



November 7, 2013

**Re: ACLU Urges “YES” Votes on Cloture and Final Passage of the
Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), S. 815**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a non-partisan organization with more than a half million members, countless additional activists and supporters, and fifty-three affiliates nationwide, we write to urge you to vote YES on cloture and final passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), S. 815.

When it is finally signed into law, a journey nearly 40 years in the making, ENDA will prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in most American workplaces. This critical and long-overdue legislation will allow American workers, who stand side-by-side in the workplace and contribute with equal measure in their jobs, to also stand on the same equal footing under the law regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Congress needs to act to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals have the same workplace protections that apply based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, and disability. Sadly, the reality in a majority of states remains that there is no law that explicitly protects LGBT people from being fired or not hired simply because of who they are. There remains a critical need for the federal government to expand employment non-discrimination protections to LGBT workers.

This view is shared by the overwhelming majority of the American public. A 2013 poll found that 68 percent of registered voters, including 56 percent of Republicans, support a federal law to protect LGBT people from discrimination in employment. In addition, many large and small businesses – including many federal contractors – have already taken these steps on their own, and report that they have very few or no costs and actually reap longer-term benefits to their bottom lines (e.g. recruiting the best and brightest, minimizing turnover costs, increasing productivity, appeal to new markets, etc.). Nearly 90 percent of Fortune 500 companies have implemented non-discrimination policies including sexual orientation and more than 57 percent have policies that include gender identity.

In 2013 in the United States, it is fundamentally unacceptable that there are individuals who, when they go to work, are forced to deny their families and loved ones and hide who they are for fear of losing their livelihood. It makes absolutely no sense to add otherwise talented, dedicated workers to the unemployment rolls simply because they have the “wrong” sexual orientation or gender identity. When it passes ENDA, Congress will help

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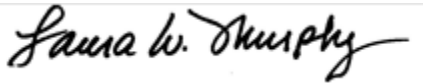
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ensure that everyone can enter and succeed in the workplace without regard to sexual orientation or gender identity and that millions will have protection against discrimination on that basis.

We urge all senators to vote YES on cloture and final passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), S. 815.

If you have questions, please contact Ian Thompson at (202) 715-0837 or ithompson@dcacclu.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura W. Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura W. Murphy

Director, Washington Legislative Office

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian S. Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ian S. Thompson

Legislative Representative