

HIV/AIDS COMMUNITY SIGN-ON LETTER TO CONGRESS RE TRANS RIGHTS IN ENDA  
Organizational and individual sign-ons requested at [secretary@c2ea.org](mailto:secretary@c2ea.org)

[To All Members of the Senate and House of Representatives]

Dear XXXX,

The undersigned HIV/AIDS organizations oppose the removal of protections for transgender people from ENDA. We would also oppose any employment nondiscrimination bill that did not protect transgender people.

**We urge you to support a fully-inclusive ENDA as a part of our nation's commitment to sound HIV/AIDS policy.**

Transgender Americans are among those at highest risk for HIV infection. A recent analysis by the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) across multiple studies found that 27.7% of male-to-female transgender people (MTF) tested positive for HIV infection, while 11.8% self-reported being HIV-seropositive. These infection rates are amongst the highest in the country, and nearly two out of three of those infected did not know their status. Even higher HIV infection rates were found among African American MTF people, with 56.3% testing positive, and 30.8% indicating that they knew they were positive.

The CDC reported that "contextual factors potentially related to increased HIV risk include mental health concerns, physical abuse, social isolation, economic marginalization, and unmet transgender-specific healthcare needs."

Multiple studies have demonstrated the link between economic instability and risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Gender-variant people of all sexual orientations are at increased risk of economic marginalization that can lead to increased risk of HIV infection, homelessness or unstable housing, and/or difficulty accessing appropriate and sensitive health care services. Concomitantly, improving economic status, stabilizing housing and health care access, and decreasing discrimination and stigma reduce HIV risk and improve health status for people living with HIV.

Thus, workplace protections are of the utmost importance to people at risk of or living with HIV/AIDS – including transgender Americans.

Despite the fact that nearly 90% of Americans favor equal rights for lesbians and gay men with regard to job opportunities, less than half of all states specifically ban workplace discrimination in the private sector based on sexual orientation and even fewer states expressly ban discrimination based on gender identity or expression.

ENDA would ensure that in most workplaces a person's qualifications and job performance -- rather than sexual orientation or gender identity -- would be the factors that determine success on the job. These protections would also create greater economic security for people at highest risk of HIV/AIDS in our nation, adding to our collective capacity to combat the epidemic.

Signed,

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