

**From:** [Salerno, Chris](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** Equal Protection for LGBT  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 3:52:12 PM

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Thank you for championing this worthy cause. I have personally been discriminated against. The current Administration in Washington just signed an Executive Order allowing discrimination against the LGBT communities in construction contracting. It also just removed from the 2020 Census questions that would quantify/qualify LGBT as a minority. We have seen hate filled rhetoric for years from various religious leaders in Anchorage.

“Legal protected status” is the only thing that will keep LGBT from further discrimination.

Christopher Salerno

30 year resident of Anchorage

**From:** [Cindy Lelake](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** In support of SB72  
**Date:** Friday, March 31, 2017 6:59:54 AM

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Dear Senator Gardner:

I wholeheartedly support expanding the duties and scope of the State Commission for Human Rights to include the prohibition of discrimination based on gender identity or expression and sexual orientation.

Please note that this is not a new law; rather, SB72 seeks to add new categories to existing anti-discrimination language.

There's no fiscal impact, but the social impact is huge.

Thank you for sponsoring this bill on behalf of LGBTQ Alaskans.

Very truly yours,

Cindy Lelake  
Anchorage

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Frances Marin](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** Just a quick Thank you!  
**Date:** Friday, March 31, 2017 7:24:55 AM

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Thank you for all the good work you are doing. I really appreciate your efforts on Senate Bill 72. The LGBT community is near and dear to my heart and I am a strong ally to all of my friends who are a part of it.

Carry on!

--

Frances  
Marin

Do not wait; the time will never be "just right." Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along.

**From:** [Fred Traber](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** Letter in Support of Senate Bill 72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 5:57:33 PM

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I am writing in support of Senate Bill 72. The provision of equal rights to LGBT persons in Alaska continues to be a lengthy process. SB 72 is an important and positive action to continue this process.

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 ruling allowed my spouse to receive the same health benefits that the spouses of other Municipal employees.

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 SB 72. This is not a new concept. It has been tested 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)).

Fred Traber

Anchorage, AK

**From:** [Barbara Mishler](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** LGBT Bill  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 10:09:06 PM

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Berta, My husband and I strongly support your LGBT bill. Thank you for standing for everyone's civil rights. Supportively, Barbara and Craig Mishler

**From:** [Jeff Walters](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** Please support SB 72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 4:29:30 PM

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To Sen. Gardner and Members of the Health & Social Services Committee,

I am writing to support SB 72, 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 SB 72 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 SB 72.

Thank you,  
Jeff Walters  
Fairbanks, AK



**From:** [Pam Cravez](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Cc:** [billy.i.farrell@gmail.com](mailto:billy.i.farrell@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Please support SB72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 3:50:04 PM

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Dear Sen. Gardner,

I am writing to urge you to support SB72, expanding anti-discrimination to LGBTQ in Alaska. As a longtime Alaskan and the mother of a gay son, I understand how important it is for us, as a community, to support one another and provide the same legal protections to every one in our community regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. Thank you for passing this message along to your colleagues.

With gratitude for your support of SB72,

Pam Cravez

2810 Kingfisher Drive

Anchorage, Alaska 9950s

907 444-8743

**From:** [Henry P. Huntington](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** SB 72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 4:39:05 PM

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Dear Senator Gardner and members of the Health and Social Services Committee,

I am writing to support Senate Bill 72, protecting members of the LGBTQ community from discrimination. In our church, where I have the honor to serve as president of the congregation council, we have discussed gay marriage and related topics on many occasions. The clear message from our congregation is that "all means all." We cannot protect some members of our community and not others. We cannot offer services to some and not to others. We are all God's children, and it is not our place to sit in judgment about one another or assume God's role in deciding who is acceptable and who is not. What happens within a religious denomination, sect, or community is constitutionally protected, and I continue to support the right of each group to decide what is appropriate in their religious activities. In the public domain, however, there is no basis for discrimination. Please pass SB 72 so that all Alaskans can stand on an equal footing with one another.

Thank you.

--Henry Huntington

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Henry P. Huntington, Ph.D.  
23834 The Clearing Dr.  
Eagle River, AK 99577 USA  
Tel: +1-907-696-3564  
Fax: +1-907-696-3565  
[hph@alaska.net](mailto:hph@alaska.net)

**From:** [Jennifer Mannix](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** SB 72 - I strongly sup  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 7:48:53 PM

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Hello,

I am writing to send you a brief message of STRONG support for the modifications to the State's anti-discrimination language. I believe very strongly that there are many Alaskans who are not protected under current state anti-discrimination laws. Please do whatever you can to pass this legislation in support of ALL Alaskans.

As a woman married to another woman, who has lived in Alaska for 27 years, I am fortunate that the state and also the city I live in has protected my rights to live without discrimination. I think there is more work to be done, and this is an important effort toward that end.

