Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2014

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you to fulfill the promise in your State of the Union address to make this a "year of action" and build upon the momentum of 2013 by signing an executive order banning federal contractors from engaging in employment discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans. As you have said before, "now is the time to end this kind of discrimination, not enable it."

As we continue to work towards final passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) with strong bipartisan support, we urge you to take action now to protect millions of workers across the country from the threat of discrimination simply because of who they are or who they love. We are committed to doing all that we can in Congress to get ENDA to your desk this year; however, there is no reason you cannot immediately act by taking this important step. This executive order would provide LGBT people with another avenue in the federal government they could turn to if they were the victim of employment discrimination by a federal contractor. When combined with ENDA, these non-discrimination protections would parallel those that have been in place for decades on the basis of race, sex and religion.

An executive order covering LGBT employees would be in line with a bipartisan, decades-long commitment to eradicating taxpayer-funded discrimination in the workplace. In 1941, President Roosevelt prohibited discrimination in defense contracts on the bases of race, creed, color, or national origin. In subsequent executive orders, Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson expanded these protections to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not used to discriminate.

In addition, most of the largest government contractors – companies like Boeing, Raytheon, and Lockheed Martin – have LGBT non-discrimination policies in place. They adopted them because business leaders recognize that discrimination is bad for the bottom line.

Finally, time is of the essence. Even with an executive order in place, full implementation of these protections will require regulations to be developed and finalized, a process that will take many months, if not longer, to fully put in place.

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Issuing an executive order prohibiting discrimination against LGBT workers in federal contracts would build on the significant progress for LGBT rights made during your time as President and would further your legacy as a champion for LGBT equality. We urge you to act now to prevent irrational, taxpayer-funded workplace discrimination against LGBT Americans.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Jared Polis
Member of Congress

Tom Harkin
United States Senator

Mike Michaud
Member of Congress

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

Christopher Coons
United States Senator

Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Richard Durbin
United States Senator

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

Patrick Leahy
United States Senator

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Steve Israel
Member of Congress

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Carl Levin
United States Senator

Joe Garcia
Member of Congress

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Michael Honda
Member of Congress

Al Franken
United States Senator

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Adam Schiff
Member of Congress

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Matt Cartwright
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Jack Reed
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Alan Lowenthal
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Thomas R. Carper
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Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Allyson Y. Schwartz
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Mark Udall
United States Senator

Jackie Speier
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Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Christopher Murphy
United States Senator

Sam Farr
Member of Congress

Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

Barbara Mikulski
United States Senator

Hank Johnson
Member of Congress

Tim Johnson
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Jim Moran
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Charles Schumer
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Louise Slaughter
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Bill Nelson
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Mary L. Landrieu
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Amy Klobuchar
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United States Senator

Claire McCaskill
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
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Earl Blumenauer
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Mike Doyle
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
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Steven A. Horsford
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Tom Udall
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Adam Smith
Member of Congress

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Donald M. Payne, Jr.
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Tammy Duckworth
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Ami Bera
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Ed Perlmutter
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Michael E. Capuano
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Derek Kilmer
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Patrick E. Murphy
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Judy Chu
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Juan Vargas
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Gary C. Peters
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Jared Huffman
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John K. Delaney
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
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Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress

Katherine Clark
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
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John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel
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David E. Price
Member of Congress

Al Green
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Henry A. Waxman
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Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
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Jim Matheson
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Terri A. Sewell
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Robin L. Kelly
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