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July 11, 2013

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Kline:

We write to respectfully request that you hold a committee hearing as soon as possible on H.R. 1755, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), legislation that would end employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and make clear that Americans in the workplace should be judged on whether they can do the job.

We believe that the strong bipartisan vote by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) on June 10 in favor of ENDA reflects the overwhelming consensus that LGBT Americans should have the freedom to work and be full participants in our economy. The vote sends a strong message that employment decisions should be based on merit and not prejudice. The House must seize the moment and stand on the side of fairness and equality by holding a hearing that will kick start the process of moving this important legislation through this body.

As you may know, H.R. 1755 enjoys bipartisan support in the House and currently has 177 cosponsors. The legislation would prohibit employers from firing, refusing to hire, or discriminating against those employed or seeking employment, on the basis of their perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identity. Such protections are already in place prohibiting discrimination based on race, religion, gender, national origin, age, and disability. More than 85 percent of Fortune 500 companies already extend workplace protections based on sexual orientation and more than one-third on the basis of gender identity.

Chairman Kline, business leaders, advocates, and an overwhelming supermajority of Americans – nearly 75 percent – support prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. It is time for this Committee and this Congress to act in a meaningful way and ensure that LGBT individuals are not denied the right to work and earn a living because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

We look forward to working with you on this and many other issues important to our nation.

Sincerely,

GEORGE MILLER
Senior Democratic Member

JARED POLIS
Member of Congress