

Please vote in favor of this bill. It is the right and moral thing to do to ensure equality for all our citizens!
Thank you

Karen Hilyard

To Members of the House State Affairs Committee,

I urge your support for HB 184, which will add sexual orientation and gender identity to statewide non-discrimination policies. I am a retired school counselor who, over the years, has worked with many LGBTQ youth. For far too long, LGBTQ youth (and adults!) have been disparaged by many members of society—including leaders (even legislative “leaders”)—which has resulted in increased risk for a variety of physical and other health issues. I have seen LGBTQ students struggle to “come out” to their parents and I knew at least one who committed suicide. While I am encouraged by the progress and acceptance shown by many in society regarding this issue, I continue to be discouraged that Alaska lags much of the rest of the world in formally banning non-discrimination in this area. This “sin of omission” continues to have negative consequences on many citizens of our state. Please support HB 184!

Jeff Walters
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Feb 27, 2018

Dear Alaska House State Affairs Committee; Chair, Rep Kreiss-Tomkins and Vice Chair, Rep LeDoux; Representatives Tuck, Wool, Birch, Johnson, Knopp, Josephson, and Kopp:

There is an ongoing urgent need to protect us LGBTQ Alaskans through HB 184. Especially transgender Alaskans – they are very vulnerable to violence and vilification. Last year, 33 of us LGBTQ from all over the state testified for SB 74, Senator Gardner’s protection bill. 33 of us shared stories of discrimination. In summer of 2016, 29 LGBTQ Juneau people told the CBJ Assembly about losing jobs and apartments, being kicked out of public accommodations, being turned down for financial services. Many people talked through tears sharing their stories. And now, all of us testifiers have experienced a dangerous increase in anti-LGBTQ rhetoric.

This is a perfect time to move this bill forward. Please vote today to showcase equality in Alaska.

My LGBTQ community has been historically marginalized and vilified, and our quest for human rights flows in the long river of American civil rights, as Rep Josephson wrote in his introduction to this bill. Let’s follow Senator Murkowski’s guidance from 2 days ago: “Find the good.” Elizabeth Peratrovich and her husband Roy helped our state seek the good with their lifetime equality work. This bill is a no cost common sense way to encourage respect and fair play.

My wife, a family physician, Dr. Mo Longworth, reminds me that the Alaskan Academy of Family Physicians has always strongly spoken out for statewide LGBTQ protections. Research from the National Academy of Family Physicians shows improved health outcomes for individuals and communities when LGBTQ protections are in place. And studies show there is less violence toward women when LGBTQ people are respected.

Fairness in housing, employment, public accommodations and financial services is basic to surviving in Alaska.

We need all hands on deck. Alaska has lots of infrastructure and engineering problems to solve. We need confident skilled workers. No one wants anyone, especially young LGBTQ, to receive employment hostility.

For 15 years I worked at the Juneau Job Center. I regularly heard client stories of LGBTQ employment discrimination. Many of us at the Department of Labor worried about losing good workers to welcoming states like Washington, Oregon and California.

My most recent and troubling knowledge of discrimination comes from meeting with transgender high school students. They are under siege for being who they are. Their families and friends worry constantly about their safety. Alaska can send a national message of inclusion and respect by passing HB 184.

Thank you for hearing our concerns.

Lin Davis

3099 Nowell Ave

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Good Morning!

I am contacting the House State Affairs Committee in support of House Bill 184: Non-Discrimination Statue to Promote Fairness. Extending the protections already recognized by the State and Federal government to include sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression is a change that needs to occur and has long been lacking. Members of the LGBT community are citizens of the US, and should not be treated any differently than any other citizen in their employment, housing, public accommodation and financing opportunities. And yet, there is still the pervasive attitude that members of the LGBT community can be treated as second class citizens, primarily on aspects of religion or discomfort with their lifestyle. This isn't allowable legally, against any other group. For example, it is blatantly illegal if housing is denied to a couple based on the situation that they aren't married, even (and especially) if the opposition to their lifestyle is based on religious conviction. How is that different than the same situation, where instead of a an unmarried couple, it is a married LGBT couple? I implore that the representatives here move HB 184 forward, to apply anti discrimination rights consistently to all US citizens. Thank you very much for your time and efforts. If you have any comments, concerns, or questions for me, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michael J Szidloski, II

Constituent in Fairbanks, Alaska

TO: House State Affairs Committee

RE: Anti-Discrimination Bill HB 184

I am sorry that I am not able to be present in person but I can make the time to express my thoughts on HB 184, the Anti-Discrimination Bill.

