

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 16, 2015

Dear Governor:

We are very concerned about the recent trend among some states to enact or consider expanded Religious Freedom Restoration Acts (RFRA) and other legislation that could allow businesses to discriminate against or deny service to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Americans. These discriminatory policies, under the false guise of religious freedom, have no place in a nation founded on the principal of equal treatment for all.

Fifty years ago, our nation said no more to discrimination—no more denying service to a customer based on religion, no more ‘separate but equal’ facilities targeting African Americans, and no more turning a blind eye to discrimination in the workplace that denied generations of women and minorities full access to the American Dream.

Yet, proposals like those being considered in more than a dozen states threaten to eliminate some hard fought civil protections and would exacerbate discrimination based purely on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Furthermore, these efforts are bad for business, making a state less attractive to visitors and hampering its economic development by alienating businesses concerned about hiring and retaining quality employees.

These legislative efforts and their unintended consequences, no matter their intended purpose, underscore why it is critical that states reject these discriminatory bills and instead pass anti-discrimination laws that guarantee protections to LGBT Americans. States should be showing prospective businesses that customers--and employees--are welcome no matter who they are or who they love instead of turning away businesses and customers with discriminatory policies.

While Congress continues to debate legislation to protect LGBT Americans across the country, as Governors, you hold a unique position that provides you the opportunity to add a powerful voice to this important debate and ensure that your state ends up on the right side of history, rejecting discrimination on any and all levels. Encouraging equality and fair treatment is a win for all, and it's far past time to make this a reality for all Americans.

Sincerely,



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress


Tony Cárdenas


Andre Carson


Judy Chu


David N. Cicilline


John Conyers Jr.


Suzan K. DelBene


Theodore E. Deutch


Lloyd Doggett



Elizabeth H. Esty


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