# FAITH IN ACTION

## *AN LGBT ADVOCACY TOOLKIT*


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**Share this toolkit with others using this link: http://bit.ly/equalitypafaithtoolkit**

**www.campaignforfairnesspa.org**

November 1, 2015

Dear Pennsylvania People of Faith,

We hope you will agree that it is immoral to discriminate against people based on who they are, and that this includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people.

LGBT people can now get legally married in Pennsylvania, but you may be surprised to learn that it is also perfectly legal to discriminate against LGBT persons by firing them, turning them away from their home, or refusing service at a public business.

Most religious denominations have strong stances stating that LGBT persons should be treated fairly in civil society. All of the Pennsylvania bishops of the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America bishops have submitted letters of support for including LGBT people in our existing statewide nondiscrimination protections.

The Pennsylvania Council of Churches, representing 20 Christian denominations, has also advocated for fairness for LGBT Pennsylvanians, as has the Jewish Social Policy Action Network and the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Advocacy Network. More than 850 supportive clergy and 3000+ people of faith from more than 35 faith traditions are in our network. Read the stories and fact sheet on the pages below for more information -- and visit www.campaignforfairnesspa.org.

Regardless of any differences about other moral questions related to LGBT persons, we hope you will join a chorus of thousands of across Pennsylvania who say that *because of our faith*, we support equality and fairness for LGBT people. **Please sign a moral statement to go on record publicly as supporting nondiscrimination protections for our LGBT neighbors in Pennsylvania.**

**You can use this link to sign on (and to share with others by email, Facebook, or Twitter):**

## http://bit.ly/faithforfairness

**(Catholics, sign here instead: http://bit.ly/PA-Catholics-for-LGBT-Equality )**

**Join the 'Equality PA Faith' group on Facebook** to get connected to hundreds who care about making a difference for LGBT people in PA: https://www.facebook.com/groups/EqualityPAFaith/

Thank you!!



Ammon Ripple, MLS, MDiv
Faith Organizer, Equality Pennsylvania
412-552-4388
aripple@equalitypa.org

EQUALITY PENNSYLVANIA

## *Fact Sheet for People of Faith about LGBT Discrimination in Pennsylvania*

✦ **Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people do not have full civil equality in the state of Pennsylvania.** Marriage equality is a big step, but LGBT people can be fired from their jobs, evicted from their homes, or refused services at businesses because there are no nondiscrimination protections. There are no federal protections, either.

✦ **The Pennsylvania Fairness Act, or HB 1510 and SB 974, would update the PA Human Relations Act to include gender identity or expression and sexual orientation.** The Human Relations Act, originally written in 1955, currently protects people from discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations based on race, color, religion, ancestry, age, sex, national origin, and disability.

✦ **74% of Pennsylvanians support protecting LGBT people from discrimination.** (Susquehanna Polling/Research, 2015) **86% of U.S. Christians said their faith leads them to the conclusion that the law should treat all people equally, including LGBT people.** (Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, 2011)

✦ **The same constitutional religious liberty protections that apply to the other protected groups in the Human Relations Act would be in force.** These religious exemptions are specific and broad – religious communities will be able to determine what they believe, who can they can hire, who can be a member, and who has access to marriage and other religious rituals in their community. Businesses and organizations which are not affiliated with faith communities or which accept public funding will be required to treat LGBT persons equally.

✦ **There are 34 local ordinances that protect LGBT people from discrimination, but most people do not realize that two thirds of LGBT Pennsylvanians are not protected by state or federal law.** People are treated differently whether you are in Lancaster City or Lancaster County, Pittsburgh or Butler. All people should be treated fairly.

✦ **The Pennsylvania Council of Churches, the Interfaith Alliance of Pennsylvania, the Jewish Social Policy Action Network, the Unitarian Universalist Pennsylvania Legislative Advocacy Network, Keystone Catholics, the Episcopal Church bishops, the United Methodist Church bishops and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America bishops** are among many who support protecting LGBT people from discrimination. See next page for a list of supportive denominations.

✦ **There are thousands of clergy and people of faith in Pennsylvania who have realized that they can no longer be silent about LGBT injustice.** More than 850 clergy and 3000 people of faith from 35 faith traditions are working to protect LGBT Pennsylvanians from legally permissible discrimination.

