WHAT IS THE EQUALITY ACT?

The Equality Act would provide consistent and explicit non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people across key areas of life, including employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs, and jury service.

The Equality Act would amend existing civil rights law — including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Housing Act, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Jury Selection and Services Act, and several laws regarding employment with the federal government — to explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected characteristics. The legislation also amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit discrimination in public spaces and services and federally funded programs on the basis of sex.

Additionally, the Equality Act would update the public spaces and services covered in current law to include retail stores, services such as banks and legal services, and transportation services. These important updates would strengthen existing protections for everyone.

Decades of civil rights history show that civil rights laws are effective in decreasing discrimination because they provide strong federal remedies targeted to specific vulnerable groups. By explicitly including sexual orientation and gender identity in these fundamental laws, LGBTQ people will finally be afforded the exact same protections as other covered characteristics under federal law.

[Map of states with and without protections]

- States that lack explicit protections against employment and housing discrimination on the basis of both sexual orientation and gender identity.