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## Municipality of Anchorage

April 6, 2017

The Honorable Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins  
Alaska State House  
State Capitol, Room 411  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Kreiss-Tomkins:

I am thankful that Representative Josephson introduced HB184 which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression because I have always advocated for and believed that everyone deserves equal rights. After many, many years attempting to provide this right to our LGBTQ citizens within our community, I was honored to be one of nine Assembly Members who approved AO 2015-96(S-1) on September 29, 2015.

There are some who truly believe that this is a lifestyle choice. This mentality could not be further from the truth. You see, when I was 14 years old, my sister's son was three years old. Even at that early age, we both knew he was gay. Unfortunately, at the age of 21 years, my sister died from birth control pills which caused a brain hemorrhage and heart failure. She was my idol and died in my arms on the way to the hospital. Before she died, I promised her that I would emotionally take care of Darren as he grew older in a world of hate because of his identity. Darren is now an adult, has been in a relationship with Keith for 19 years, and they married just last year.

I, personally, know what it is like to experience discrimination. I have been a victim more than once because of the color of my skin. I will always be grateful to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for making a difference in my life and the lives of many. This behavior is simply unacceptable.

I am hopeful that you and your colleagues will support this proposed legislation because it is not just the right thing to do, but the "only thing" to do. Please make this human right a reality.

Sincerely,

  
Elvi Gray-Jackson  
Chair