*Contact Ammon Ripple, Faith Organizer, for more information: aripple@equalitypa.org.*
*Join the 'Equality PA Faith' group on Facebook to be connected to our movement.*
*Sign the faith petition online and get tips on reaching out to legislators to ask them to do the right thing at:*
**http://bit.ly/equalitypafaithtoolkit**

**Most mainline faith traditions agree that it is wrong to discriminate against LGBT people in civil society.**

Alliance of Baptists ~ Conservative Judaism ~ The Catholic Church ~ The Episcopal Church ~ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ~ The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries ~ The United Methodist Church ~ Metropolitan Community Churches ~ The Moravian Church ~ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ~ Reconstructionist Judaism ~ Reform Judaism ~ Quakers ~ United Church of Christ ~ Unitarian Universalism ~ Unity

**From The Catechism of the Catholic Church**
[Gay people] must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.

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**From The United Methodist Church**
We affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God. We therefore work toward societies in which each person's value is recognized, maintained, and strengthened. We support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protection. We deplore acts of hate or violence against groups or persons based on race, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, status, economic condition, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religious affiliation.

**From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**
The Christian community … must do everything in its power to prevent society from continuing to hate, harass, and oppress [gay people]. … Vigilance must be exercised to oppose federal, state, and local legislation that discriminates against persons on the basis of sexual orientation and to initiate and support federal, state, or local legislation that prohibits discrimination against persons on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

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**From Reform Judaism:**
Whereas, The Central Conference of American Rabbis has consistently supported civil rights and civil liberties for all people, especially for those from whom these rights and liberties have been withheld, and Whereas [gay people] have in our society long endured discrimination, be it therefore resolved, that we encourage legislation which … prohibits discrimination against them as persons.

## Support from Pennsylvania Faith Leaders

The Interfaith Alliance of Pennsylvania
http://www.interfaithalliancepa.org/news/156-fairnessact

Pennsylvania Council of Churches
http://pachurchesadvocacy.org/weblog/?p=20849

PA Episcopal Bishops
https://www.diobeth.org/pennsylvanias-episcopal-bishops-urge-passage-of-non-discrimination-bill/

PA United Methodist Bishops
http://www.epaumc.org/wp-content/uploads/UMC-Bishops-Letter-PaNonDiscriminationAct2015.pdf

PA Evangelical Lutheran Bishops
http://www.lutheranadvocacypa.org/pa-bishops-support-anti-discrimination-bill/

PA Rabbis
http://campaignforfairnesspa.org/discrimination-is-immoral-a-jewish-statement/

PA Unitarian Universalist Ministers
http://www.uuplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/PA-Fairness-Minister_letter.pdf

Sister Jeannine Gramick
http://equalitypa.org/wp-content/uploads/Pennsylvania-Fairness-Act-Gramick-statement.pdf

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# *Conversations about LGBT Non-Discrimination Guidelines for People of Faith*

1. **Stay loving.** Our core faith values tell us to treat each other the way we would want to be treated. We lose the power of our witness if we are bitter and judgmental to people we speak with. Never attack with name-calling – invite people to be their best selves.

2. **Use faith language.** Sometimes people of faith default to only using secular political language in LGBT rights conversations. Language about 'rights' does not convince people of faith who might be opposed or conflicted – they respond to values. Don't let the opposition be the only group using faith language. Speak for yourself, but share the beliefs and values that cause you to want to protect LGBT people from discrimination.

3. **Stick to core, positive faith values.** For example: "We are all made in the image of God and have sacred worth." "Jesus welcomed everybody and treated them with respect, and so should we." "The greatest commandment is to love one another." "The prophet Micah says 'what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?'"

4. **Avoid debate.** Of course, there may be some back and forth if you are talking with someone who sees things differently than you. But don't get into an argument or focus on why they are wrong or 'on the wrong side of history'. Rather, listen carefully and then genuinely say "That's interesting to hear. Let me tell you a story about how I see it..." Especially avoid scripture verse wars. Nobody ever changed their mind based on quoting scripture verses out of context. If the other person is unable to have a mutual conversation, lovingly exit the conversation. Every positive face-to-face encounter with an LGBT person or an ally reduces homophobia in a person. We are all on a journey.

