Discrimination against LGBTQ+ Americans must end, doctors say

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Kevin B. O'Reilly
News Editor

What’s the news: The AMA has joined dozens of other organizations representing industries employing tens of millions of Americans to support H.R. 5, the Equality Act, which amends several provisions of the 1964 Civil Rights Act “to provide affirmative, statutory nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ Americans both in the workplace and in the community.”

The House of Representatives passed the bill last week by a vote of 224–206, and it now moves to the Senate for consideration. The measure will need 60 votes in that chamber to overcome a potential filibuster.

“Equality of opportunity is a key pillar of our great democracy—one that allows all people to pursue their American Dream—and part of what makes our nation exceptional,” says the letter to House leaders from the AMA, the National Association of Manufacturers and other organizations ranging from the Aerospace Industries Association to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Why it’s important: The Equality Act’s “protections remain vitally important even after the Supreme Court’s decision in Bostock v. Clayton County,” says the letter. “Only legislative action can forestall endless litigation, alleviate the untenable patchwork of state laws governing this form of discrimination, and make clear that discrimination because of sexual orientation or gender identity is unwelcome and unlawful in our society.”

In the Bostock case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 6–3 that the protections against sex discrimination in the workplace contained in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act apply to employees in the LGBTQ+ community.
This was the result sought by the AMA Litigation Center, American College of Physicians, Medical Association of Georgia, Michigan State Medical Society and other medical, mental health and health care organizations in a joint amicus brief in the Supreme Court filed in 2019.

Find out more about President Joe Biden’s strong early signs on LGBTQ+ inclusion and health.

**Learn more:** The AMA Foundation recently launched its National LGBTQ+ Fellowship Program with a call for letters of intent from eligible U.S. medical schools and teaching institutions that are interested in developing a fellowship in LGBTQ+ health. It’s the first step in determining which institution will receive a grant of up to $750,000 to plan and implement three consecutive, one-year medical fellowships in LGBTQ+ health.

Here’s a primer from the AMA on understanding LGBTQ+ health issues. Also, find out about the work of the AMA Advisory Committee on LGBTQ Issues.