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Statement on Recent Legislative Submissions

The American Bar Association notes that the LGBTQ+ community makes up of around 3.5% of the total American population, but is [overrepresented in hate crime statistics](#). In fact, sexual orientation has a long history of being ranked as one of the highest motivators for hate crime incidents. This is irresponsible and unacceptable- especially when adding to the fact that a “panic” defense has been utilized by some accused of crimes committed towards LGBTQ+ citizens.

A “panic” defense asks a jury or judge to find that a victim’s sexual orientation or gender identity is to blame for the defendant’s reaction towards them. This is not only an affront to human rights, but also makes a mockery of our court system. To add onto this horror, this defense has worked as recently as [2015 with the murder of Daniel Spencer](#). It is time to act and end this absurdity.

It is with great honor and anticipation that I re-submit the [Prohibition of LGBTQ+ Panic Defenses Act](#) for consideration in the U.S. Senate. This is a commonsense resolution that would prohibit panic defenses federally, and bring us one step closer to equality. No one should be attacked for who they are or who they love, and no one should be able to use this information against someone for the benefit of a trial.

I am optimistic that this can pass with bipartisan consensus, and I appeal to the Senate Majority Leader and President Adith to assist me in getting this done.

Senator Jaccobei

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