

**Additional Letters of Support, House State Affairs
May 1 – 8**

HB 184: DISCRIMINATION: GENDER ID.;SEXUAL ORIENT.
Rep. Andy Josephson

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Dear Chairman and Members:

I support a statewide protection of all persons in Alaska with regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. in order that each person may achieve her or his full potential.

Victor D. Carlson,
Anchorage

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Dear Members of the House State Affairs Committee:

Please extend the crucial protections of State of Alaska non-discrimination statutes to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered Alaskans. All Alaskans deserve fair treatment in the areas of employment, housing, financing and public accommodation.

It's important to realize that HB184 does not seek to create new law. Rather, it attempts to broaden the scope of existing non-discriminatory language.

I would greatly appreciate your wholehearted support of HB184.

Very truly yours,

Cindy Lelake
Anchorage

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Dear House State Affairs Committee,

I am a white 58 year old women. I urge you to pass House Bill 184. Alaska has a long history of promoting civil rights. It is essential that protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity be added to state non discrimination regulations. This is a very vulnerable population, especially with the changes that are being rolled back by the Federal level. It is important to me that my LGBTQ friends and neighbors are protected in the great State Alaska.

Thank you for you work and consideration.

Laurie Walton
Fairbanks, AK 99701

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HB 184 is so important to Alaskans as the first inclusive statewide non-discrimination law, granting protections we have long fought for in Alaska and across the region. Prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identify in housing, employment, and places of public accommodation only makes sense in light of the push by some to compromise these protections.

When asked if I have ever been discriminated against I frequently forget how often I ignore what others take for granted. Should I have to ask when I enter a bakery to buy a cupcake if they sell to lesbians or is my money good enough as long as I keep my sexual orientation to myself and I don't want a wedding cake. If I wear my "Big Wild Lesbian" T shirt into a store can I be denied service? Can I ask that my taxes not pay for the sidewalk or the street lights, or the snow removal from outside of any business that discriminates?

Thank you for HB 184. Please vote to formalize protections for all citizens in Alaska. Discrimination must be eliminated.

Gayle Schuh
18631 Gibens Cir.
Eagle River, AK 99577

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I have owned an Alaskan based Corporation for 30 years in Alaska. I have never denied my identity as a Lesbian and I married a woman and have 2 beautiful children with her. Her concerns for discrimination required we step out of Alaska. Where did we chose but a city with a Gay Mayor. While we have felt discrimination that was always insidious and never blatant. We did not want that life for our children.

Alaska has a strong individual rights philosophy in its constitution and so I trust it will see its way clear to do the right thing...eventually.

I am in Washington DC today and Roosevelt's words are important for your discussion. "We must scrupulously guard the civil rights and civil liberties of all its citizens. We must remember any oppression, any injustice, any hatred, is a wedge designed to attack our civilization".

Sincerely, Jean Craciun

Jean Craciun
President/CEO Craciun Research

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I am writing to voice my support for HB 184 which would add "sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression" to our existing state's anti-discrimination law.

The LGBTQA+ community is one of our most vulnerable and discriminated against and these protections are much needed. All people are deserving of the same rights under the law, regardless of sexual orientation.

Sexual orientation and gender identity have no relationship to workplace performance. However, in a national survey 44% of LGBTQ respondents reported facing discrimination at work. An overwhelming 97% of transgender people report having been harassed on the job, and 26% have been fired because of their gender identity. Because of discrimination, and fear of discrimination, many LGBTQ employees hide their identities, are paid less and have fewer employment opportunities than their non-LGBT counterparts. This prejudice puts LGBTQ people at increased risk for poor physical and mental health.

I urge you to support this bill and show that Alaska is a state that values every citizen and protects the rights of every citizen. By passing this bill you can have a great impact for good for those whose only wish is to live their lives without harassment or discrimination.

Thank you,
Chelsea Vukovich
99516

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To the House State Affairs Committee,

I am emailing to lend my support to HB 184.