We, in Juneau, are not equal until there is equity for marginalized groups and freedom from oppressive systems. The difference between equity and equality is critical. The assumption that we are born equal is false, it's a myth. We are born in to systems of power and privilege, and oppression; in this case a cisheteronormative patriarchal (and colonial) system. Equality states that everyone should be afforded the same rights and protections regardless of need. Equity states that everyone is different and some need more protections and assistance in different areas than others. This holds true for policy. I believe it is incredibly important to include the language and to make more than clear that the LGBTQ communities are respected, held with dignity, that their well-being is of utmost importance, and that their contribution to our community is an honor and is recognized.

Just yesterday I read the comments on the bottom of the article about AWARE's Racial Equity and Liberation program. The critique of language and terms illustrates just how important the use of terms can be to empower or disempower people (see [article](#) and comments). Unless language of equity is institutionalized, people will use it against each other, as we can see in the comments of the Juneau Empire article. When our leaders honor these terms and these groups it sets an example and precedence for community members. The consequences of this hate is the livelihood of members of our communities. Or their lives.

We, in Juneau, will not live in a non-violent community until everyone is free from violence. Patriarchy is not just an oppressive system for women, it is also oppressive for members of the LGTBQ communities or anyone who challenges what is considered normal, good, and masculine. Patriarchy, not only hurts women and the LGBTQ communities it hurts cishetero men. In our community we are seeing high rates of substance abuse, male-on-male violence, and other health issues in particular mental and behavioral health. I believe that in breaking down systems that assume equality and that are based on patriarchal and colonial beliefs we will be able to heal and will all be stronger and healthier for it. What we have to lose is the well-being, prosperity, and gifts that each individual member has to offer our community. What we will gain when we are more inclusive is greater creativity, greater connection, less acts of violence, more acts of kindness, and a community grounded on the values of human rights and love of individuals and all that the demonstration of the practice of choosing love has to offer.

I apologize for the poor writing in this email but I wanted to make sure that voice in support of HB 184 is heard.

Thank you for taking time to read this email.

Kind regards,

--

Britta Elizabeth Tonnessen

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What did the tree learn from the earth to be able to talk with the sky?

--Pablo Neruda

My name is Phyllis Rhodes; I have been a resident of Anchorage, Alaska for over 50 years.

For the last 15 years I have been a volunteer at the Gay & Lesbian Community Center in Anchorage and I have volunteered as one of the individuals answering the “hotline” for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues.

I have provided a kind and nonjudgmental ear and have been “rewarded” with personal stories—I want to share with you a sampling of those stories highlighting the importance of moving SB 184 forward.

16 year old Josh from Seward—I talked with him and he asked me to talk with his mom. Josh’s best friend had just committed suicide.

John from Nome who told me that just before he called he had a gun in his mouth

The Anchorage father who tells me how fearful he is at every early morning ring of the phone—that is will be about his gay son who has previously attempted suicide.

The young woman frantic because she had just lost her job—she had worked in a doctor’s office for 5 years, but a co-worker “outed” her and she had been fired on the spot.

The mother and father concerned about their pre-schooler who was transgender and how would he cope in public school.

I ask you to do the right thing by voting to move SB 184 through committee.

Thank you. Phyllis Rhodes (80 years old)

Phyllis Rhodes, Anchorage, Alaska.

Why vote to move SG184 along?

The many LGBT young people who have shared with me the scars on their hearts and their arms from cutting and attempted suicide.

Please do the right thing on this legislation and pass it through committee!

Phyllis Rhodes

I am writing in support of HB 184. I witnessed dozens of my fellow Anchorage residents stating during testimony on Municipality of Anchorage Assembly Ordinance AO-2009-64 that they would discriminate against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Alaskans in employment, housing, banking, and any other matters when presented with any transaction dealing with LGBTQ Alaskans. Many of the people who testified said they felt obligated to discriminate by denying services to LGBTQ Alaskans out of a belief that LGBTQ Alaskans are morally deviant. Dozens more of those who testified stated that they were residents of Wasilla and Palmer. This experience led me to believe that protections that were afforded to Anchorage residents when a subsequent version of AO-2009-64 passed in 2015 were necessary on a statewide level to protect LGBTQ Alaskans living in the Valley and throughout Alaska. My experience with AO-64 led me to see that HB 184 is needed especially to protect the employment of LGBTQ Alaskan who are teachers, day care providers, health care providers and others who are professional care providers.

Rebecca Shaffer

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Anchorage AK 99503

Public Testimony speaking to HB184 submitted to the Sitka LIO by Libby Stortz:

HB 184 Regarding sexual diversity and discrimination: I support this bill. All members of our Alaskan community deserve to be protected from discrimination. Our Commission on Human Rights needs all the tools necessary to provide protection.