

May 3, 2017

Rep. Andy Josephson
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: HB 184 – An act prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression

Dear Rep. Josephson,

AARP Alaska offers our appreciation to you, Rep. Josephson, for your sponsorship, and to the members of the House State Affairs Committee for consideration of HB 184. AARP's policy is that it is the fundamental right of all people to be free from discrimination, including discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

Discrimination toward LGBT individuals is historically well documented, and ranges from mild harassment to violence and hate crimes. But, I wish to provide yet another aspect of the importance of non-discrimination protections for LGBT individuals. AARP, nationally, has undertaken a partnership with SAGE USA (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders) to help shine a light on the little understood situation LGBT individuals face as they grow old.

In short, the very unfortunate choice older LGBT individuals must face is whether they must go "back in the closet." As people age, we typically experience a series of losses which create varying degrees of dependency on others, and a consequent sense of vulnerability. The need to feel safe (including the need for respect and dignity) increases when having to depend on persons or systems other than one's self. While research on the experience of older LGBT individuals is only now beginning to describe their situation, results show some patterns that underscore the need for increased protection. We know, for instance, that LGBT older adults are:

- Five times less likely to access senior services
- Experience higher poverty rates than senior heterosexual counterparts
- Significantly more likely to delay or not seek needed medical care
- More likely to have problems with substance abuse
- At higher risk for cancer and other serious health conditions (including depression)
- Half as likely as heterosexual elders to have family members to call for help, and are three times less likely to have children.
- Hesitant to disclose sexual orientation to their primary care provider

Many of these disparities can be attributed to the effects of historical prejudice, including disruption to families (who are so necessary to our long term care system), and diminished opportunities to earn a living and save for retirement (often due to lifelong employment discrimination). Ongoing stigma often interferes with full participation in community and society, leaving a significant number of LGBT older adults reluctant to seek needed services and support from potentially hostile aging and health service

providers. Almost a third of gay and lesbian Baby Boomers identify discrimination as their greatest concern about aging....as if aging weren't concerning enough!

The experience of discrimination over a lifetime (remembering today's LGBT elders could have been a victim of violence, or seen their expressions of love labeled a psychiatric disorder, a criminal activity, anti-family, immoral, and a security risk) takes a toll and predisposes to being highly vigilant and cautious. When faced with the vulnerabilities of long term care, one might have to "sweep the house" of all evidence if a home health aide is due to pay a visit; or if living in an assisted living home or nursing home, one would have to make continuous decisions about whether this person or that one, whether staff or other residents, might be safe enough with whom to share the stories of one's life. For all persons coming to the end of life, the story of that life is among the most precious things a person has. It is hard to imagine the sense of loss and grief if that story had to be kept secret or denied. Furthermore, to live in a dependent care situation might have implications about who the LGBT elder is able to have in to visit, or whether those friends would themselves feel comfortable coming into that environment to visit...all of which has the potential to increase an unnecessary sense of loneliness and isolation.

The protections most people take for granted are urgently needed for LGBT older adults, especially with regard to public accommodations, which would include senior centers, health care facilities, assisted living homes, and skilled nursing facilities. No one should have to feel unsafe when they are old and vulnerable, and when so few choices may remain. Nor should anyone have to hide their own life out of fear of what others might say or do. HB 184 is a long-needed and crucial part of Alaska's proud history of self-determination and respect for individual human beings.

AARP Alaska offers our thanks to you and the House State Affairs Committee, and we furthermore offer our strong support for the passage of HB 184 out of committee. Please feel free to contact us if we can be helpful with any further information.

Respectfully,



Ken Helander
Advocacy Director
762-3314
khelander@aarp.org

CC: Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tompkins, Chair House State Affairs Committee
Rep. Gabriel LeDoux
Rep. Chris Tuck
Rep. Chris Birch
Rep. DeLena Johnson
Rep. Gary Knopp



April 25, 2017

Honorable Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, Chair
House State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Chairperson Kreiss-Tomkins and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah Warbelow, and I am the Legal Director for the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) equality. By inspiring and engaging all Americans, HRC strives to end discrimination against LGBTQ citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all. On behalf of our nearly 2,000,000 members and supporters nationwide, I am writing you today in support of House Bill (HB) 184, which would extend nondiscrimination protections to LGBTQ Alaskans in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