Thank you,

Jennifer Mannix

8496A Thunder Mountain Rd.

Juneau, AK 99801

907-723-9932

**From:** [Paige Hodson](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** SB 72 LGBT Civil Rights Bill  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 5:29:10 PM

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Dear Senator Gardner,

I am a resident within Senator Von Imhof's district, and a business owner within your district.

I am constrained by work obligations and am unable to attend or call in to the Senate Health & Social Service Committee hearing tomorrow on SB 72.

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

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.

I thank you for introducing this legislation.

Please share my email with your colleagues.

Sincerely,

***Paige R. Hodson, SRA***

*Anchorage, AK 99503*

*(907) 274-8258 phone; (907) 274-8259 fax*

<http://pagehodsonappraisal.appraiserxsites.com/>

**From:** [Cheryl & Mark Lovegreen](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** SB 72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 6:03:49 PM

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This email is for you and the State Senate Health and Social Services committee.

Please support SB 72 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.

Thanks for your time,

Cheryl Lovegreen

**From:** [Peggy Robinson](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** SB 72 support  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 3:49:11 PM

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Dear Senator Gardner and all Senators:

I urge you to support SB 72 to provide protections for all our students in all our schools! I was on the Anchorage School Board for 9 years, and we heard many stories from and about students who were harassed and discriminated against for their sexual orientation and gender status. This poor school environment for them led to many dropping out of school and relieving their pain in non-productive ways. As gender and sexual norms have become more accepting these last years, I've read that suicide has decreased in this population. Anchorage became more inclusive in the early 2000's, but not all communities and school districts followed suit. This should be the basic right for every student in the State of Alaska!

Sincerely,

Peggy

Margaret (Peggy) Robinson

rt, Anchorage, AK 99503

**From:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#) [.com](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Cc:** [\[mailto:bertha.gardner@legis.ga.gov\]](#)  
**Subject:** SB 72 support  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 5:59:00 PM

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Hello Berta.

As members of the Social Justice Committee of Anchor Park United Methodist Church, we want you to know that we strongly back and encourage your Senate Bill 72, extending equal rights protections regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Keep up the good work!

Bob and Mary Ellen Mitchell



**From:** [Meneka Thiru](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** SB 72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 4:21:16 PM

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Dear Senator Gardner,

I am a resident of Anchorage, Alaska and I am writing you to profess my support for SB 72, which will expand current anti-discrimination statues to include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity. I think this is an incredibly important step for our state to take to protect the rights of all Alaskans. Although I am not part of the LGBTQ community, I am a strong ally and have many friends who have to deal with discrimination. I think that everyone should have the safety of being judged on their job performance and qualifications and not have to worry about losing their job for any other reason.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Meneka Thiru

**From:** [Elizabeth](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** SB 72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 4:51:21 PM

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Please support this anti-discrimination bill. It is the right thing to do.

Elizabeth Hatton  
8601 Sultana Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99516  
277 9968  
[libbyh@alaska.net](mailto:libbyh@alaska.net)

**From:** [Tonja moser](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** SB72 support  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 4:31:56 PM

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Dear Honorable Sen Gardner

I am writing to emphasize how vital SB 72 is to the safety and well being of 52 teenagers at Juneau- Douglas High School. That is how many KNOWN students we have who identify as gay, trans, bi, or gender non- conforming. Please, this isn't a right or left, democrat or republican issue, it's a human being issue and everyone deserves equal treatment and protection. I urge the committee to support SB 72.

Thank you,

Tonja Moser  
Teacher  
Parent  
LGBTQ+ ally

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [turner](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** SB72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 5:47:32 PM

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Senator Gardner;  
I support SB72.  
Steve Turner  
3  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

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This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.  
<https://www.avast.com/antivirus>

**From:** [Donald Johnson](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** SB72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 6:12:23 PM

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Dear Sen. Gardner:

Thank you for your efforts in assuring equal opportunity for all Alaskans. Although I am retired, my experiences at work over the years have been rife with experiences of discrimination, sometimes subtle, often not. On one job I had in the 1970s, I was asked if I was "queer" because my manager thought I sounded "queer as Paul Lynde". This exchange occurred in front of my coworkers. Human Resources verified that I sounded like Paul Lynde but did nothing else but suggest that I quit "if I couldn't take it". There was a "ladder to leadership" but there weren't very many rungs if you were identified as gay or lesbian. The only option was "don't be so obvious" or try to pass as str8. I don't want to see a return to those days.

Donald Johnson

Cooper Landing, AK 99572

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [\[REDACTED\]](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** SB72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 6:36:35 PM

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Senator Gardner and fellow Legislators,

Regarding SB72, adding "sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression" to our states' existing anti-discrimination law is needed and much overdue.