As a gay woman living here in Alaska, I've had the good fortune not to experience discrimination at in employment or in housing situations. However, many members of my community have not been so lucky. Many queer friends and acquaintances of mine have had to hide their sexual or gender identity at work or risk losing their jobs. A dear friend of mine who is a gifted music teacher was made to scale back their interaction with young students when they decided to transition from female to male. The impacts of a lack of protection from discrimination are real and have negative influence over many Alaskan citizens. Beyond missing out on job opportunities and housing, the mental and emotional cost of hiding one's identity is steep.

Opponents to the bill will tell you that this discrimination and these negative impacts don't exist - that they just don't see it. But I and my friends and broader LGBTQ2 community see and experience them constantly. Saying a problem doesn't exist doesn't solve it, so let's solve it instead - starting with this piece of legislation.

These protections would only make our state stronger. I am lucky enough to work for a company that embraces diversity of all kinds, and working in an environment where I know I am supported makes me a better, more dedicated employee. The same can be true for every queer Alaskan.

Sincerely,

Nora Gecan
Anchorage, Alaska

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Dear Alaskan Representatives,

"Bill (HB) 184 would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, employment, and places of public accommodation."

I hope that you all come down on the right side of history on this issue. It used to be okay to discriminate against women and African Americans. No one is saying that gender or sexual

orientation confers any “preferential treatment.” It is time to stop treating some people as less than human.

Thanks for your consideration.

Anna Nelson
Executive Director
Interior AIDS Association

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I'm writing to express my support for HB 184.

William Earnest
Fairbanks, AK 99701

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To Members of the House State Affairs Committee,

I am writing to support HB 184, which would add “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” to Alaska’s non-discrimination statutes. I am a recently-retired high school counselor in Fairbanks. Over the years, I saw many gay/lesbian/transgender students struggle to “come out” to their families and friends. (Fortunately, in most cases, the students' families were supportive after the student gained the courage to be honest with their loved ones. But I know of at least one gay student who committed suicide shortly after graduating from high school.) It saddens me that, in this day and age, our society still makes it uncomfortable and painful for many people to “come out” and be honest about their identities. Passing HB 184 would show that the state of Alaska does not tolerate discrimination in this area.

Alaska should be welcoming and respectful of ALL its citizens, and this bill helps move this message forward.

Please support HB 184.

Thank you,
Jeff Walters
Fairbanks, AK

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Dear Representatives:

I am writing in strong and passionate support of HB 184. Thank you for working to make LGBTQIA people protected under the law. No one should be discriminated against, and LGBTQIA deserve the same protections as other classes of citizens who have historically suffered discrimination just for being.

Who you love, how you look, how you are born should never be a cause for discrimination. Yet, people discriminate against LGBTQIA all the time. Some even use religious freedom as an argument to try to support their actions. Treating people with basic human kindness and dignity should be common in our society. But when it isn't, it is the role of government to ensure our community has legal protections.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Bhree Roumagoux
Anchorage, AK 99502

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Distinguished Committee Members:

My name is Candace Bell and I am writing in my capacity as President of the Alaska Christian Conference to support HB 184. We can no longer continue to discriminate against our friends and neighbors, brothers and sisters, because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. It is simply immoral. Discrimination assaults the basic human dignity of the people targeted and demeans the dignity of those who allow it. So many of the arguments against equal rights are based on ignorance and irrational fear; that we are somehow less safe in the bathroom, that most Christians oppose equality, that being LGBTQ is "disordered" etc. This kind of ignorance and irrational fear has allowed us to marginalize an entire segment of society for decades and it is unjust. When we stand in the face of injustice and do nothing we become less than our best selves. Alaskan's are better than that, so, please, do the right thing. Support equality for all Alaskan's. Support HB 184. It's time.

