



Support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (S.815)

July 9, 2013

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 165,000 bipartisan members and supporters of the American Association of University Women, I write you to **endorse the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (S.815) and to urge you to support the Act.** ENDA will prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. AAUW's member-adopted 2013-15 Public Policy Program affirms our commitment to "vigorous protection of and full access to civil and constitutional rights" as well as "freedom in definition of family and guarantee of civil rights in all family structures."¹

Current federal employment laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, age, and disability. ENDA will mandate that civil rights protections in the workplace – in both the public and private sectors – are extended to cover actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity. A version of this bill passed the House of Representatives during the 110th Congress. The current bill, which has 53 cosponsors, would provide workplace security and a level economic playing field for all Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Americans – the same protections which have covered other classes of persons for decades. This bill can help to create a climate where discrimination against LGBT Americans is no longer tolerated by prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Hardworking Americans should not be kept from supporting their families and making a positive contribution to the economic life of our nation because of characteristics that have no bearing whatsoever on their ability to do a job. Yet it remains legal in the majority of states to fire or refuse to hire someone simply because of his or her sexual orientation or gender identity. In 29 states, there is no state law protecting a lesbian, gay or bisexual person from being fired *just because of who they are* – and the same is true in 33 states for transgender people.² The time has long since come to end this injustice for LGBT Americans and pass ENDA.

Again, **AAUW endorses the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (S.815) and urges you to support the Act.** Cosponsorship and votes associated with this legislation may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record* for the 113th Congress. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7720, or Erin Prangle, associate director of government relations, at 202/785-7730, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Maatz
Vice President of Government Relations

¹ American Association of University Women. (June 2013). *2013-15 AAUW Public Policy Program*. Retrieved July 8, 2013, from www.aauw.org/resource/principles-and-priorities/

² Human Rights Campaign. (June 19, 2013). *Employment Non-Discrimination Act*. Retrieved July 8, 2013, from www.hrc.org/laws-and-legislation/federal-legislation/employment-non-discrimination-act