As a Christian, I find it disheartening to know that there are those who discriminate against others due to their actual or perceived sexual identity, and many of those doing the discriminating call themselves Christians. Jesus commanded us to love one another, and that means everyone.

Thank you for standing up for ALL Alaskans with the language this bill would add.

Sheri Whitethorn  
Anchorage, AK

**From:** [\[redacted\]@alaska.gov](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** Senate Bill (SB) 72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 6:13:20 PM

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Please vote yes on Senate Bill (SB) 72. Alaska needs a bill that will expand the current anti-discrimination statutes to include protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Similar provisions already prohibit discrimination based upon race, religion, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, age, sex, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy or parenthood. People should also be protected from discrimination based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Thank you,  
Sharon Lee

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Anchorage, AK 99508  
274 2520

**From:** [Deborah](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** Senate bill 72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 3:34:53 PM

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Berta,

I totally support this bill. Please do everything you can to get it approved!!!!

Thank you!!

Deborah Brown

99501



**From:** [PAM SIEGFRIED](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** Senate bill 72  
**Date:** Friday, March 31, 2017 7:48:35 AM

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To keep this short, I support this. I confess gender expression is new to me but I can't see where what a person does on their own time should matter.

Yours,  
Pam Siegfried  
Anchorage AK

**From:** [Candace Cahill](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** State Senate Bill 72  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 7:44:57 PM

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I support State Senate Bill 72! Updating the law will ensure that all people in our state are judged on their job performance and qualifications. No one should have to live in fear of being legally fired for reasons that have nothing to do with job performance.

Candace Cahill

Skagway, Alaska 99840

Callie Dietrich

Sutton, Alaska 99674

March 30, 2017

Senator Natasha von Imhof  
State of Alaska District L Senator  
1500 W. Benson Blvd.  
Anchorage AK, 99503  
Phone: 907-269-0250

Dear Senator von Imhof,

My name is Callie Dietrich, and I am a born and raised Alaskan, UAA alumni and RN at Providence Alaska Medical Center. As a nurse, I have dedicated my life to understanding the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspect of human beings. My senior capstone project last spring explored the relationship that people in the LGBTQ+ community have with their environment using the Ecological Model. We found that ensuring anti-discrimination has a positive correlation to healthier communities. For this reason, I am writing to voice my support of Senate Bill 72 and hope that you will support this bill as well.

It is well known and researched that healthy, safe environments lend to healthy people and communities. It is also well known that people in the LGBTQ+ community face high rates of discrimination related hate crimes, stigmatization, slander, and general nonacceptance in communities, and thus have high rates of suicide and depression. This is particularly concerning in conservative districts such as Alaska. As community members, the least we can do is make it policy that LGBTQ+ community members are protected from discrimination so that they may be productive, secure, and safe citizens.

SB72 seeks to include anti-discrimination protection for sexual orientation and gender identity minorities such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBTQ+) people in Alaska under the State Commission for Human Rights. As a lifelong resident of Alaska, I imagine it as a place where anyone can feel that they can get housing, stay in housing, get a job, keep a job, and feel safe against discriminatory crimes regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity as well as many of the other outlined criteria in Alaska's State Human Rights Commission including race, religion, color, sex, disability, or national origin.

I would urge those in opposition of this bill to think of LGBTQ+ anti-discrimination as a civil rights issue that has been left open to hate crimes, rejection from housing, and termination of jobs. Please support SB 72 and help facilitate safer, healthier communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



Callie Dietrich

**From:** [Maxine](#)  
**To:** [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** support SB 72  
**Date:** Friday, March 31, 2017 8:23:50 AM

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Maxine Doogan

**From:** [Tasha Elizarde](#)  
**To:** [Sen. David Wilson](#); [Sen. Natasha Von Imhof](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Sen. Peter Micciche](#); [Sen. Tom Begich](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Sam Kito](#); [Sen. Dennis Egan](#); [Sen. Berta Gardner](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony in Support of SB72, Tasha Elizarde (Juneau)  
**Date:** Thursday, March 30, 2017 11:51:40 PM

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Hello,

My name is Tasha Elizarde and I am an 18-year-old high school senior from Juneau, Alaska. My House District is 33 (Rep. Kito) and my Senate District is Q (Sen. Egan).

I greatly support SB72 and I appreciate Sen. Gardner for taking initiative and advancing human rights issues in Alaska. Thankfully, earlier this year the City and Borough of Juneau passed an ordinance prohibiting sexual orientation and gender identity and expression-based discrimination. Although I am not personally affected by discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, I have friends who do identify differently and, although Juneau is a very welcoming community, are sometimes discriminated against. One of my friend was bullied constantly by another student simply because he is a transman. Other students would even go out of their way to call him by the wrong name, creating a bad atmosphere for his learning. Nowadays, he is much more accepted in the school and there have been fewer harsh incidents based on his gender. However, the reason for the fewer bad incidents was due to a change in society - a shift that now finds this sort of discrimination as intolerable.

