

Despite achieving nationwide marriage equality, LGBTQ people and their families continue to lack basic legal protections against discrimination in a majority of states. The Equality Act is a federal bill that would amend existing civil rights and nondiscrimination laws to prohibit discrimination on the bases of sexual orientation, gender identity and, where not already covered, sex. This bill will provide protections to LGBTQ people and their families in a wide variety of contexts, including the workplace, housing, access to public accommodations, access to credit, education, access to adoption and foster care services, and more.

Employment

- **The Act:** The Equality Act amends Title VII, the section of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that applies to employment, to prohibit discrimination in hiring, firing, and promotions based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. It also prohibits discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sex stereotyping, meaning employers cannot take adverse action against an employee because he or she presents in a manner not stereotypical of others of the same sex.
- **LGBTQ-headed Families:** Employment protections are especially important for LGBTQ-headed families. The U.S. workforce contains approximately 5.4 million LGBTQ workers, many of whom are raising children. Many LGBTQ families live in Southern and Midwestern states, where they have limited or no protections from workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. LGBTQ-headed families are at higher risk for poverty than other families, and where they live in states without employment and other protections from discrimination, this already vulnerable population is put at greater risk. Federal law prohibiting discrimination in employment will help ensure that these workers are not at risk of being fired or mistreated at work simply because of who they are or who they love.

Housing

- **The Act:** The Equality Act amends the Fair Housing Act, the federal law that provides protections against discrimination in access to housing. Under the Act, landlords, real estate companies, and others involved in the housing process will be prohibited from discriminating against individuals and families on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **LGBTQ-Headed Families:** Same-sex couples and LGBTQ-headed families may be at greater risk of discrimination when seeking housing. A 2013 study by the Department of Housing and Urban Development showed that different sex couples were favored over same-sex couples in over 15% of interactions with providers of rental properties. This discrimination often goes unchecked, as the highest proportion of LGBTQ families raising children live in Southern and Midwestern states, where there are limited or no state-level protections from housing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The Equality Act will ensure that all families are protected from discrimination in housing, regardless of where they make their home.