

May 13, 2021

Dear Senator:

As organizations dedicated to ensuring physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all Americans, we write to voice our support for the *Equality Act* and urge the Senate to pass this critical legislation that will provide affirmative, statutory nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ Americans both in the workplace and in the community.

There is no basis for the denial of equal rights to any human being because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or transgender status. The patchwork nature of current laws protecting LGBTQ people leaves many Americans subject to uncertainty and potential discrimination that impacts their safety, their medical care, and their day-to-day lives. LGBTQ people need the explicit, permanent protections under our nation's existing civil rights laws that the Equality Act would provide with regards to access to care, housing, education, federally funded programs and more. Such protections will help to protect LGBTQ people from discrimination that threatens their health and well-being.

Despite some advances in public awareness and legal protections, those who identify as LGBTQ continue to face disparities, including from inequitable laws and policies, societal discrimination, and a lack of access to quality health care, including mental health care. All Americans deserve access to quality evidence-based health care regardless of gender or sexual orientation, yet a substantial body of research indicates that LGBTQ populations across the United States encounter significant barriers to health care.<sup>i</sup> Many LGBTQ people have difficulty finding providers who are knowledgeable about their needs, encounter discrimination from insurers or providers, or delay or forego care because of concerns about how they will be treated. The Equality Act is needed to help achieve the goal of health equity for all Americans.

Medical care for transgender youth is evidence-based and has proven effectiveness. Guidelines for appropriate treatment have been carefully developed and endorsed by American Academy of Pediatrics<sup>ii</sup>, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists<sup>iii</sup>, the Endocrine Society and Pediatric Endocrine Society<sup>iv</sup>, the American College of Physicians<sup>v</sup>, World Professional Association for Transgender Health<sup>vi</sup>, and the American Psychological Association.<sup>vii</sup> The international consensus among health care professionals regarding treatment for gender dysphoria is to assist the patient to live in accordance their gender identity. In a gender-affirmative care model, providers offer developmentally appropriate care that is oriented toward understanding and appreciating a person's gender experience. Treatment may include counseling, social transition, hormone therapy and/or gender confirming surgeries. Before puberty, there is no medical or surgical treatment that is used at all; guidelines emphasize supporting children as they express themselves.

Improving access to gender-affirming care is an important means of improving health outcomes for the transgender population. The treatment for gender dysphoria is highly effective in reducing or eliminating the incongruence and associated distress between a person's gender identity and assigned sex at birth. Receipt of gender-affirming care has been linked to dramatically reduced rates of suicide attempts, decreased rates of depression and anxiety, decreased substance use, improved HIV medication adherence, and reduced rates of harmful self-prescribed hormone use.<sup>viii</sup>

The protections of the *Equality Act* would help to ensure that all Americans, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or transgender status are protected from discrimination that threatens their health and well-being. We urge you to take up and pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations**

ACA Consumer Advocacy  
Academic Pediatric Association  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association of Clinical Endocrinology  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Physicians  
American Geriatrics Society  
American Medical Association  
American Medical Student Association  
American Pediatric Society  
American Physical Therapy Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society of Nephrology  
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs  
Center for Parental Leave Leadership  
Children's Defense Fund  
Coalition of Labor Union Women  
Common Threads  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
Endocrine Society  
Families USA  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Futures Without Violence  
Health Resources in Action  
HIV Medicine Association  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
MomsRising  
NASTAD  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Consumers League  
National Crittenton  
National Employment Law Project  
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association

National League for Nursing  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Patient Advocate Foundation  
Pediatric Endocrine Society  
Pediatric Policy Council  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)  
Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine  
Society for Pediatric Research  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
Trust for America's Health  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Young Invincibles

**State Organizations**

PFlag of Jacksonville  
South Dakota Chapter of AAP  
AAP Colorado  
American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Alaska Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, CA Chapter 3  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter 2  
American Academy of Pediatrics, DC Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Utah Chapter  
Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
California Academy of Family Physicians  
California Chapter 1, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Colorado Academy of Family Physicians  
Consumers for Affordable Health Care  
Every Texan  
Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Florida Health Justice Project  
Georgia Academy of Family Physicians  
Georgia Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics  
Georgians for a Healthy Future  
Health Care For All  
Illinois Academy of Family Physicians  
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Immunize Nevada  
Iowa Academy of Family Physicians  
Iowa Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Kentucky Chapter of the AAP

Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Michigan Academy of Family Physicians  
Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Missouri Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
NC Pediatric Society  
Nebraska Chapter AAP  
New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
New Mexico Pediatric Society  
NYS American Academy of Pediatrics, Chapters 1, 2 & 3  
Office of the Health Care Advocate, Vermont Legal Aid  
Ohio Academy of Family Physicians  
Oklahoma Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics  
Public Justice Center  
Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
SC Chapter of the AAP  
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center  
TakeAction Minnesota  
Tennessee Health Care Campaign  
Tennessee Justice Center  
Texas Parent to Parent  
Texas Pediatric Society, the Texas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Voices for Utah Children  
Washington Academy of Family Physicians  
Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
West Virginians for Affordable Health Care  
Wisconsin Academy of Family Physicians  
Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Women Employed

### **Healthcare Facilities and Systems**

Advocate Aurora Health  
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago  
Atlantic Health System  
Baptist Health of Northeast Florida  
BJC HealthCare  
Callen-Lorde Community Health Center  
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
Children's Hospital Colorado  
CrescentCare  
DAP Health  
Desert AIDS Project d/b/a DAP Health  
Family Tree Clinic

Hospital Damas. Inc  
Inova Health System  
JASMYN  
John Muir Health  
Managed Access to Child Health, dba, Partnership for Child Health  
Mel Leaman Free Clinic  
Nemours Children's Health System  
NYC Health + Hospitals  
Ochsner LSU Health  
Oregon Health & Science University  
Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness  
Saint Francis Memorial Hospital  
Sequoia Hospital  
Stanford Health Care  
UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh  
Wolfson Children's Hospital

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/07/23/you-dont-want-second-best/anti-lgbt-discrimination-us-health-care>

<sup>ii</sup> Rafferty J. Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents. Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, Committee on Adolescence and Section on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Health and Wellness. *Pediatrics*. Oct 2018, 142 (4) e20182162; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-2162>

<sup>iii</sup> Health care for transgender and gender diverse individuals. ACOG Committee Opinion No. 823. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Obstet Gynecol* 2021;137:e75–88.

<sup>iv</sup> Hembree W, [Cohen-Kettenis P](#), Gooren L, [Hannema S](#), Meyer W, Murad M, Rosenthal S, Safer J, [Tangpricha V](#), T'Sjoen T. Endocrine Treatment of Gender-Dysphoric/Gender-Incongruent Persons: An Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guideline. *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, Volume 102, Issue 11, 1 November 2017, Pages 3869–3903, <https://doi.org/10.1210/jc.2017-01658>

<sup>v</sup> Safer J, Tangpricha V. [Care of the Transgender Patient](#). *Annals of Internal Medicine*. July 2, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.7326/AITC201907020>

<sup>vi</sup> Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People. The World Professional Association for Transgender Health. 2011. <https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc>. Accessed January 9 2021.

<sup>vii</sup> Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People. American Psychological Association. *American Psychologist*, December 2015. Vol. 70, No. 9, 832–864 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0039906>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/population-care/advocating-lgbtq-community>