

EMPLOYMENT NON DISCRIMINATION ACT (ENDA)

The Problem

Qualified, hardworking Americans are denied job opportunities, fired or otherwise discriminated against just because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). There is no federal law that consistently protects LGBT individuals from employment discrimination; it remains legal in 29 states to discriminate based on sexual orientation, and in 38 states to do so based on gender identity or expression. As a result, LGBT people face serious discrimination in employment, including being fired, being denied a promotion, and experiencing harassment on the job.

A recent survey of over 6,450 transgender and gender non-conforming Americans found that discrimination on the basis of gender identity is pervasive throughout our nation. The study, "Injustice at Every Turn," further showed the combination of anti-transgender bias and persistent, structural racism to be especially devastating. Most of the transgender people of color surveyed faced not only unemployment, but homeless, and suicide at rates up to 20 times the national average. In today's society, they are harshly treated as the least of our brethren.

The Solution

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) would provide basic protections against workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. ENDA simply affords to all Americans basic employment protection from discrimination based on irrational prejudice. The bill is closely modeled on existing civil rights laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The bill explicitly prohibits preferential treatment and quotas and does not permit disparate impact suits. In addition, it exempts small businesses, religious organizations and the military, and does not require that domestic partner benefits be provided to the same-sex partners of employees.

Catholic Support

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of American Catholics favor laws that would protect gay and lesbian people against discrimination in the workplace – Public Religion Research Institute 2011

Catholic Talking Points

- Catholics are called by our faith to defend the rights of the oppressed and the marginalized.
- Catholics believe in the support and the wellbeing of the human person, which centers around the ability to be gainfully employed and earn a living
- All people are entitled to housing as a fundamental human right.
- ENDA includes broad religious exemptions and does not apply to our church, nor any of our privately funded church organizations and programs.

Catholic Social Teaching and Scripture

- Catholic social teaching emphasizes that employment and housing are fundamental human rights.
- "Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me."
 - Matthew 25:40

Catholic Constituent Faces of ENDA: Available upon request