America has a proud history of valuing liberty, freedom, and hard work. Anti-discrimination laws put those values into practice. By expanding the state's civil rights laws to include LGBTQ people, Alaska will send a strong message that all of its residents matter. It is time to ensure that discrimination does not trump merit or basic fairness by extending protections to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

Discrimination against LGBTQ people continues to be a very real problem. Far too often, LGBTQ Americans have lost their livelihoods simply because of an employer's fear, lack of understanding, or intolerance. Some are highly skilled professionals who, though seemingly irreplaceable in their positions, suddenly become expendable when they wish to live openly in their communities or are outed by colleagues. Others are people forced into whatever jobs they can find, some scraping together money for the tremendous medical costs of gender transition, which are rarely covered by health insurance. They are people in every walk of life—doctors and lawyers, plumbers and bus drivers. Many are parents and spouses, whose efforts to find secure, fulfilling employment are also a struggle to provide for their families. And for these Americans, the threat of discrimination does not end once they leave the workplace. It is well-documented that LGBTQ people are shown less desirable properties for purchase or rent, receive less favorable customer service, or encounter outright refusal of service. The time has long since passed when we as a nation ought to tolerate arbitrary discrimination against any group of people, in any aspect of life.

I cannot overstate the real-life implications this bill would have for Alaska. It would extend vital protections in the most fundamental aspects of life to all Alaskans. Now that marriage equality is a reality nationwide, this bill would eliminate the untenable possibility of an individual marrying the person they love, only to be fired from work, evicted, or denied access to public places for doing so.



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

May 4, 2017

Dear Legislators:

The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault strongly supports HB 184 ('Discrimination: Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation'). We urge you to also support it and ensure that it passes. This important legislation needs to be a priority – it cannot wait.

Even with important policy gains, and gradual socio-cultural shifts towards understanding and tolerance, the LGBTQ community continuously faces very real discrimination and inequality. **This discrimination and inequality perpetuates high levels of violence against people who are LGBTQ. Responding to and preventing such discrimination and violence is a civil rights and human rights issue.**

The transgender community in particular, and specifically trans youth and trans women of color, [face the threat of violence on a daily basis](#) and need laws in place to protect them from discrimination. This vulnerability can be related to a lack of resources due to deeply imbedded disenfranchisement and discrimination--in school, housing, employment, and access to health care.

To highlight just a few statistics

- **Statistics documenting transgender people's experience of sexual violence indicate horrific levels of sexual abuse and assault. One in two transgender individuals are sexually abused or assaulted at some point in their lives.¹ More than half experienced some form of intimate partner violence.** (2010 report by National Center for Victims of Crime and the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2015 US Transgender Survey)ⁱ
- **Some reports estimate that transgender survivors may experience rates of sexual assault up to 66 percent, often coupled with physical assaults or abuse.² This indicates that the majority of transgender individuals are living with the aftermath of trauma and the fear of possible repeat victimization** (2010 report by National Center for Victims of Crime and the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs)
- **12 percent of transgender youth report being sexually assaulted in K–12 settings by peers or educational staff; 13 percent of African-American transgender people surveyed were sexually assaulted in the workplace; and 22 percent of homeless transgender individuals were assaulted while staying in shelters.³** (2011 *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*)ⁱⁱ
- **There was an 11% increase in anti-LGBTQ homicides in 2014. Looking at broad category of homicide victims, 50% were trans women of color** (2014 National Report on Hate Violence Against LGBTQ and HIV-Affected Communities, National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs)ⁱⁱⁱ

As service providers, we encourage any legislative frameworks to support us as we continuously expand our LGBTQ cultural competence.

Discrimination compounds economic, health, and other disparities and is a root cause of violence that perpetuates the culture of violence against people who are LGBTQ; and the social acceptance of this violence. We join our colleagues who are victim advocates all around the country in saying: to create a social, political, and economic environment in which violence against women no longer exists, we must support equality and safety for all.

