

Religious Organizations Letter in Support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act

November 5, 2009

Dear Legislator,

On behalf of our organizations, representing a diverse group of faith traditions and religious beliefs, we urge you to support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). As a nation, we cannot tolerate arbitrary discrimination against millions of Americans just because of who they are. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people should be able to earn a living, provide for their families and contribute to our society without fear. ENDA is a measured, common sense solution that will ensure workers are judged on their merits, not sexual orientation or gender identity. We call on you to pass this important legislation without delay.

Many of our sacred texts speak to the importance and sacred nature of work - an opportunity to be co-creators with God - and demand in the strongest possible terms the protection of all workers as a matter of justice. Our faith leaders and congregations grapple with the difficulties of lost jobs every day, particularly in these difficult economic times. It is indefensible that, while sharing every American's concerns about the health of our economy, LGBT workers must also fear job security because of prejudice.

At the same time, as religious denominations and faith groups, we deeply value our guarantee to the freedoms of faith and conscience under the First Amendment. ENDA broadly exempts from its scope any religious organization, thereby ensuring that religious institutions will not be compelled to violate the religious precepts on which they are founded, whether or not we may agree with those precepts. In so doing, ENDA respects the protections for religious institutions afforded by the First Amendment and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 while ensuring that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are protected from baseless discrimination in the workplace.

We urge the Senate to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (S. 1584) and ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans have an equal opportunity to earn a living and provide for themselves and their families.

Sincerely,

National Religious Organizations