

April 29, 2015

The United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative,

The undersigned organizations write to urge you to oppose H.J. Res 43, the resolution of disapproval to block the Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act (RHNDA), which was adopted by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and may reach the House floor this week. We are also strongly opposed to H.J. Res. 44, which would block the Human Rights Amendment Act (HRAA). The RHNDA and the HRAA are local anti-discrimination bills that would guarantee basic fairness for people who work and study in D.C., and Congress should not interfere through these resolutions or any other means.

The RHNDA would protect D.C. employees from discrimination in the workplace based on their personal reproductive health care decisions. Everyone should have the ability to make private health care decisions including whether, when, and how to start a family, without fear of losing their jobs or facing retribution from their employers. Unfortunately, women across the country have faced discrimination for such personal decisions as using birth control, becoming pregnant while unmarried, and using in vitro fertilization to become pregnant.¹ The RHNDA would ensure that this doesn't happen in D.C. Contrary to claims made by opponents seeking to distract from RHNDA's real purpose, the RHNDA does not impose any new requirements on employers to cover or pay for any reproductive health service.

The HRAA would ensure that LGBT students at religiously affiliated schools and universities in D.C. have equal access to school facilities and services by repealing a discriminatory, explicitly anti-gay exemption in D.C.'s Human Rights Act imposed by Congress in 1989.² Under the HRAA, educational institutions affiliated with religious organizations would not be allowed to prohibit LGBT student groups from using the school's facilities and services (e.g. providing access to meeting spaces and bulletin boards). However, those institutions would not be required to extend official recognition or accompanying funding to the LGBT student groups, as some opponents of the bill claim.

Supporters of the resolutions to block both bills have wrongly claimed that the RHNDA and the HRAA infringe on religious liberty. This is false. In fact, these non-discrimination bills would do just the

¹ See, e.g., Rebecca Green, *Jury Sides with Fired Teacher*, JOURNAL GAZETTE, Dec. 20, 2014, <http://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/courts/Jury-sides-with-fired-teacher-4094706>; Press Release, ACLU Settles Sex Discrimination Case of Pregnant Employee Fired From Religiously Affiliated Organization (Feb. 18, 2015), <https://www.aclu.org/womens-rights/aclu-settles-sex-discrimination-case-pregnant-employee-fired-religiously-affiliated-or>; VA *Woman Says She's Being Fired Because She's Single and Pregnant*, FOX, Feb. 3, 2015, <http://www.okcfox.com/story/27834708/va-woman-says-shes-being-fired-because-shes-single-and-pregnant>; Jacqueline Gedeon, *Teacher Fired for Pregnancy Sues Butte Central Catholic Schools*, KTVM BUTTE REPORTER, Aug. 22, 2014, <http://www.nbcmontana.com/news/teacher-fired-for-pregnancy-sues-butte-central-catholic-schools/27690792>; *Jury Awards Christa Dias \$171K in Suit against Archdiocese of Cincinnati*, AP, June 3, 2013, <http://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/jury-awards-christa-dias-120k-in-suit-against-archdiocese-of-cincinnati>.

² Nation's Capital Religious Liberty and Academic Freedom Act, Pub. L. 100-462, §145, 102 Stat. 2269-14 (1989).

opposite: they would ensure that students and employees in D.C. are able to follow their own religious or moral beliefs. Employees of all faiths would be able to make personal health care decisions without fear that they will face consequences in the workplace, and LGBT students would be able to assemble on campus in the same way as their peers.

Religious liberty is a fundamental and cherished American value. It guarantees us the freedom to hold any belief we choose and the right to act on those beliefs, but it does not allow us to discriminate against or otherwise harm others.

We stand united against any action that furthers discrimination and undermines equal access to services and health care. Together, we urge you to oppose H.J. Res. 43, H.J. Res 44, and any other effort to prevent the RHND or the HRAA from taking effect in Washington, D.C.

Signed,

ACLU of the Nation's Capital
AIDS United
American Civil Liberties Union
Americans United for Separation of Church and State
Anti-Defamation League
Athlete Ally
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Black Women's Health Imperative
Catholics for Choice
Center for Black Equity, Inc.
Center for Inquiry
Center for Reproductive Rights
DC Section ACOG
DC Vote
Disciples for Choice
Disciples Justice Action Network
Equality Federation
Family Equality Council
Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)
Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality
Human Rights Campaign
Institute For Science and Human Values
Jews United for Justice
Lambda Legal
League of United Latin American Citizens
Marriage Equality USA
MergerWatch
Methodist Federation for Social Action
NAPAWF

NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Abortion Federation
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
NMAC
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Connection Action Fund
Pride at Work, AFL-CIO
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Secular Coalition for America
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
The DC Center for the LGBT Community
Unitarian Universalist Association