Member Programs

Anchorage AWAIC, STAR Bethel TWC Cordova CFRC Dillingham SAFE Fairbanks IAC Homer SPHH Juneau AWARE
Kenai LeeShore Center Ketchikan WISH Kodiak KWRCC Kotzebue MFCC Nome BSWG Petersburg WAVE
Seward SeaView Community Services Sitka SAFV Unalaska USAFV Utqiagvik AWIC Valdez AVV



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Phone: (907) 586-3650
Fax: (907) 463-4493

Sitka Office
PO Box 6631
Sitka, Alaska 99835
Phone: (907) 747-7545
Fax: (907) 747-7547

Anchorage Office
431 W. 7th Ave. #205
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: (907) 297-2860
Fax: (907) 279-2451

Let's make sure that Alaska is on the right side of this issue. Please take a stand and show that Alaskans do not support discrimination and violence, and do support tolerance and peace. Support HB 184. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carmen Lowry
Executive Director

ⁱ <http://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/Executive%20Summary%20-%20FINAL%201.6.17.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.avp.org/storage/documents/Reports/MEDIARELEASE_2014_NCAVP_HVREPORT.pdf

Member Programs

Anchorage AWAIC, STAR Bethel TWC Cordova CFRC Dillingham SAFE Fairbanks IAC Homer SPHH Juneau AWARE
Kenai LeeShore Center Ketchikan WISH Kodiak KWRCC Kotzebue MFCC Nome BSWG Petersburg WAVE
Seward SeaView Community Services Sitka SAFV Unalaska USAFV Utqiagvik AWIC Valdez AVV

From: [Judy Andree](#)
To: [Megan Holland](#); [Rep. Andy Josephson](#); [Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins](#); [Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux](#); [Rep. Chris Tuck](#); [Rep. Adam Wool](#); [Rep. Chris Birch](#); [Rep. DeLena Johnson](#); [Rep. Gary Knopp](#)
Subject: HB 184: Support Letter from the League of Women Voters Alaska
Date: Friday, April 28, 2017 9:27:28 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)



The League of Women Voters
A Voice For Citizens, A Force For Change

P. O. Box 22048, Juneau, Alaska 99802

April 28, 2017

Dear Representative Andy Josephson, Sponsor; Representative Kreiss-Tomkins, Chair of the House State Affairs Committee; and Members of the State Affairs Committee:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes in equality in education, housing, and employment for all persons regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. In addition, the League supports the equalization of legal rights, obligations, and benefits available to same-gender couples with those available to heterosexual couples, including the right to marry under civil law. The League believes that one of government's responsibilities is to protect the rights of all its citizens. Therefore, the League of Women Voters of Alaska strongly supports HB 184, a bill to protect the rights of persons regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.

The 1992 LWFUS Convention added language to their Equality of Opportunity position, making it clear that this position referred to "all persons, regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability." The League position focuses particularly on equal opportunity for education, housing, and employment, three important requirements for inclusion and survival in society. In late March, public testimony in the Senate on the companion bill to HB 184, SB 72, gave evidence that the problem of discrimination is very real for citizens who identify as members of the LGBTQ community. The loss of jobs and/or housing and the threat of violence were just a few of the potential problems mentioned in the testimony.

Although the League was formed initially to fight for women's suffrage, today the League's work has widened to include all citizens and the guarantee of equal opportunity and civil rights for all. A society is weakened when it excludes some of its citizens from full participation in the rights and opportunities afforded to only certain citizens. We urge the members of the House State Affairs Committee to consider the rights of all your constituents and pass HB 184 out of committee. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Judith Andree, President LWVAK

Phyllis Tugman-Alexander, Vice-President



Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii

Representative Josephson
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: House Bill 184

March 22th, 2017

Dear Representative Josephson,

On behalf of Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii, I write today to thank you for sponsoring House Bill 184, which would add the words “sexual orientation, gender identity or expression” to Alaska’s non-discrimination statutes. Our state already prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, and marital status in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodation, and financing practices. However, these important protections do not extend to lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people.

Everyday Alaskans across the state live in fear of being fired or denied housing, public service, or other opportunities because they are gay or transgender. It doesn’t have to be this way. Each of us should be free to build loving adult relationships and to create families without discrimination based on our personal, private lives.

As a health care provider and employer, Planned Parenthood knows that this legislation is good for public health and good for business. Because of discrimination, and fear of discrimination, many LGBT employees hide their identities, are paid less, and have fewer employment opportunities than their non-LGBT counterparts. This prejudice puts LGBT people at increased risk for poor physical and mental health. Businesses that support anti-discrimination measures for LGBT people recognize that having a corporate culture that embraces diversity improves worker productivity and helps recruit the best talent. Sexual orientation and gender identity have no relationship to workplace performance, and hardworking Alaskans shouldn’t be fired because of who they love or who they are.

Access to stable and secure housing is also essential for successful and healthy families, but LGBT people often experience housing discrimination and are denied the security of one of life’s most basic necessities. Like everyone else, they just want to contribute to the economic health of our state, earn a living, and be able to provide for their families.