Yet, there are still people out there who still believe it is alright to discriminate people against their own existence. No Alaskan should have to bear such harsh bullying and in worse cases, systemic denial of jobs or property, simply because of who they are. It's time Alaska publically acknowledge its acceptance of every Alaskan living in our state by updating the Non-Discrimination Act to include sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

I am happy to see SB72 up in the Legislature and hope to see it sail through the Senate, House and Governor's desk as soon as possible.

Thank you for listening to my testimony,

Tasha Elizarde  
House District 33  
Senate District Q



March 31, 2017

Honorable Senator David Wilson, Chairperson  
Senate Health & Social Services Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capital  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Support for Senate Bill 72 – Prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Dear Chairperson Wilson and Committee Members,

Alaskans Together for Equality (ATE) fully supports making all Alaskans equal and protected from discrimination through passing Senate Bill (SB) 72: “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 SB72 is imperative to securing the rights and opportunities of all Alaskans and provides the tools to pursue these opportunities. SB72 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 2013<sup>1</sup>, 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 SB72. With this bill's passage, the Alaska legislature ensures the right for individual Alaskans to work, innovate, and contribute to our state. SB72 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 Senate 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 ATE Board and our members,



Elias Rojas  
Board President  
Alaskan Together for Equality

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.jec.senate.gov/public/\\_cache/files/42dc59a0-6071-46d0-8ff2-9bd7a6b0077f/enda---final-11.5.13.pdf](http://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/42dc59a0-6071-46d0-8ff2-9bd7a6b0077f/enda---final-11.5.13.pdf)



March 31, 2017

Senate Health and Social Services Committee  
State Capitol Room 205  
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Chairperson Wilson 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 Senate Bill (SB) 72, 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. 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 SB 72 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 SB 72.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Warbelow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Warbelow



Dear Senator Gardner,

Thank you for sponsoring SB72, which seeks to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. Your commitment to this important issue is appreciated. **I would like to take this opportunity to express Identity Inc.'s support for SB72.**

Identity Inc. is a statewide LGBTQ organization that works to advance the lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Alaskans. We envision a world where all Alaskans can be their authentic self and still feel safe, supported and welcomed in their community. Alaska is an expansive state—much of which is lacking resources and support for LGBTQ people—and as a result, many in our community face isolation and fear for their safety.

It is Identity Inc.'s hope that this legislature will take action to create a more inclusive and welcoming Alaska for the following reasons:

- Equality is good for business. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of Fortune 500 companies prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and nearly 6 in 10 prohibit discrimination based on gender identity. Changing our laws to reflect our values will help Alaska attract and retain the best and the brightest in the workforce.
- All hardworking people—including those who are gay or transgender—should be treated fairly and equally by the laws of our state. All Alaskans should have the opportunity to earn a living to provide for themselves and their families.
- Updating the law will ensure that all people in our state are judged on their job performance and qualifications. Nothing more, nothing less. No one should have to live in fear of being legally fired for reasons that have nothing to do with job performance.
- There is broad-based support, including from within the business community, for creating a more inclusive Alaska. Locally in Anchorage, Identity Inc. is partnering with Pride Foundation, the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce and the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation to recognize local businesses that have policies and practices supporting LGBT inclusion. Watch the video here: <https://vimeo.com/117326439>.

Again and again, people are surprised to learn that discrimination against gay and transgender people is still legal in Alaska. Unfortunately, there are people who will only treat others fairly if the law requires it, and so we need these protections for those times when good judgment breaks down. We can all agree that people deserve to be treated fairly, and that it's not for any of us to judge. We strongly urge you to pass SB72.

Together, we can protect all Alaska families and ensure that we stand on the right side of history.

Sincerely,

William Farrell, Executive Director  
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## Municipality of Anchorage

March 31, 2017

The Honorable David Wilson  
Alaska State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 115  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Wilson:

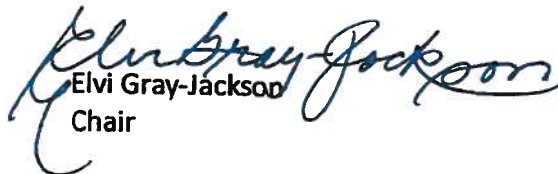
I am thankful that Senator Gardner introduced SB72 which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression because I have always advocated for and believed that everyone deserves equal rights. After many, many years attempting to provide this right to our LGBTQ citizens 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