

My name is David Clark and I am 22 years old. Throughout my professional life, I haven't encountered direct discrimination or sexual harrassment based on my identity. However, I've been bullied severely in grade school without any substantive help from school administration, and it took me until the Summer of 2016 to come to terms with my sexual identity. I'm lucky that I've only been employed in places where I don't feel I need to shut parts of myself out in order to work successfully with others, and I have yet to encounter hateful individuals in stores or on the street; I've always been able to bring my full authentic self to the table, whether it be among friends or family, at the store, or even the workplace, along with a professional demeanor and a damn good work ethic that's led me to do some good things. However, THIS STORY IS MINE, AND IT DOES NOT SPEAK FOR EVERYONE ELSE. There are trans individuals I know and love that are harrassed on public transit in Anchorage, and I remember stories told from family that they would be denied service for being gay, during the early 80s. That being said, knowing that there are still no state statutes protecting LGBT individuals like myself in service establishments and in the workplace, is unacceptable. Though societal values are changing, WE STILL DESERVE TO TAKE LEGAL ACTIONS FOR PEOPLE WHO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST AND HURT US, AND FOR THE PERPETRATORS TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS. For how good of a name I've made for myself thus far professionally, it pains me to know that my fellow LGBT people that work hard and take pride in all that they do could have a good path cut very short at the whim of a hateful or ideologically-bound employer, and to have their employers be subject to zero legal consequences, even if the plaintiff could gather enough proof to show discriminatory hiring practices and/or a hostile work environment that is baseless and not at the fault of the worker themselves. It's a black eye on our state that our State Legislature hasn't yet made strides to protect ALL of our people and to ensure that we ALL are entitled to take legal action on the basis of baseless discrimination, after countless LGBT individuals have made strides and contributed to our state through embracing the Alaskan spirit, pulling up their sleeves, and working hard just like everyone else. PROTECT LGBT ALASKANS NOW. PASS THIS BILL.