5. **Tell stories.** Many people do not know it is legal to discriminate in our state and may not know LGBT people. Stories make a big difference because they humanize LGBT people and explain the urgency of how discrimination harms them. See www.campaignforfairnesspa.org for stories.

6. **Frame LGBT people as 'us'.** Instead of talking about gaining rights for 'those people', help people understand that you are concerned about 'protecting the LGBT members of our families, our congregations, and our communities from discrimination.' We instinctively want to take care of our own. There are good stories in scripture about welcoming the stranger or the outsider or 'loving the sinner' but these are not helpful frames in this public conversation.

7. **Know that most religious traditions oppose LGBT discrimination.** Remind people that the Catholic Church and nearly all mainline Protestant and Jewish denominations have official stances that it is wrong to discriminate against LGBT people in society. Many people are not aware of this. More than 800 clergy and over 3000 people of faith from 35 denominations in Pennsylvania agree that it is immoral to discriminate against LGBT people.

# Equality Pennsylvania - Put Your Faith into Action

*Thank you for being willing to put your faith in action to make a difference for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in Pennsylvania!*
*There are several ways people of faith can help bring equality to our state.*

**1.) Write a personalized letter to your legislator.** They are hearing from some faith voices opposed to equality -- your voice is needed to help them know the great majority of faith traditions support civil equality for our LGBT neighbors. A personalized letter from a person of faith will make a big difference. Legislators will be more likely to personally read a very personal, handwritten letter (or, if clergy, a typed letter on your congregation's letterhead). They will remember your testimony when considering changing our law to protect LGBT people from discrimination.

**2.) Call your legislator**. We want them to know in the coming week that thousands of people from diverse faith communities across the state care about equality for LGBT people.

**3.) Ask some of your friends who are people of faith to write or call their legislators.** Consider asking friends to act, especially if their faith calls them to stand on the side of justice! Most people do not know it is legal to discriminate against LGBT people in PA - just asking will raise awareness.

**4.) Ask clergy persons or people of faith you know to sign a faith petition saying we need to protect our LGBT neighbors from discrimination.** We need to show our leaders thousands of faith leaders support LGBT equality because of their faith. Sign the petition at: http://bit.ly/faithforfairness

**5.) Speak to your congregation.** Offer a mission moment, a sermon, a Bible study, or just a simple open conversation about what our faith calls us to do about LGBT discrimination. Tell a story that will help people understand the real life implications of LGBT discrimination. Sign up congregation members as supporters of the PA Fairness Act using the petition on page 16 and guidelines on page 17 below.

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**How do I know who my PA state legislators are?**

Search by your home address: http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/
*(Tip: To get here easily, type 'find PA legislator' in Google.)*

We recommend contacting both your state senator (about SB974) and your state representative (about HB1510). Either of these identical bills, both known as 'The Pennsylvania Fairness Act', could be the one to move forward first.

*Please do not write to representatives in the U.S. Congress - this has to pass our state legislature. (If we succeed in passing the Pennsylvania Fairness Act, then that will build momentum for the U.S. Congress to pass a federal Equality Act.)*

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## *Personalized Letter Guidelines for People of Faith*

Thank you for writing to your legislator to let them know why, because of your faith, you support passing nondiscrimination protections for all Pennsylvanians. Please review the following guidelines and a sample template to help you write your letter.

1. **Letters need to be unique and personal.** It is very important that you use your own language and make your letter as compelling as possible. If you do not feel comfortable writing a personalized letter, please consider making a phone call instead. (See phone call guidelines.)

2. **Be sure to use faith language and not just political language.** Use stories and values rather than arguments. Stay positive and loving. Judgmental, argumentative language turns people off and does not adhere to core faith values. Identify yourself as a member of your particular congregation. Explain how your core faith values influence your stance. Many legislators say the only faith messages they get oppose LGBT equality. If you clearly identify yourself as a person of faith and use a faith message, you will change that reality. As Rev. Elaine Ely in the Lehigh Valley says, “Speak Love Louder!”

3. **If possible, handwrite your letter to make it stand out or write in on your organization’s letterhead.** If you at least hand sign the letter and hand address the envelope, it will be more likely to get more attention.

4. **Make sure your letter clearly includes your name & address at the top of the page**, before the address of your legislator (and your information is written legibly). This is critical to let your legislator know that you’re a real person who lives in their district.