Equality is everyone’s concern and it’s time that our state catches up. Thank you for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to supporting your efforts.

Sincerely,

Alyson Currey
Regional Field Organizer and Legislative Liaison

Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii
3231 Glacier Hwy, Juneau, AK 99801
907.957.8708 | Alyson.Currey@ppvnh.org



May 2, 2017

Honorable Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, Chair
House State Affairs Committee

PFLAG of Fairbanks is in support of HB 184. Our chapter promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families, and friends. Please add the six words and a comma: "sexual orientation, gender identity or expression" to the Alaskan Human Rights Law.

Alaska is blessed with a diverse populace yet attacks against LGBTQ individuals is well documented. A discrimination Survey released in November of 2011 by Green and the organization Identity provides evidence of unequal treatment of LGBTQ individuals in employment, housing, education and public services.

Violence and discrimination against these citizens exists in all parts of Alaska but the data thereof needs to be organized and presented. This task is perfectly suited to the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights.

We have a human rights law in this state to secure peace, order, health, safety, and the general welfare of the state and its inhabitants. End the bullying of the non-binary. Allow for the vast expression of gender that exist in the human realm.

When a culture-scape does not include a place for Queer citizens they are murdered, attacked, humiliated and forced to exist in the face of stagnation, isolation and systemic erasure. We look forward to a time when labels are removed from humans and all can flourish regardless of their status at birth.

Add the six words and a comma: "sexual orientation, gender identity or expression" to the mission of the Alaska Human rights Commission. Embrace, protect and include the documented and undocumented Alaskan citizens that express themselves as LGBTQ. Pass HB 184 into law.

Thank-you,
PFLAG Fairbanks Chapter

Pat Redmond, Past-President

Gail Knobf, Secretary

Cheryl Jebe, Treasurer

Hetty Barthel, Director

Karen Griffin, Director

Mary Lee Guthrie, Director

Mariann Mills, Director

Diane Mathisen, Director

(Emailed by
Judy Andree
5985 Lund Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801
907-780-6767 (home)
907-321-1559 (cell)i)



May 1, 2017

Honorable Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, Chairperson
House State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Support for House Bill 184 – Prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Dear Chairperson Kreiss-Tomkins and Committee Members,

Alaskans Together for Equality (ATE) fully supports making all Alaskans equal and protected from discrimination through passing House Bill (HB) 184: “An act adding to the powers and duties of the State Commission for Human Rights; and relating to and prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.”

ATE represents hundreds of members across the state of Alaska. We are a statewide, nonpartisan, civil rights organization whose mission is to advance civil equality for all Alaskans through grassroots organizing and advocacy, with a primary focus on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Alaskans. We advocate for all Alaskans because the stronger the foundation of equal civil rights across institutions and practices makes for a better Alaska. All Alaskans will be enabled to take advantage of opportunities to create healthy lives and produce income that allows for a stronger state.

ATE believes that HB184 is imperative to securing the rights and opportunities of all Alaskans and provides the tools to pursue these opportunities. HB184 positively impacts all Alaskans by strengthening the foundation of equality and protecting civil rights.

As Alaska continues to weather economic challenges, it is imperative that the State do all that it can do to attract and retain a skilled and diverse labor force. When the United States Congress Joint Economic Committee examined the economic consequences of discrimination

based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in November of 2013¹, it found that discrimination results in detrimental economic impacts including: lower profits; higher turnover costing business more to train and retain employees; reduced wages and underemployment; reduced economic growth through lost productivity, inefficiencies in the economy and an overall misallocation of crucial human capital.

We urge you to support the justice, fairness and equality for all Alaskans by supporting HB184. With this bill's passage, the Alaska legislature ensures the right for individual Alaskans to work, innovate, and contribute to our state. HB184 is integral to meeting Alaska's economic challenges and will send a strong message to Alaska's LGBT community and those talented LGBT individuals and their families who are considering making Alaska their home, that our state is a welcoming state to all.

Thank you for hearing this bill and after years of waiting for a vote, we hope you pass this bill through this committee but also encourage your fellow legislators to move this bill to the House floor and pass it. Not only is it the right thing to do but it also aligns with our Alaskan values of fairness and equality for all.

On behalf of the ATE Board and our members,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'E. Rojas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Elias Rojas
Board President
Alaskan Together for Equality

¹ http://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/42dc59a0-6071-46d0-8ff2-9bd7a6b0077f/enda---final-11.5.13.pdf

Moreover, this bill would send an unequivocal message to businesses that Alaska is a place where they can find the best and brightest; where their employees can live, grow, and thrive without fear of discrimination.

