

SCPD Issues & Education Committee Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)

No federal protection exists to prevent employees from losing their employment simply as a result of their sexual orientation, or perceived sexual orientation. There are 17 states (plus the District of Columbia) that ban discrimination based on sexual orientation, but the other 33 states (including Ohio) have no such protections. Teachers and others who work with children are particularly vulnerable to losing their employment because of ignorance and unfair stereotypes, and with no legal protections, their fear of being open and honest about their lives is justified.

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) would provide basic protections against workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

- ENDA does not create any "special rights." It simply affords to all Americans basic employment protection from discrimination based on irrational prejudice.
- ENDA explicitly prohibits preferential treatment and quotas.
- ENDA exempts small businesses, religious organizations and the military
- ENDA does not require benefits to the same-sex partners of employees.

According to a 2001 Gallup study, 85 percent of Americans support equal opportunity for gay people in the workplace.

Corporate America opposes discrimination.

- Not only have hundreds of companies enacted policies similar to ENDA, but dozens of companies, from Microsoft to Nike to Quaker Oats, have endorsed ENDA.
- As of December 31, 2005, 86 percent of the Fortune 500 companies have implemented non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation.
- This implementation has occurred because those companies believed non-discrimination makes good sense, creates a healthy and productive work environment, and attracts the best and the brightest employees.

Passing ENDA will allow all workers to concentrate on their work instead of worrying nonproductively about others' perceptions of their lives. It will protect teachers and others from discriminatory hiring and firing practices, based on something as immutable as sexual orientation.

Respectfully submitted,
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