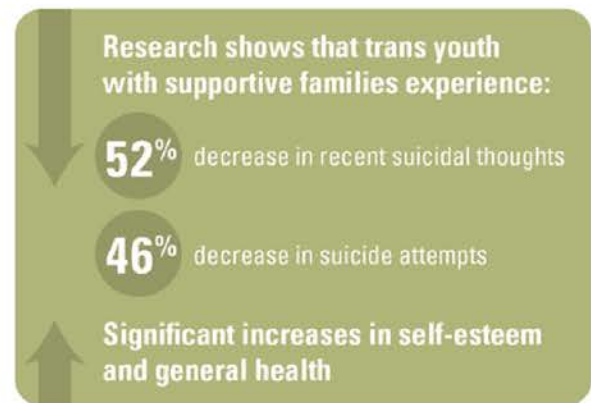


Fall 2022 LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

The Equality Act: H.R. 5, Rep. Cicilline (D-RI) and S. 393, Sen. Merkley (D-OR)

ASK: SOPHE Urges Congress to Swiftly Pass the Equality Act!

The **Society for Public Health Education** (SOPHE) recognizes that the health and wellbeing of communities and the individuals within them is dependent not only on biological, but on social and environmental factors. Underrepresented communities, including sexual and gender diverse minorities, have been historically silenced, ignored, and disenfranchised with regard to economic opportunity, justice, safety, health care access and service delivery, housing, employment, and education.



Source: Ryan et al. 2010. "Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young Adults." *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing* 23(4): 205-213.

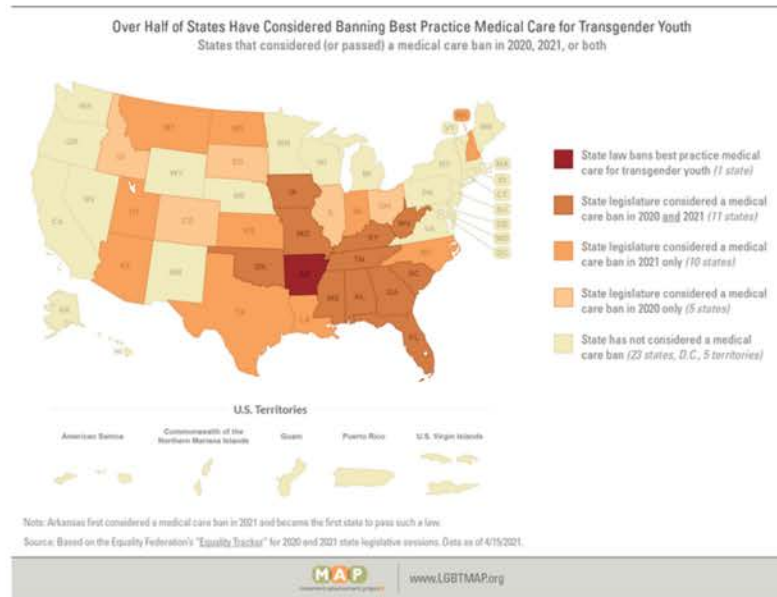


www.LGBTMAP.org

The Problem:

Despite progress, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people are faced with discrimination and uncertainty on a daily basis. While several states have taken steps towards enacting laws to protect LGBTQ+ people, more must be done at the federal level. Federal law does not explicitly provide non-discrimination protections based on sexual orientation or gender identity. As the bill states, "LGBTQ+ people commonly experience discrimination in securing access to public accommodations—including restaurants, senior centers, stores, establishments that provide entertainment, health care facilities, shelters, government offices, youth service providers including adoption and foster care providers, and transportation." These discriminatory practices must end immediately.

Fall 2022 LEGISLATIVE BRIEF



The Solution: The Equality Act

The Equality Act would provide consistent and explicit non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people across key areas of life, including employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs, and jury service. The Equality Act would amend existing laws—including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Housing Act, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Jury Selection and Services Act, and several laws regarding employment with the federal government—to explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected characteristics.

The legislation amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit discrimination in public spaces and services and federally funded programs on the basis of sex. The legislation would amend the landmark federal anti-discrimination laws to explicitly add sexual orientation and gender identity to longstanding bans on discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, jury service, access to credit, federal funding, and more. It would also add protections against sex discrimination in parts of anti-discrimination laws where these protections had not been included previously, such as public accommodations and federal funding.

Congressional Support: The House version of the bill, H.R. 5, has 224 cosponsors & the Senate bill, S. 393, has 48 cosponsors.

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