



Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii

Representative Andy Josephson
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: House Bill 82 (Discrimination: Gender Identity; Sexual Orientation)

March 29th, 2019

Dear Representative Josephson,

On behalf of Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii, I write today to thank you for sponsoring House Bill 82. 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, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) individuals.

It became crystal clear during the recent [non-discrimination fight](#) in Fairbanks that our LGBTQ friends and family badly need the protection of the law. We sat through hours of hurtful testimony as a few loud opponents tried to convince Fairbanks city council that queer and transgender individuals deserve to be discriminated against simply because of their gender or who they love.

As a health care provider and employer, Planned Parenthood knows that this legislation is good for public health and safety, and good for business. Because of discrimination, and fear of discrimination, many LGBTQ employees hide their identities, are paid less, and have fewer employment opportunities than their non-LGBTQ counterparts. This prejudice puts LGBTQ people at increased risk for poor physical and mental health. Businesses that support anti-discrimination measures for LGBTQ 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 should not be fired because of who they are or who they love.

Furthermore, access to stable and secure housing is also essential for successful and healthy families, but LGBTQ 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.

Each of us should be free to build loving adult relationships and to create families without discrimination based on our personal, private lives. Until we pass statewide non-discrimination protections, every day Alaskans will continue to live in fear of being fired, denied housing, public service or educational opportunities just because they are gay or transgender.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to supporting your continued efforts in the fight for equality for LGBTQ Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Alyson Currey
Legislative Liaison

Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest & Hawaii