5. **Address the letter to your legislator’s district office** (this will be either in your region). Please contact BOTH your state senator (about SB 974) and your house representative (about HB1510). You can find out who your legislators and their addresses by Googling ‘find PA legislator’ or linking to http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/ .

6. IMPORTANT **Please share a copy of your letter.** If you share a copy of your letter with me at aripple@equalitypa.org or mail it to Equality Pennsylvania, 1211 Chestnut St. Ste 605, Philadelphia, PA 19107, we will be able to share it with legislative leaders who need to know how much faith support there is for this bill!

7. **Finally, PLEASE consider asking 3-5 people of faith you know to write a letter!** We need each legislator to hear from hundreds of LGBT-affirming people of faith by Thanksgiving!

See next page for a sample letter

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## *Tips for Writing a Good Letter to Your Legislator*

Your Name
Your Address
Your City, State, Zipcode

Your Legislator's Name
Your Legislator's Address
Your Legislator's City, State, Zipcode

Date

Dear Senator/Representative XXX,

***1. Be clear what you are asking for up front.***

[I am writing to ask you to support] [Thank you for being a co-sponsor of] HB1510 OR SB974 (if a house member, use HB1510) / (if a state senator use SB974), the Pennsylvania Fairness Act. *(see list of co-sponsors on following pages)*

***2. Clearly establish yourself as a person of faith.***

As a Christian who takes my faith seriously / My Jewish faith means I care about the world around me and... / As the pastor/rabbi/a faithful member of __*congregation name*__ in __*congregation town*__,

***3. Share your belief statement.***

*I believe [insert core positive faith value, for example:]*
-the golden rule to love our neighbors is the most important rule to follow and this includes loving our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender neighbors
-Jesus welcomed and included everybody and so should we, no matter how harshly they are judged by others
-the Jewish principle of tikkun olam, to repair the world, means working to make sure everyone lives with dignity, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people

***4. Tell why this value means it is wrong to discriminate against LGBT people.***

Focus on employment, housing, and public accommodations. Tell a story of discrimination if you have one. Establish that you know and care about LGBT people in your congregation or community and that they/we are important, productive members of our community. Helpful to frame as 'protecting LGBT people from discrimination' rather than 'giving them rights'. LGBT people are 'us' and not 'them'.

***5. A sincere note of thanks and a note of encouragement to do the right thing.***

Sincerely,
(handwritten signature)

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## *Tips for Calling Your Legislators*

Look up your legislators' phone numbers at:
http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/

**Sample Phone Call Script**
*(Please speak clearly and slowly. Adapt to your own style and language, staying positive, encouraging, and loving. Be sure to use faith language that is authentic to you – not just political language. Read the stories and moral statements on the following pages for values language that will help.)*

Dear {Senator OR Representative} _____,

My name is _____. As a [pastor/priest/minister/rabbi/faithful Christian/Jewish person whose faith is important to me/member of _____ church/synagogue] who lives and worships in your district, I wanted to share with you about how important it is that we not allow discrimination in our state.

There are many people of faith that live in your district, and the majority of us follow the Golden Rule to treat others the way we would want to be treated. We believe that no one should be able to be discriminated against for being who they are, including gay and transgender people.

[Thank you for supporting*] [Please support] {Senate Bill 974 OR House Bill 1510} -- The Pennsylvania Fairness Act. This will update the Human Relations Act to protect my friends/family members/colleagues/congregation members who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

My address is _____ and my phone number is _____. Thank you.

*See lists of co-sponsors on following pages.

Always remember to give your full name & address on the phone so they'll know you're a constituent.

Some things that are helpful:

- ➔ Talking about the spiritual foundation for your position, both for you and for other people of faith.
- ➔ If your faith community has a nondiscrimination policy that protects LGBT individuals, talking briefly about why that is important to your members.
- ➔ If your municipality has a nondiscrimination ordinance that covers LGBT individuals, mentioning how you have observed it increasing morale or how important the policy is to your community.
- ➔ If a large number of faith leaders in your faith, your denominational leaders, or your denomination as a whole, have taken a position supporting nondiscrimination, mentioning that this concern is not only yours, but is important to many other leaders in your faith. More than 800 faith leaders across the state agree that LGBT discrimination is immoral. See fact sheet and www.campaignforfairnesspa.org.

