



HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
CAMPAIGN®

# TALKING POINTS: EQUALITY ACT & FAITH PEOPLE

## Protections Are Needed

- The lack of explicit federal protections and the patchwork of state protections are inadequate, leaving LGBTQ people across the country vulnerable to discrimination. In too many places, LGBTQ people are treated like second-class citizens.
- Everyone—including LGBTQ people—should have a fair chance to earn a living and provide a home for their families without fear of constant harassment or discrimination.
- Employees should be hired, fired, and promoted based on their performance, not their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- The need for these protections is clear—nearly two-thirds of LGBTQ Americans report having experienced discrimination.

## The Equality Act

- Our nation's civil rights laws protect people on the basis of race, color, national origin, and in most cases, sex, disability, and religion. But federal law does not provide consistent non-discrimination protections based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- The Equality Act will provide the exact same protections to LGBTQ people as are currently provided under federal law based on other protected characteristics.
- The Equality Act provides clear and consistent federal non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people in core civil rights categories, including employment, housing, credit, public spaces and services, education, federally funded programs, and jury service.
- It will also strengthen anti-discrimination protections for everyone, including women and communities of color.
- The Equality Act simply embodies the longstanding, deeply American principle that people should be judged solely on their merits.

## The Equality Act and Faith Leaders

- The Equality Act will retain the same religious exemptions that already exist for every other protected characteristic. The Equality Act does not alter these exemptions.
- Under Title VII, the provision that prohibits employment discrimination, religious corporations, associations, and societies may limit employment to members of their own faith.
- This narrow exemption extends to schools, colleges and universities that are supported, owned, controlled or managed by a religious organization.
- Churches and other places of worship providing spaces and services exclusively to their congregations, including meeting spaces or spaghetti dinners, would not be considered places of public accommodations.
- Clergy operating in their ministerial capacity would never be compelled to perform a religious ceremony in conflict with their beliefs - including same-sex marriages.
- The Equality Act includes a provision clarifying that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) cannot be misused to allow entities to violate civil rights laws.