

Duckworth, Durbin Help Re-Introduce Bipartisan Equality Act to Protect LGBTQ Americans from Discrimination

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- U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Susan Collins (R-ME), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Cory Booker (D-NJ) and 41 of their colleagues in re-introducing comprehensive bipartisan legislation to ban discrimination against LGBTQ Americans. The *Equality Act of 2019* amends existing federal civil rights laws to explicitly include protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. While a number of states, including Illinois, have taken steps to protect LGBTQ individuals from discrimination, the majority of states still lack explicit LGBTQ non-discrimination laws. The *Equality Act* would ensure that all LGBTQ Americans are protected from discriminatory acts like being fired, evicted, or denied services based on who they are. Companion legislation was also filed in the U.S. House of Representatives by Congressman David Cicilline (RI-01), joined by 239 Representatives.

"It is absolutely unacceptable that someone can be fired from their job, evicted from their home and experience discrimination just because of who they are or who they love," said Duckworth. **"It is time for the entire country to join the State of Illinois in finally enshrining critical civil rights protections for LGBTQ Americans in federal law."**

"No American should ever be treated as less than equal under the law, period," Durbin said. **"It is unacceptable that in a majority of States, LGBTQ individuals are still at risk of being discriminated against because of who they love and who they are. I'm proud to join my colleagues to reintroduce the Equality Act to ensure that LGBTQ Americans are protected under our nation's civil rights laws."**

Duckworth and Durbin have [co-sponsored legislation](#) to ensure LGBTQ Americans are properly counted for and represented in Census data collection efforts, as well as a bill

to protect currently serving transgender servicemembers and continue to allow new transgender servicemembers to join the military. They also joined U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and their colleagues in [sending a bipartisan letter](#) to then U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis opposing Trump's discriminatory ban on transgender servicemembers.

Last April, Duckworth wrote a [letter](#) urging the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Aza to ensure key data is collected so that LGBTQ Americans can access federal programs best suited for their needs.

In addition to Duckworth, Durbin, Merkley, Collins, 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), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), 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), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Chris Murphy (D-CT), 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).