

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Leads urgently needed bill to protect LGBTQ+ community from discrimination

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) today joined Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Corey Booker (D-NJ) in introducing the *Equality Act* – historic, comprehensive legislation to ban discrimination against LGBTQ+ Americans, just as religious, racial, and ethnic discrimination are illegal everywhere in the United States.

“If we want to live up to our nation’s ideal of true equality, we must address the fact that we have been coming up short. It is wrong that in a majority of states, LGBTQ+ people can be denied an apartment, cut from a job, thrown out of a store, or face other forms of discrimination just because of who they are or who they love,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “And that’s why I am proud to join my colleagues in introducing the Equality Act to protect LGBTQ+ Americans against discrimination and live up to our nation’s ideals of freedom and equality.”



Video can be downloaded [here](#).

The *Equality Act* would amend the landmark federal anti-discrimination laws to explicitly add sexual orientation and gender identity to longstanding bans on discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, jury service, access to credit, federal funding, and more. It would also add protections against sex discrimination in parts of anti-discrimination laws where these protections had not been included previously, such as public accommodations and federal funding.

“Generations of Americans have marched, voted, organized, and raised their voices to move us closer toward a more perfect union with freedom, equality, and opportunity for all,” **said Senator Merkley**. “We all go to work and school, go home, and go shopping, and none of us should have to keep our families hidden or pretend to be someone we’re not to do those things. Yet in some states, Americans can still be evicted, be thrown out of a restaurant, or be denied a loan because of who they are or whom they love. To realize the vision of America as a land of freedom and equality, we must be willing to take the steps to bring that vision closer to reality, and that’s exactly what the Equality Act does.”

“The flood of legislation in state after state seeking to undermine the rights of LGBTQ+ Americans is antithetical to our nation’s fundamental ideals and only serves to foster more hate, division, and prejudice,” **said Senator Booker**. “Congress must act to ensure that no person is discriminated against based on their gender identity or who they love. That is why I am proud to join again with colleagues to reintroduce the Equality Act, landmark legislation that will guarantee that LGBTQ+ Americans are protected under federal law and move us one step closer to having a nation that truly lives up to our ideals of liberty, freedom, and justice for all.”

LGBTQ+ equality received a huge boost across the nation last year when President Biden signed Senator Baldwin’s bipartisan *Respect for Marriage Act* into law, enshrining federal protections for same-sex and interracial marriages. Further, in 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Bostock v. Clayton County* that workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity is prohibited as a form of sex discrimination under Title VII of the 1964 *Civil Rights Act*. However, this court ruling has not yet been nationally applied to other areas of potential discrimination—including housing, public accommodations, jury service, access to credit, and more.

LGBTQ+ Americans around the country are facing an uptick in discrimination and dangerous state-sponsored legislation. State legislatures have introduced [nearly 500 pieces of legislation](#) that target LGBTQ+ rights. Despite Americans’ [increasing support of LGBTQ+ rights](#) and protections, the majority of states currently do not have fully-inclusive non-discrimination laws for members of the LGBTQ+ community.

U.S. Representative Mark Takano (D-CA-39) led the introduction of the *Equality Act* in the House.

The full text of the *Equality Act* can be found [here](#) as introduced in the Senate, and [here](#) as introduced in the House.

A summary of the bill can be found [here](#).