Candace Bell
President
Alaska Christian Conference

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To Whom It May Concern: Discrimination is alive and well in Alaska and has been since 1983 when I first arrived in the State. Major religious entities still discriminate against the LGBT community. These "deeply held religious beliefs" translate into discrimination for even the basic right of marriage. People should not have to worry or hide who they are at work or in their homes for fear of losing a security that all others are afforded. I encourage the State to

take the leadership role and include sexual orientation as a protected status. Thank you for your efforts to make Alaska a safer and more inclusive place to live.

Christopher Salerno
Air Quality Specialist II
Municipality of Anchorage
Dept of Health and Human Services
Anchorage, AK 99519

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I am writing in support of House Bill 184.

The provision of equal rights to LGBT persons in Alaska continues to be a lengthy and painful process. HB 184 is an important and positive action to continue this process.

Members of our LGBT community are faced with continuing affronts from "religious" hate groups like the Alaska Family Council and Family Research Council; many lawmakers at the local, state and federal level; many organized religions; and homophobes of every stripe.

We have a President who has shown through actions in Texas and other states by his Department of Justice that LGBT rights will not be defended at the federal level.

There is "religious liberty" legislation pending at the federal level and in a number of states which would permit persons to discriminate against individual members of the LGBT community based on religious grounds.

Those of us in favor of LGBT equality will need to defend themselves against efforts in states, including Alaska, to ban the use of restrooms and to embrace so-called religious-liberty bills. The fight is now our own. We won't be able to look to the Trump administration for help.

The following Supreme Court ruling was an important and life-changing ruling for many of us who are members of the Alaska LGBT community. The 2005 ruling allowed my same-sex spouse to receive the same health benefits that the opposite-sex spouses of other Municipal employees receive.

The reliance on Article 1 Section 1 by the Supreme Court and their explanation in the Introduction of their opinion in that matter also demonstrated how it can also apply to HB 184. This is not a *new* concept. It has been used by the Alaska Supreme Court.

Article I, Section 1 of the Alaska Constitution, states in part: *"This constitution is dedicated to the principle[] ... that all persons are equal and entitled to equal rights, opportunities, and protection under the law."*

The Alaska Supreme Court relied on this Section when they deliberated:

ALASKA CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION, Dan Carter and Al Incontro, Lin Davis and Maureen Longworth, Shirley Dean and Carla Timpone, Darla Madden and Karen Wood, Aimee Olejasz and Fabienne Peter-Contesse, Karen Sturnick and Elizabeth Andrews, Theresa Tavel and Karen Walter, Corin Whittemore and Gani Ruthellen, and Estra Bensussen and Carol Rose Gackowski, Appellants, v. STATE of Alaska and Municipality of Anchorage, Appellees. No. S-10459.

The Supreme Court found *in favor* of the same-sex couple Appellants and *against* Defendants State of Alaska and Municipality of Anchorage: "We conclude that the public employers' spousal limitations violate the Alaska Constitution's equal protection clause."

<http://law.justia.com/cases/alaska/supreme-court/2005/s-10459-1.html>

October 28, 2005

OPINION

EASTAUGH, Justice.

I. INTRODUCTION

The State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage offer valuable benefits to their employees' spouses that they do not offer to their unmarried employees' domestic partners. Essentially all opposite-sex adult couples may marry and thus become eligible for these benefits. But no same-sex couple can ever become eligible for these benefits because same-sex couples may not marry in Alaska.[1] The spousal limitations in the benefits programs therefore affect public employees with same-sex domestic partners differently than public employees who are married. This case requires us to determine if it is reasonable to pay public employees who are in committed domestic relationships with same-sex partners less in terms of employee benefits than their co-workers who are married. In making this determination, we must decide whether the spousal limitations in the benefits programs violate the rights of public employees with same-sex domestic partners to "equal rights, opportunities, and protection under the law." [2]

The Alaska Constitution dictates the answer to that constitutional question. Irrelevant to our analysis must be personal, moral, or religious beliefs held deeply by many about whether persons should enter into intimate same-sex relationships or whether same-sex domestic partners should be permitted to marry. It is the duty of courts "to define the liberty of all, not to mandate [their] own moral code." [3] Our duty here is to decide whether the eligibility restrictions satisfy established standards for resolving equal protection challenges to governmental action.

