



LGBTQ+ Psychology Group Applauds Equality Act

The Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, Division 44 of the American Psychological Association (APA), applauds the passage of the [Equality Act](#)¹ by the U.S. House of Representatives on February 25, 2021. If signed into law, this comprehensive piece of civil rights legislation would prohibit discrimination against members of the LGBTQ+ community in a wide range of areas including employment, housing, and public accommodations. Both Division 44 and the broader [APA](#)² support the Equality Act and strongly encourage the U.S. Senate to pass it.

Nearly [70% of Americans](#)³ support nondiscrimination legislation for LGBTQ+ people. Equalizing legislation has been associated with mental health benefits for lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations.⁴ Non-discrimination protections improve health,⁵ job satisfaction, and family relationships.⁶ The Equality Act's nondiscrimination protections would also expand protections in public accommodations for people targeted because they are LGBTQ+, Black, Indigenous, or other People of Color, immigrants, or people of faith, for example. Discrimination in retail stores, restaurants, and taxi cabs targeting any of these characteristics would become illegal discrimination under the Equality Act.⁷

APA's resolution [Opposing Discriminatory Laws, Policies, and Practices Aimed at LGBTQ+ Persons](#)⁸ calls to enact equalizing legislation and to oppose discriminatory legislation to reduce anti-LGBTQ+ stigma. Discriminatory public policies against LGBTQ+ people have been associated with increased stress, stigma, and poorer health and wellbeing; whereas, supportive policies (e.g., non discrimination policies, marriage equality) have been associated with decreased stress, improved mental health, and lower rates of adolescent suicide attempts.⁶

The passage of the Equality Act would enshrine legal protections that no person can be discriminated against based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. The Equality Act also explicitly states that religious exemptions and freedoms cannot be used to discriminate against LGBTQ+ persons. This is an incredible and crucial step forward. LGBTQ+ people deserve the same rights, freedoms, and protections as all other citizens.

References

¹ To prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, and for other purposes, H.R. 5, 117th Cong. (2021). <https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr5/BILLS-117hr5ih.pdf>

² American Psychological Association. (2019, May). *Why APA supports the equality act*. <https://www.apa.org/advocacy/civil-rights/sexual-diversity/equality-act>

³ Greenburg, D., Najle, M., Bola, O., & Jones, R. P. (2019, March 26). *Fifty years after Stonewall: Widespread support for LGBT issues – Findings from American Values Atlas 2018*. <https://www.prrri.org/research/fifty-years-after-stonewall-widespread-support-for-lgbt-issues-findings-from-american-values-atlas-2018/>

⁴ Hatzenbuehler, M. L., Keyes, K. M., & Hasin, D. S. (2009). State-level policies and psychiatric morbidity in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99, 2275-2281. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2008.153510>

⁵ American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *Public policies, prejudice, and sexual and gender minority health*. <https://www.apa.org/advocacy/civil-rights/sexual-diversity/gender-minority-health.pdf>

⁶ American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *Social science research supporting passage of the Equality Act (H.R.5/S. 788)*. <https://www.apa.org/advocacy/civil-rights/sexual-diversity/equality-act-research.pdf>

⁷ Movement Advancement Project. (2021). *Why we all need the Equality Act now*. <https://www.lgbtmap.org/2021-equality-act>

⁸ American Psychological Association. (2020). *Resolution on opposing discriminatory laws, policies, and practices aimed at LGBTQ+ persons*. <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/policy/opposing-laws>