Finally, passing the HB 184 will place the state in good company. Beginning with an ordinance passed in Minneapolis in 1975, 19 states, the District of Columbia, and more than 100 cities and counties have enacted fully-inclusive, comprehensive laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Additionally, more than 600 private businesses across the United States, including 66% of Fortune 500 companies, have voluntarily adopted policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It is clear that employers and governments nationwide agree that they are at their best—their most competitive and most productive—when they do the right thing and affirm that they're open to everyone.

It has never been more important for Alaska to act and ensure that discrimination has no place in this great state. Please vote in favor of HB 184.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Warbelow". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a long, sweeping underline.

Sarah Warbelow



May 1, 2017

Representative Andy Josephson
State Capitol Room 102
Juneau, AK. 99801

Re: HB 184

Dear Representative Josephson,

SAGE Alaska would like to thank you for sponsoring HB 184 and to thank the members of the Committee for considering this bill. As our name states, SAGE (Services and Advocacy for Gay Elders) Alaska is committed to addressing the needs of older LGBT people and to advocating for policy changes that affect those needs. We want to ensure that the older LGBT community can age with a sense of security, dignity, confidence and well-being.

While the struggle for equality has advanced over the last few decades, it is far from over. For older LGBT individuals, there are still memories of times of hiding, fear for safety, and the heartbreak of rejection by family, friends, workplaces, and even their church. For many, the scars of struggle will remain and affect many aspects of their later life experience. Some will remain "in the closet" forever, regardless of laws protecting specific status, as laws do not dictate personal beliefs nor attitudes, as only time and relationships can work open hearts and minds.

National studies estimate the population of LGBT seniors will double by the year 2030 and unfortunately, many in that population deal with poverty and reduced economic security as well as significant health disparities related to physical and mental health issues. Our lack of nondiscrimination protections for all LGBT peoples, raises risk factors for social isolation in disproportionate ways. Older LGBT people are twice as likely to live alone, and 3-4 times less likely to have children, and many are estranged from their biological families. Many mainstream providers do not account for the unique realities and needs of older adults, leaving them at risk for isolation, neglect and further discrimination.

Aging is stressful enough without the additional stress that discrimination can cause. No one should have to live their life in fear of being denied services or housing because of who they are. It is time for all Alaskans to be treated fairly and we strongly support HB 184 and hope to see it become reality in the near future.

Respectfully,
Julie Schmidt
Program Director
529-6725

P.O. Box 200070 Anchorage, AK 99520 EIN 92-0091087

Southeast Alaska Gay & Lesbian Alliance
P.O. Box 21542 Juneau, AK 99802
Tel 907-723-5795
webmaster@seagla.org
Seagla.org



MAY 1, 2017

Members of the House State Affairs Committee: Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, Chair; Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux, Vice Chair; Rep. Chris Tuck; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Chris Birch; Rep. DeLena Johnson; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Andy Josephson, Alternate; Rep. Chuck Kopp, Alternate
Alaska State Capitol, Juneau Alaska, 99801

Dear Members,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Southeast Alaska LGBTQ Alliance I wish to express our strong support for HB 184; a bill that adds sexual orientation and gender identity and expression into legislation, to continue furtherance of equal rights within our state.

Last year, the City and Borough of Juneau passed an ordinance that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Dozens of Juneau residents testified before the Juneau Assembly in support of an ordinance that protects LGBTQ+ people of our community in the areas of housing, employment, and public accommodations. This ordinance passed without much opposition while including a ministerial exception which allows the constitutional right to free speech of religious institutions to discriminate in their hiring practices when hiring religious leaders to lead their church. People of our community debated, discussed, shared, and decided that equal protections in this area should be granted to all who choose to be a part of our community.

We believe there are many LGBTQ people outside of Juneau who are not currently protected in the area of private economic opportunities. We acknowledge that Alaskans hide who they are every day out of fear of losing their job, being refused services in their community, or losing the most basic of needs like housing. It is morally untenable to allow bigotry and fear to persist in our great state, a state which lead the way, not so long ago, against discrimination. Please, support HB 184 with your vote. In doing so, you may provide protection for your neighbors, family, and friends, those too young and too fearful, against discrimination.

Respectfully,

Brandon Demery, Chair

SEAGLA