



April 11, 2019

Representative Andy Josephson
Member House Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 502
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Josephson,

All Alaskans, including Alaska's students and educators, deserve protection from discrimination.

House Bill 82 is an important and overdue proposal to provide equal protection to all Alaskans from discrimination in employment, housing, financing, and public accommodations. Some Alaska communities have taken the commendable step of passing ordinances to protect Alaska's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) residents. But, in many parts of our state, there is still not comprehensive protection for LGBTQ Alaskans.

Too many Alaskans have been victims of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Such discrimination can destroy the lives and careers of committed education professionals and harm the education of LGBTQ students. LGBTQ students and educators deserve a safe and supportive educational environment.

As a matter of sound education policy, equal protection from employment discrimination provides Alaska educators the employment security they deserve, so they can focus on providing an excellent education for Alaska students every day. Additionally, the possibility of discrimination in employment, housing, financing and public accommodations sends a dangerous message to Alaska's LGBTQ students: that they are second-class citizens who are not entitled to the same legal protections as their peers. This is harmful and disruptive to the learning environment and does incalculable damage to our students who are depending on us for support and inspiration to learn.

NEA-Alaska has a long standing commitment to oppose all forms of discrimination. We believe that all Alaskans must have equal opportunities and equal protections. We support HB 82 and encourage you to support and pass this important legislation to provide equal protection to all Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Tim Parker
President, NEA-Alaska