We do not need to decide whether heightened scrutiny should be applied here because the benefits programs cannot withstand minimum scrutiny. Although the governmental objectives are presumably legitimate, the difference in treatment is not substantially related to those objectives. We accordingly hold that the spousal limitations are unconstitutional as applied to public employees with same-sex domestic partners, and we vacate the judgment below. We ask the parties to file supplemental memoranda addressing the issue of remedy.

NOTES

[1] Alaska Const. art. I, § 25.

[2] Alaska Const. art. I, § 1. As the issue is framed in this case, we need not reach any separate question of the independent right to benefits of a same-sex domestic partner of a public employee.

[3] *Lawrence v. Texas*, [539 U.S. 558](#), 559, 123 S. Ct. 2472, 156 L. Ed. 2d 508 (2003) (citing *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pa. v. Casey*, [505 U.S. 833](#), 850, 112 S. Ct. 2791, 120 L. Ed. 2d 674 (1992)).

Again, my (legally married) husband and I support House Bill 184 and strongly urge our elected representatives to do the very same.

Fred Traber
Anchorage, AK

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Please support HB 184 and encourage your colleagues to do so. It is past time to acknowledge that everyone has equal rights and is welcome to work and live here in Alaska. Not only is it the moral thing to do, but it will also help us economically if employers and employees see Alaska and a safe, friendly place to be.

Thanks for your time,

Cheryl Lovegreen

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Dear members of the Alaska House State Affairs Committee,

I am writing to let you know how important it is for our state to protect and strengthen the rights of all individuals. As a state that has one of the most diverse populations in the country, it is vital that we take steps to make certain that all Alaskans are afforded protections against

discrimination, including discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Your support of HB 184 is important and vital to this goal.

Thank you for your work to make Alaska a place that does not tolerate discrimination.

Sincerely,

Pam Cravez
Anchorage, Alaska
99502

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Dear House State Affairs Committee,

I am emailing to write my support for the statewide non-discrimination bill HB184. I have included Rep. Millet so she understands that one of her constituents supports this bill.

I cannot overstate how important this language is to LGBTQ Alaskans. It is imperative to support all Alaskans in their right to pursue happiness.

We do not live in a perfect world and we are not immune to history. Until 1974, being gay was considered a mental illness. We just recently won marriage equality, giving us the ability to protect our families and secure generational capital for our children. Despite these advances, there are groups and organizations in this state that actively pursue agendas to suppress the rights of LGBTQ Alaskans/Americans. They've filed an initiative called "Protect Our Privacy," in Anchorage that seeks to strip discrimination protections from LGBTQ Alaskans. They state that it is because they want to protect religious freedom. However, religious freedom is already protected in the First Amendment in the United States Constitution. What they desire is the right to refuse to provide services to other Alaskans based on sexual orientation. That is terrifying to me.

I have personally experienced the negative impacts of bias and discrimination based on the fact that I am a lesbian. I've been denied housing and I was also told not to discuss my private life at work. The fear, anger, humiliation and despair of these experiences stays with me. I don't know if any of you have ever been intentionally humiliated, but it is a gut-wrenching experience to be made to feel less than. Discrimination allows those who wish to feel superior to attempt to shame others by denying them the basic rights enjoyed by the majority for arbitrary reasons.

No one should be made to feel inferior, especially in Alaska - a place where hard work, individual contribution to community, and the personal freedom to make something of yourself are valued. The language of HB184 supports those values.

My wife and I have been together for 17 years. We've raised two children in this state. Like

many other Alaska parents, we hope they come back home after having their adventures around the world. They are watching to see how our state deals with fiscal and social issues. They want to live, work, and contribute to a state that values the same things as their generation. They are well-educated and have many choices. If policies are regressive, they won't bring their time and talents home, and our state will continue to experience the brain drain of a generation that can help us secure our fiscal future.

