrimination against LGBT Americans.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Jared Polis
Member of Congress

Tom Harkin
United States Senator

Mike Michaud
Member of Congress

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Mazie Hirono
United States Senator

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

Christopher Coons
United States Senator

Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Richard Durbin
United States Senator

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

Patrick Leahy
United States Senator

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Steve Israel
Member of Congress

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Carl Levin
United States Senator

Joe Garcia
Member of Congress

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Michael Honda
Member of Congress

Al Franken
United States Senator

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Adam Schiff
Member of Congress

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Allyson Y. Schwartz
Member of Congress

Mark Udall
United States Senator

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Tony Cardenas
Member of Congress

Christopher Murphy
United States Senator

Sam Farr
Member of Congress

Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

Barbara Mikulski
United States Senator

Hank Johnson
Member of Congress

Tim Johnson
United States Senator

Jim Moran
Member of Congress

Charles Schumer
United States Senator

Louise Slaughter
Member of Congress

Bill Nelson
United States Senator

Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress

Jon Tester
United States Senator

Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress

Mark Begich
United States Senator

Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress

Cory Booker
United States Senator

Mike Doyle
Member of Congress

Claire McCaskill
United States Senator

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Steven A. Horsford
Member of Congress

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Dan Kildee
Member of Congress

Tom Udall
United States Senator

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

John D. Rockefeller, IV
United States Senator

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Mark Warner
United States Senator

Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress

Joe Donnelly
United States Senator

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Kay Hagan
United States Senator

Lucille-Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

George Miller
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Tammy Duckworth
Member of Congress

Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

James A. Himes
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

Colleen W. Hanabusa
Member of Congress

Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

Timothy H. Bishop
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William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Brad Schneider
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Suzan K. DelBene
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John Lewis
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Dina Titus
Member of Congress

John Yarmuth
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Janice Hahn
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Karen Bass
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Marc Veasey
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty
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Dan Maffei
Member of Congress

Denny Heck
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson
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Filemon Vela
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James P. McGovern
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Suzanne Bonamici
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Elizabeth Esty
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Julia Brownley
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Theodore E. Deutch
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Ron Barber
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Tim Walz
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Jim McDermott
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Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

Loretta Sanchez
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Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

Rush Holt
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy III
Member of Congress

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Ami Bera
Member of Congress

Ed Perlmutter
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Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

Patrick E. Murphy
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Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

Gary C. Peters
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

John K. Delaney
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress

Katherine Clark
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

David E. Price
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress

Jim Matheson
Member of Congress

José E. Serrano
Member of Congress

John F. Tierney
Member of Congress

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress

Bruce Braley
Member of Congress

Nydia Velazquez
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
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Nita M. Lowey
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Bill Pascrell, Jr.
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Steve Cohen
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Luis V. Gutiérrez
Member of Congress

Scott Peters
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John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

Richard M. Nolan
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André Carson
Member of Congress

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress