



March 26, 2015

The Honorable Asa Hutchinson  
Office of the Governor of Arkansas  
State Capitol  
500 Woodlane Street,  
Suite 250  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Governor Hutchinson,

I write to you today regarding H.B. 1228, a piece of legislation which we have discussed privately, and about which you have publicly made very skeptical comments.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, it now seems that this deeply harmful and discriminatory legislation may shortly be on its way to your desk. As you know, H.B. 1228 is opposed by Apple, Wal-Mart, the Arkansas Municipal League, thousands of Human Rights Campaign (HRC) members across Arkansas and countless more fair-minded Arkansans—we **urge you to veto this bill should it reach your desk.**

**However, if you are still considering signing this legislation despite the wave of opposition, I also write to you today with an invitation.** On Tuesday, HRC will be convening a gathering of more than 250 C-suite executives of Fortune 500 companies and other major businesses in New York City—corporations whose investment potential collectively totals in the hundreds of billions of dollars. Each of these companies has scored a 100 percent on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index (CEI)—demonstrating their core commitment to treating lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people fairly and equally under the law.

Many of these companies have spoken out publicly in opposition to legislation like H.B. 1228. Many of them create the high-tech jobs you argue Arkansas hopes to attract. I know many of these corporate leaders will have questions for you—especially as it relates to H.B. 1228, as well as another piece of anti-LGBT legislation, S.B. 202, which you allowed to become law.

I'd like to invite you to join us at this convening of corporate America. I hope you haven't made your mind up about H.B. 1228, and may yet be persuaded of its explosively harmful effects for Arkansas' business climate and reputation—to say nothing of the harm it will do to Arkansas' most vulnerable citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> [In an article](#) in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* dated February 25, 2015, you said of H.B. 1228: "It raises a lot of questions as to how it would be applied, how it'd actually work. As a lawyer with a little bit of experience in the legal arena [...] there are a lot of questions that need to be answered in regard to this. I can see a great deal of litigation coming out of this."

For my part, I will be speaking up at this event about the fact that Arkansas is at a tipping point moment. If H.B. 1228 becomes law, it will do three things:

1. Send a warning sign to corporate America that Arkansas is not open for business and that they should stay away;
2. Make recruiting and retaining top talent in Arkansas much more difficult;
3. Perhaps most of all, it will do grave harm to thousands of LGBT Arkansans—especially young people. It will send a message that they are second class citizens in their own home state.

These consequences will not be lost on the companies in the room on Tuesday. They are committed to locating their business operations in states that welcome the fair-minded employees of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—not in states where elected leaders are willing to throw their own citizens and economic climate under the bus in favor of needless and discriminatory legislation.

If you agree to attend this event, you will be welcomed as our guest and given time to make your case and answer questions from America's top business leaders and job creators. As a son of Arkansas, I would be very happy to see our state move toward economic dynamism, high-tech jobs, and an economy that serves all Arkansans. However, if you fail to take a clear stand and reject discrimination, that future is at grave risk.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chad Griffin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chad Griffin  
President, Human Rights Campaign