

Duckworth, Durbin help to re-introduce Equality Act to protect LGBTQ Americans

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) today joined Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Cory Booker (D-NJ), along with 41 other Senators, to re-introduce comprehensive federal legislation to ban discrimination against LGBTQ Americans. The legislation was filed simultaneously in the U.S. House of Representatives by 194 Representatives, led by Rep. David Cicilline (D-RI).

“It is absolutely unacceptable that someone can be fired from their job, evicted from their home and experience discrimination because of who they love,” said

Senator Duckworth. **“It is time for the entire country to join the State of Illinois in finally enshrining critical civil rights protections for LGBT Americans in federal law.”**

Despite major advances in equality for LGBT Americans, including nationwide marriage equality, the majority of states still do not have explicit LGBT non-discrimination protection laws. The Equality Act of 2017 would ensure full federal non-discrimination equality by adding sexual orientation and gender identity to other protected classes, such as race or religion, in existing federal laws.

The bill would explicitly ban discrimination in a host of areas, including employment, housing, public accommodations, jury service, access to credit, and federal funding. It would also add protections against sex discrimination in parts of anti-discrimination laws where these protections had not been included previously, including in public accommodations and federal funding.

“For far too long, the door of discrimination has been slammed shut on LGBTQ Americans. It’s been slammed shut on equality, it’s been slammed shut on opportunity, and this must end,” said Senator Merkley. **“It’s time to have the Equality Act on the floor of the House and the floor of the Senate for a full debate.”**

In addition to Duckworth, Durbin, Merkley, Baldwin and Booker, the legislation is cosponsored in the Senate by Sens. Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Patty Murray (D-WA), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Tom Carper (D-DE), Bob Casey (D-PA), Chris Coons (D-DE), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Al Franken (D-MN), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Angus King (I-ME), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Claire McCaskill (D-MO), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Bill Nelson (D-FL), Gary Peters (D-MI), Jack Reed (D-RI), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Jon Tester (D-MT), Tom Udall (D-NM), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Mark Warner (D-VA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

The full text of the Equality Act of 2017 is available [here](#).