I know that my wife and I want to stay here. She is from here and I've lived here for 22 years. We've been able to make a good life in Alaska despite those who work to ensure we're not included. **We've been able to make a good life because good people have stood up next to us and fought with us for our rights.** Rights are basically another word for inclusion in the American dream.

There may come a day when the rights of minority groups don't have to be articulated so clearly to be ensured. There may come a day when the better angels of our collective nature allow us to see the humanity in each other more clearly. We aren't there yet, but I believe we can get there together.

Please support this bill. It is important to me and it is important to Alaska.

Thank you all for your time. I very much appreciate it.

Michelle Wozniak
Anchorage, Alaska

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Dear Chair Kreiss-Tomkins and Members of the State Affairs Committee,

I am writing this email to urge members of this committee to support HB 184, which will codify similar protections as we have in Anchorage, Juneau, and several other municipalities throughout Alaska, to include sexual orientation and gender identity into our state's non-discrimination laws.

As you craft policies in these economically difficult times, I urge this body to consider the potential financial impacts to our state.

We are sending a signal, by moving this legislation forward, that Alaska is a welcoming place that protects all of its residents in housing, employment, and public accommodations.

This is particularly critical as my generation, which will lead the economy of Alaska's future, decide whether to invest in this state or move to a place that already provides these protections.

As you consider this public policy, I hope you will take into account that this legislation will help put an end to discriminatory practices that have existed in Alaska for decades. I have heard unacceptable stories of discrimination -- whether its the employee that brought their girlfriend to the Christmas party and was subsequently fired, or the renter looking for a home and denied housing because their gender identity didn't match their documentation -- so I ask this committee to open its eyes to the needs of Alaskans.

I am proud of our Alaskan tradition of being on the forefront of many movements to provide equity for our diverse population.

I hope the legislature can continue the leadership provided by Anchorage, Juneau, and other municipalities.

Thank you for your time.

Felix Rivera
House District 25
Midtown Assembly Member

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Dear members of the State Affairs committee,
Please support HB184. LGBT people suffer from lack of protection across much of Alaska. It's time to provide for the equal protection of this community, of which I am a member. Thankfully, Anchorage led the way and passed protections. It's time for the State to do the same.

Respectfully,
Christopher Constant

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Hello, my name is Tristan Walsh.

Thank you, Representative Josephson, for sponsoring this bill. Thank you to the Committee for taking the time for this testimony.

I am a lifelong Alaskan born and raised in Fairbanks. I now live and work here in Anchorage, in Representative Spohnholz' District 16. I am also a member of the board of Alaskans Together for Equality.

I am here to express my support for House Bill 184. As a gay man and an Alaskan, I appreciate the protections offered in this bill.

As previous folks have no doubt told you, this bill is supported by evidence gathered by Get Equal and Identity Inc. 44% of LGBT Alaskans report discrimination in their workplaces.

In my own work experience, I have had coworkers question me on the religious consequences of my sexual orientation after I was outed to them.

I can tell you, that experience made me question the protections of my workplace and the safety of my own job in an at-will state. Alaskans should be able to live and work without fear of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It is an even more acute fear when it comes to housing for LGBTQ Alaskans. Transgender Alaskans face even more discrimination in housing and employment than most. I have had multiple friends harassed or physically attacked because of their gender identity or expression.

Other states have already taken action and passed bills similar to the one you see before you. Over 20 other states and numerous cities offer these protections to the benefits of their residents, economies, and families.

This is a good bill. It protects all Alaskans, makes Alaska a more attractive place to do business, and brings all Alaskans under the protections that Anchorage has already extended to its residents. I can tell you, as an gay Alaskan, it is one of the reasons I appreciate living and working here.

In closing, I strongly urge you to pass this bill. It makes Alaska more equal, more competitive, and a better place to live, work, and play.

Thank you for your time, your careful consideration, and your support.

