



Attorney General Raoul Condemns New Federal Attack On Lgbtq Individuals

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Chicago – Attorney General Kwame Raoul today as part of a coalition of 19 attorneys general filed [a comment letter](#) opposing the federal government’s latest effort to undermine the health care rights of LGBTQ individuals and families. Under a new federal proposal, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) would eliminate explicit anti-discrimination language used in regulations governing federal grants that guarantee equal access to programs administered across the country. The proposal would apply to a broad range of HHS grant programs, including maternal and child health grants, federally-assisted health training programs, Head Start programs, and mental health and substance abuse grants.

“Our federal tax dollars should not be funneled towards organizations that openly discriminate against certain groups,” Raoul said. “I am committed to ensuring that all Americans are protected against discrimination and have an equal opportunity to apply for and take advantage of programs funded through federal grants.”

Under the proposed rule, HHS would eliminate explicit protections for age, disability, sex, race, color, national origin, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation and replace them with a generic prohibition based on the federal statute. In the comment letter, Raoul and the coalition note that this HHS proposal is arbitrary and capricious and that the agency failed to provide an adequate explanation for the proposed rule.

Raoul and the coalition also argue the proposed rule would create unnecessary barriers that could impede qualified LGBTQ families from caring for any of the hundreds of thousands of children across the country that are in the foster care system. There are an estimated 27,000 same-sex couples raising 58,000 children through adoption and foster care across the United States. By allowing the denial of federally funded services to LGBTQ families, HHS will deprive prospective LGBTQ foster and adoptive parents of the opportunity to provide a loving home to children in need.

Additionally, ensuring nondiscrimination in the provision of care and services to LGBTQ foster youth who are greatly overrepresented in the foster care system is vitally important. In 2015, almost 20 percent of youth in foster care identified as LGBTQ as compared to an estimated 8.3 percent in the general population. Leading medical experts and organizations, such as the American Psychological Association, have recognized that discrimination can have significant health consequences, including mental health.

Joining Raoul in submitting the comment letter are the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.