EQUALITY PENNSYLVANIA

## *Co-Sponsors of the Pennsylvania Fairness Act - HB1510*

**House Prime Co-Sponsors**

Rep. Dan Frankel (D; HD23-Allegheny)
Rep. Thomas Killion (R; HD168-Delaware)

**House Co-Sponsors**

Rep. Leslie Acosta (D; HD197-Philadelphia)
Rep. Louise Williams Bishop (D; HD192-Philadelphia)
Rep. Ryan Bizzarro (D; HD03-Erie)
Rep. Kevin Boyle (D; HD172-Montgomery & Philadelphia)
Rep. Matthew Bradford (D; HD70-Montgomery)
Rep. Leanne Krueger-Braneky (D; HD161-Delaware)
Rep. Tim Briggs (D; HD149-Montgomery)
Rep. Vanessa Lowery Brown (D; HD190-Philadelphia)
Rep. Donna Bullock (D; HD195-Philadelphia)
Rep. Thomas Caltagirone (D; HD127-Berks)
Rep. Mike Carroll (D; HD118-Lackawanna & Luzerne)
Rep. Mark Cohen (D; HD202-Philadelphia)
Rep. Scott Conklin (D; HD77-Centre)
Rep. Dom Costa (D; HD21-Allegheny)
Rep. Paul Costa (D; HD34-Allegheny)
Rep. Angel Cruz (D; HD180-Philadelphia)
Rep. Mary Jo Daley (D; HD148-Montgomery)
Rep. Peter Daley (D; HD49-Fayette and Washington)
Rep. Margo Davidson (D; HD164-Delaware)
Rep. Tina Davis (D; HD141-Bucks)
Rep. Jason Dawkins (D; HD179-Philadelphia)
Rep. Madeleine Dean (D; HD153-Montgomery)
Rep. Daniel Deasy (D; HD27-Allegheny)
Rep. Pamela DeLissio (D; HD194-Montgomery & Philadelphia)
Rep. Frank Dermody (D; HD33-Allegheny)
Rep. Maria Donatucci (D; HD185-Delaware & Philadelphia)
Rep. Michael Driscoll (D; HD173-Philadelphia)
Rep. Dwight Evans (D; HD203-Philadelphia)
Rep. Florindo Fabrizio (D; HD02-Erie)
Rep. Frank Farina (D; HD112-Lackawanna)
Rep. Marty Flynn (D; HD113-Lackawanna)
Rep. Robert Freeman (D; HD136-Northampton)
Rep. Ed Gainey (D; HD24-Allegheny)
Rep. John Galloway (D; HD140-Bucks)
Rep. Marc Gergely (D; HD35-Allegheny)
Rep. Neal Goodman (D; HD123-Schuylkill)
Rep. Michael Hanna (D; HD76-Centre & Clinton)
Rep. Patrick Harkins (D; HD01-Erie)
Rep. Kate Harper (R; HD61-Montgomery)
Rep. Jordan Harris (D; HD186-Philadelphia)
Rep. Warren Kampf (R; HD157-Chester & Montgomery)
Rep. Aaron Kaufer (R; HD120-Luzerne)
Rep. Sid Michaels Kavulich (D; HD114-Lackawanna)
Rep. William Keller (D; HD184-Philadelphia)
Rep. Patty Kim (D; HD103-Dauphin)
Rep. Stephen Kinsey (D; HD201-Philadelphia)
Rep. Thaddeus Kirkland (D; HD159-Delaware)
Rep. Joseph Markosek (D; HD25-Allegheny)
Rep. Robert Matzie (D; HD16-Allegheny & Beaver)
Rep. Stephen McCarter (D; HD154-Montgomery)
Rep. Joanna McClinton (D; HD191-Delaware & Philadelphia)
Rep. Daniel McNeill (D; HD133-Lehigh)
Rep. Dan Miller (D; HD42-Allegheny)
Rep. Gerald Mullery (D; HD119-Luzerne)
Rep. Thomas Murt (R; HD152-Montgomery & Phliadelphia)
Rep. Ed Neilson (D; HD174-Philadelphia)
Rep. Michael O'Brien (D; HD175-Philadelphia)
Rep. Cherelle Parker (D; HD200-Philadelphia)
Rep. Eddie Day Pashinski (D; HD121-Luzerne)
Rep. Scott Petri (R; HD178-Bucks)
Rep. Marguerite Quinn (R; HD143-Bucks)
Rep. Adam Ravenstahl (D; HD20-Allegheny)
Rep. Harry Readshaw (D; HD36-Allegheny)
Rep. James Roebuck Jr. (D; HD188-Philadelphia)
Rep. Chris Ross (R; HD158-Chester)
Rep. Mark Rozzi (D; HD126-Berks)
Rep. Steve Samuelson (D;HD135-Northampton)
Rep. Steven Santarsiero (D; HD31-Bucks)
Rep. James Santora (R; HD163-Delaware)
Rep. Michael Schlossberg (D; HD132-Lehigh)
Rep. Kevin Schreiber (D; HD95-York)
Rep. Peter Schweyer (D; HD22-Lehigh)
Rep. Brian Sims (D; HD182-Philadelphia)
Rep. Pam Snyder (D; HD50-Fayette, Greene & Washington)
Rep. Todd Stephens (R; HD151-Montgomery)
Rep. P. Michael Sturla (D; HD96-Lancaster)
Rep. John Taylor (R; HD177-Philadelphia)
Rep. W. Curtis Thomas (D; HD181-Philadelphia)
Rep. Greg Vitali (D; HD166-Delaware & Montgomery)
Rep. Katharine Watson (R; HD144-Bucks)
Rep. Jake Wheatley (D; HD19-Allegheny)
Rep. Rosita Youngblood (D; HD198-Philadelphia)

