

June 11, 2009

Dear Ohio General Assembly:

NASW, OH Chapter strongly supports the Equal Housing and Employment Act. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) works towards expanding directives that protect the social and economic rights of all people, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

Social workers have long supported the expansion of civil rights for all people, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. An ethical responsibility of social work as a profession is to pursue social change efforts focused on social injustices, such as discrimination. Discrimination, treating one person unfairly over another according to factors unrelated to their ability or potential, has an enormous and pernicious impact on the individual as well as the community.

Is it not the right of all Ohioans to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities?

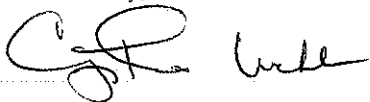
I urge lawmakers to support the Equal Housing and Employment Act (EHEA) to prevent discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations based on an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity.

This legislation is important because:

- Ohioans should not have to live in fear of losing their housing or employment
- 21 other states already ban discrimination based on sexual orientation
- Sixteen of Ohio's cities already have measures banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity, but this only protects 20 percent of all Ohioans
- 433 of the top Fortune 500 companies and the Ohio House of Representatives already have similar policies banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identify
- Governor Strickland supports the passing of this legislation and intends on signing this bill into law when it reaches his desk
- It is about equality for all Ohioans

The passage of the Equal Housing and Employment Act will affirm the commitment of Ohio's State Leadership to the protection of citizen rights and equal opportunities.

Sincerely,



Cynthia M. Webb, LISW-S
Executive Director