-Tristan

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All Alaskans should have equal access to jobs, housing, financing, etc. Sexual orientation, gender identify or expression should never be grounds for discrimination and it's about time Alaska adds these categories to our anti- discrimination legislation. I fully support HB184 and hope you will to.

Kind regards,
Debby
Deborah Tennyson

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Please support HB 184 to promote fairness & justice for all Alaskans.

Debbie Corral

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House State Affairs Committee – May 3, 2017

My name is Marsha Buck and I am the treasurer of PFLAG Juneau. I would like to testify in strong support of House Bill 184. PFLAG, as you may know, stands for Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays as well as people who are transgender, bisexual, intersex, queer, and questioning.

PFLAG Juneau strongly supports House Bill 184 as well as Senate Bill 72 because they are needed here in Alaska. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression are sadly still alive and active in our great state where we think of ourselves as independent and strong and delightfully different than people in the Lower 48. But I've noticed in my 49 years here in Alaska that we still manage to harbor discrimination.

Two examples come to mind. I will never forget the night my phone rang in the middle of the night and I answered to find a friend sobbing. My friend was a lesbian who lived here in Juneau at the time and her landlord had just evicted her from her house because she was a lesbian living peacefully with her partner. When she asked me through her tears if the landlord could do that, all I could give her was a place to stay but not any legal recourse.

Another conversation I will never forget was with a transgender woman in Anchorage who was told by a bus driver that she could not board a city bus because of the way she looked. Apparently she looked "too trans." Again, I could not assure this woman that she had any place to turn legally.

Please pass HB 184 out of committee with your full committee support, because you are Alaskans who care about other Alaskans and you care about ending discrimination against your constituents.

Marsha Buck
Juneau, AK 99801

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Dear Chairman Kreiss-Tompkins and committee members:

I am a resident within Representative Kopp's district.

I am fully in support of this bill and feel it is long overdue.

I was very disheartened to learn of one committee members recent response to a constituent claiming that based on his experience such a bill isn't needed in Alaska.

I might suggest that it is important to step outside of one's one sphere and walk a mile in others shoes to truly have an understanding of your citizens lives.

The very willful blindness to discrimination is even more cause to enact a bill that protects those injustices some refuse to acknowledge.

There has been ample testimony about discrimination against LGBTQ persons to the legislature as well as in past years when Anchorage was mulling a similar city ordinance.

My own son has experienced harassment at school and in his workplace in Alaska.

He is currently attending college out of state.

His experiences in the state affected his choices for where to attend college and are now a major factor in his decision-making as to where to seek employment in his field of study.

This young man graduated third in his class and would have been an asset and a wonderful representative of the best of Alaska's citizens.

We stand to lose another bright mind and innovative thinker to another state because of the perception that this is not a LGBTQ-friendly place to live.

Everyone deserves protection from harassment and discrimination. This should be a no-brainer.

It is not only the right thing to do in terms of civil and human rights, but it is the right thing to do to maintain our standing as a vibrant economy and welcoming state.

Please pass this important legislation.

Paige R. Hodson, SRA
Anchorage, AK 99503

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Hello all,

I would like to show my support for House Bill 184.

As someone who "passes" as masculine despite performing a wider range of social roles and identifying as transgender, but more importantly as the friend of many others who are not afforded the same luxury of "passing" or even being accepted in their chosen social roles, I applaud your efforts to reduce the number of inconsequential reasons by which a given demographic can be unfairly discriminated against. If the goal of discrimination is to prevent unwanted behaviors, what more efficient way to do so than by leaving harmless people alone: far superior means exist than policing gender performance. Thank you for all that you do.

Most sincerely,

Alexander Bergman

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Greetings --

I am writing as Lutheran pastor and hospital chaplain to ask that you **support House Bill 184**.

I am deeply committed to the respect and care of all people, and in particular, am passionate that we care especially for our most vulnerable. While for me these values are rooted in my Christian faith, I hope these are values that as citizens of Alaska, we can all share.