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***Co-Sponsors of the Pennsylvania Fairness Act - SB974***

**Senate Prime Co-Sponsors**

1. Sen. Patrick Browne (R; SD16-Lehigh)
2. Sen. Larry Farnese (D; SD1-Philadelphia)

**Senate Co-Sponsors**

3. Sen. John Blake (D; SD22-Lackawanna, Luzerne & Monroe)
4. Sen. Lisa Boscola (D; SD18-Lehigh & Northampton)
5. Sen. James Brewster (D; SD45-Allegheny & Westmoreland)
6. Sen. Jay Costa (D; SD43-Allegheny)
7. Sen. Andrew Dinniman (D; SD19-Chester)
8. Sen. Wayne Fontana (D; SD42-Allegheny)
9. Sen. Art Haywood (D; SD4-Montgomery & Philadelphia)
10. Sen. Vincent Hughes (D; SD7-Montgomery & Philadelphia)
11. Sen. Shirley Kitchen (D; SD3-Philadelphia)
12. Sen. Daylin Leach (D; SD17-Delaware & Montgomery)
13. Sen. Charles McIlhinney Jr. (R; SD10-Bucks)
14. Sen. Dominic Pileggi (R; SD9-Chester & Delaware)
15. Sen. John Sabatina (D; SD5-Philadelphia)
16. Sen. Mario Scavello (R; SD40-Monroe & Northampton)
17. Sen. Judith Schwank (D; SD11-Berks)
18. Sen. Christine Tartaglione (D; SD2-Philadelphia)
19. Sen. Rob Teplitz (D; SD15-Dauphin & Perry)
20. Sen. Patricia Vance (R; SD31-Cumberland & York)
21. Sen. Scott Wagner (R; SD28-York)
22. Sen. Sean Wiley (D; SD49-Erie)
23. Sen. Anthony Williams (D; SD8-Delaware & Philadelphia)
24. Sen. John Wozniak (D; SD35-Bedford, Cambria & Clearfield)
25. Sen. John Yudichak (D; SD14-Carbon & Luzerne)

## Called to Do Justice, Pastor Chris Hart, Lancaster, PA



I was serving as a pastor at Grace United Church of Christ in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Our congregation had been welcoming of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people for over ten years. Because of this, I got a call in 2013 from a woman who was worried she might be fired from her job because she was a lesbian.

I listened carefully to her story and learned that she had worked at her company for many years and had good performance reviews. She had recently come out to co-workers as a lesbian when she and her partner decided to adopt a child. Her supervisors and colleagues began to treat her differently almost immediately. The pattern of how she was treated was the same as what a gay male employee had faced before he was fired.

She wanted me to help her. I told her I would look into what could be done. I talked to congregation members and members of the legal community. I soon learned that there was nothing that could be done. Her company was well within its legal rights to fire her just for being a lesbian, no matter what a good job she was doing.