In particular, I have heard stories from transgender friends and colleagues about applying for housing, initially receiving an extremely positive response, and then, most likely after a credit check has revealed that a person's biological gender doesn't match their gender presentation, been denied housing.

Our society tends to operate with a norm that people are white, heterosexual, cisgender, often married and with children -- for those of us who don't fit those molds (and I say this also speaking as a lesbian), we often feel extremely vulnerable and the world can be a very unsafe place. I hope that we will be clear as Alaskans that we are diverse people, committed to caring for one another, not discriminating against each other, and that we hope to see communities where all people can thrive, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Thank you very much.

Rev. Susan M. Halvor

Anchorage, Alaska 99517

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My name is Anne Green and I live in Anchorage, Alaska. I'm writing this to urge support for HB 184, preventing discrimination against members of the LGBTQ+ community.

In Anchorage we've had laws on the books for a couple of years now, protecting the rights of residents against the worst forms of discrimination based on sexual preference and gender

identity. These have had NO ILL EFFECTS to our community. Rather, now all residents can rent homes, be employed, and make banking transactions without fear of rejection based on who they are and who they love.

These are basic human rights. Recognizing these rights neither "picks your pocket" nor "breaks your leg" (to use Thomas Jefferson's basis for evaluating such bills). You, in fact, lose nothing. But the people of Alaska gain. We gain more LIBERTY, more RESPECT, more EQUALITY. Aren't those American values? Alaskan values?

Please support HB 184.

Thank you,

Anne Green

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Hello committee

I am writing in for support of HB 184, adding gender identity and sexual orientation as a protected class.

I myself have experienced discrimination and was treated as separate but equal at a job in 2015. I identify my gender as different than my legal documents have marked. I was an intern for a non-profit who received funding from the federal government. During my new hire paper work, I informed HR of my pronouns. I was told that it was okay and nothing to worry about.

Then a week later, I was pulled aside and told that another employee felt uncomfortable about me using the men's restroom. I was told that I must use a separate single stall bathroom on the other side of the office. This companies non-discrimination policy did not cover gender identity. Since they received money from the federal government, they were to follow Obama Executive Order 13672. They stated that they can pick and choose which orders to follow.

I went to the Human Rights Commissioner to file a complaint. I was unable to do so, because they didn't recognize gender discrimination as sex discrimination, even though the Supreme Court ruled that gender discrimination is sex discrimination.

I filled with the EEOC and my case was setteled.

Now I work at a different job, without protections. I constantly worry every time we get a new employee. Protections would help ensure that this would not happen again.

Thank you for you support!

Eli Michael

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I am writing in support of HB 184. I am a straight man who's been married, happily!, for almost 36 years. Everyone deserves the same opportunities to live and work in Alaska free from discrimination because of who they are or who they love. I encourage you to pass this legislation. Thank you.

Glenn Cravez
Anchorage, Alaska 99502

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I am writing to encourage you to vote in favor of HB 184. Our anti-discrimination laws need to be expanded to include prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. All people who identify differently in this respect need legal protection. Alaskans value and tolerate many kinds of "differences," and those differences make us a stronger state.

Discrimination in the workplace is especially egregious. We should all be judged on how we perform in work situations, not on our personal characteristics.

Please support this bill.

Sherry Eckrich
Eagle River, AK 99577

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Dear Representatives Kreiss-Tomkins; Le Doux; Tuck; Wool; Birch; Johnson; Knopp; Kopp:

All of us LGBTQ members and supporters appreciate that House State Affairs is carefully listening to our concerns. As Rep. Josephson said in his introduction, the quest for LGBTQ human rights flows in the long river of American civil rights, as historically marginalized groups speak up about how fellow citizens automatically disregard them. We hope there will be an opportunity for public testimony on HB 184. We want to share our personal stories and show that there is an ongoing urgent need to protect us LGBTQ and create a wider climate of fairness in Alaska.

HB 184 is all about creating a more healthy Alaska. As someone who taught high school, I know young Alaskans are always secretly concerned about some quality of theirs, something about how they look or naturally act. Creating legal respect for LGBTQ differences helps all young Alaskans be more confident about who they naturally are. Anything that causes disrespect and

discrimination for LGBTQ also increases violence against women and school bullying. None of us wants anyone, especially young LGBTQ to receive hostility. Alaska needs all our young people on deck for engineering and infrastructure needs. For 15 years I worked at the Juneau Job Center helping Alaskans find work. I regularly heard stories of LGBTQ job discrimination. Even workers who were not gay but appeared LGBTQ told stories of work hostility.

As I go about my day, many Juneau people go out of their way to express support for LGBTQ equality. Since we got marriage equality 2 years ago, they often think we are now fully protected from all discrimination. Unfortunately there are many nooks and crannies of our daily lives where we LGBTQ do not have equal opportunity. Last week a group of us met with local LGBTQ high school students, and they detailed the anti-LGBTQ slur words under the breath and unheard by teachers, looks that demean, shoves, group laughs and staring, eye rolling, gestures of disrespect. They said these behaviors happen daily, and they have to steel themselves through each school day.

Last summer after magnificent support from all across Juneau, with lots of churches speaking out for LGBTQ equality, the Juneau Assembly passed an updated non-discrimination ordinance. A resounding YES vote. 29 people testified for our equality. Many cried as they told about losing jobs and apartments, being kicked out of public accommodations, being turned down for financial services. Testifiers spoke from a special soul depth about how they had been wounded by years of unhealthy disfavor and daily barbs that chip away at one's soul.

HB 184 creates more health for LGBTQ who have been wounded by blatant discrimination. HB 184 creates more health for Alaskan parents of LGBTQ who easily worry about the safety of their kids. (I'm in my 70's, and when I came out as a lesbian in the 1970's, my parents and brother always worried about my safety. Lots of decades of family worry.) HB 184 creates more health for transgender Alaskans and their families. Trans people are very vulnerable to violence and murder. 50% of trans people report suicide attempts. America is very hostile to transgender Americans. With HB 184 Alaska can shine as a state that stands for respect.

HB 184 is a no cost common sense way to create more healthy communities. Anchorage and Juneau have led the way in LGBTQ protections, Bethel is not far behind, and now Alaska is ready to show the country that we stand for expanded healthiness through expanded equality. This is a perfect time for Alaska to move forward.

In the 21 states that have created statewide LGBTQ protections, very few LGBTQ have had to sue for their rights. Having legal rights in place creates an environment of new respect.

My wife, family physician, Dr. Mo Longworth, reminds me that the Alaskan Academy of Family Physicians has always strongly spoken out for statewide LGBTQ protections. Research from the National Academy of Family Physicians shows data on improved health outcomes for individuals and communities when LGBTQ protections are in place.

Thank you for considering that HB 184 is a healthy choice for Alaska, and thank you for passing this legislation to the next committee.

Sincerely,

Lin Davis
Juneau, AK 99801
24 year resident

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Dear Representatives,

I am writing to express my support of House Bill 184. Updating this law will help ensure that all of Alaska's workers are judged on their job performance and not their sexual orientation. I am proud to have grown-up in a state that passed the Anti-Discrimination Act in 1945 after moving testimony delivered by Elizabeth Peratrovich. I feel her testimony is relevant here when she said "No law will eliminate crimes, but at least you, as legislators, can assert to the world that you recognize the evil of the present situation and speak of your intent to help us overcome discrimination."

I graduated from Juneau Douglas High School in 2008. While I attended school I was a member of the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA). I have many friends, colleagues, and peers in town with a variety of sexual orientations and am grateful for this diversity. It is important to me that all people who make up our community have equitable access in the workplace and that no one has to fear for their job based on their gender identity or expression.

I ask that a vote be taken and that HB184 is passed through the committee.

Gunalchéesh, thank you,

Mallory Story