I felt helpless and outraged. It was horrible to learn that in Pennsylvania you could be a great employee and still be treated this way. As a straight man, I never questioned my right to work. I assumed that federal or state law would protect me and her from being unjustly fired. This woman does not have the basic right to work just because of who she is and who she loves.

It was worse to learn that if she lived just a few miles away in the city of Lancaster, she would be protected by a local ordinance. But she lived and worked outside of the city limits in Lancaster County. My faith tells me that all human beings should be treated with dignity and respect. Every person is a child of God with sacred worth. It does not make any sense that people should have different human rights and protections under the law based on living in one place or another. Justice is justice, no matter where you live.

Jesus included people. He reached out to many outsiders who were judged harshly by others and brought them into his community. In our church, we do not believe there is anybody who is beyond God's love or God's community and we are called to welcome them all in. This is what we hope for in our state - that everyone will be respected and included equally.

In the Bible, the book of Micah says, "what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" People in Jewish and Christian traditions are called by our God to do justice. We are called to be kind.

I hope every person of faith will join me in working to change the laws in Pennsylvania so that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people can be treated justly as they live in our communities. They deserve the right to work and to be judged based solely on their performance. They deserve the right to fair treatment in buying or renting a home. They deserve to be treated equally and with respect when using public services and patronizing businesses. Let us do justice together and help to create a better community in our state!



**Bishop Peggy A. Johnson:**
**What the golden rule says about discrimination**

*Op-Ed reprinted from The Morning Call (Allentown Newspaper), Feb. 13, 2015*
http://www.mcall.com/opinion/mc-discrimination-lgbt-religion-johnson-yv-0213-20150212-story.html

As the bishop of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church, I believe that discrimination laws do not hinder religious freedom, contrary to the perspective in Dean Browning's Your View ("Freedom of speech, religion under attack by many in U.S."). In fact, discrimination protections help all religious people live their lives more freely. That's why I support updating our laws to be sure that no one is discriminated against, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Updating these laws is simply the right thing to do. Imagine that you are going out to a restaurant with your family, and the restaurant owner asks you to leave because of who you are or what you believe in. If you believe it would be wrong to do that to you, then it should be clear that it is wrong to do it to someone else.

There have been times in our history when religion was used as a reason to turn people away. The United Methodist Church has fought for the dignity of all people as they live and work in our society, and we have never sought the ability to use religious freedom to discriminate against others.

We may have differing understandings in our churches about human sexuality, but one thing The United Methodist Church is quite clear about is that it is immoral to discriminate. Our social principles contain a strong statement: "Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting these civil rights for all persons."

It also states that "we support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protection." My church clearly teaches that this includes gay and transgender people.

As Christians, we should be working to protect the equality of our gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender brothers and sisters — because of our faith. In the Bible, I John 4:20 says, "For anyone who does not love those they see, cannot love God, whom they have not seen."

My faith leads me to believe that all human beings deserve the dignity of work and the ability to use their gifts for the good of the community. All human beings deserve to be treated with respect as they live in their communities, use public services and patronize businesses.

During this time when many of us are struggling to understand the world that we live in, we are often tempted to reject some idea that is different than what we were taught or people who are different from us. Many people of faith, including my own, are wrestling with the issue of updating Pennsylvania's non-discrimination laws to include lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. I believe the Christian tradition teaches a gospel of love, and one thing Jesus was absolutely clear about in his life and teaching is that we should treat each other with hospitality and respect. I could not imagine Jesus turning anyone away.

Nothing in any discrimination law requires people to change what they believe. Discrimination protections only require employers, landlords and shop owners to treat all people with dignity and respect.

When you stop to think about it, this is the essence of the golden rule that people of faith hold sacred — that all people should be treated with dignity as children of God. I don't necessarily need to agree with a person to show Christian hospitality as I go through my daily life shopping at stores or working at my job, just as you don't have to agree with me to treat me, a person of faith, with the same dignity and respect.

By treating others as we would want to be treated, every faith tradition can be respected, every member of our community can be valued, and we can live together in harmony as we endeavor to build a peaceful and fair society and world. To help build that society, Pennsylvania's laws need to be updated to ban discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

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**Rabbi Daniel Swartz, Temple Hesed, Scranton, PA**
*Op-Ed reprinted from the Scranton Times-Tribune, 'More to Do to Outlaw Discrimination', June 1, 2014*
*Note that the previous version of this legislation was numbered SB/HB 300.*



Our country was founded upon the bedrock principle that all people are created equal and that all deserve equal treatment under the law. It has taken us generations, however, to shape the laws of our land so that they actually match that principle.

It took almost 90 years from the adoption of the Declaration of Independence to the end of slavery, and another 100 years till the Voting Rights Act truly enabled all African-Americans to vote. It was less than 100 years ago that "all men" became "all people" and women were finally given the right to vote.

One by one, different forms of discrimination have been outlawed. Today, discrimination based on gender, race, religion, age, or disabilities are all illegal. But, despite the recent ruling giving same-sex couples the right to marry in Pennsylvania, it is still legal in our state to fire someone or deny them housing simply because of whom they love. That is wrong, and it's time — well past time, I'd say — to change it.

My faith tradition, Reform Judaism, is one of a growing number of faiths that celebrate and sanctify committed same-sex relationships. We believe that God values all people, and that committed, loving relationships not only makes our lives more enjoyable and strengthen our communities, but also can bring us closer to God.

I know that different individuals and different faith traditions have different views about homosexuality. Such diversity of opinion is guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, which, among other things, grants all Americans freedom of speech and of religion. But whatever you think about same-sex relationships or marriage, we should all be able to agree that discrimination is wrong.

Indeed, many faiths that do not accept same-sex marriages have called for an end to discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people. Bishop Joseph Bambera recently reminded us, "in the midst of this decision, which may be challenging to some, the Church condemns injustice, oppression, or violence against all people, regardless of sexual orientation. Like every person, our gay sisters and brothers — members of our families, our communities and our churches — are beloved children of God who deserve to be treated with respect, sensitivity and compassion."

Now we have a chance to translate these good intentions into law, bringing us one step closer to our nation's founding principle of equality.

Many in Harrisburg, including our own Sen. John Blake, have introduced SB/HB 300. It would update Pennsylvania's current non-discrimination law — one that has been tested over the decades and which provides appropriate religious exemptions to preserve religious freedom — to include lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Faith has sometimes been used to exclude, to divide, and to oppress. As Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King said, speaking to a convention of Reform Jews, "it is tragic that so often in history men have used the Bible and religion to justify their prejudices and to crystallize the status quo." But faith can also bring us together, help us grow closer to the ideals this country was founded on.

One might say that the very first declaration supporting civil rights can be found in Genesis 1, where it states that people — all people, equally — are created in the divine image. SB/HB 300 would help us respect that image in everyone.

EQUALITY PENNSYLVANIA

CAMPAIGN FOR FAIRNESS

**I believe discrimination is immoral. It is not right that lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people can be fired, evicted, or refused services at a business based on who they are. Because of my faith, I support updating the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act to protect LGBT people from employment, housing, and public accommodations discrimination along with other minority groups.**

*Please complete form below to 'sign' this moral statement as an individual PA citizen. Your signature will allow our campaign to tell PA legislators that thousands of people of faith support treating their LGBT neighbors with dignity and respect.* ***Please print clearly.***

Full Name (incl. Dr./Rev./Rabbi etc.):_____

PA Home Address: Street_____

City/Zip_____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ ☐ Home ☐ Work ☐ Mobile

Denomination:_____

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Congregation & Title/Role:_____

**I identify as a:**

☐ Person of Faith
☐ Faith Leader
*(Clergy/Religious Professional)*
☐ Small Business Owner
☐ Conservative
☐ Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual Person
☐ Transgender Person
☐ Person of Color-Black or African-American
☐ Person of Color-Latin@ or Hispanic
☐ Person of Color-Other

**I am willing to do the following to help end discrimination against LGBT people:**

☐ Pray for LGBT people to be treated with dignity and respect in our legal system and in our communities.
☐ Contact my legislator to convince him or her to update our laws to protect LGBT people.
☐ Make phone calls to potential LGBT equality supporters.
☐ Enter data from LGBT equality supporters into an online system.
☐ Help reach out to and activate people of faith in my region.
☐ Tell a story of discrimination or potential discrimination about me or someone I love.

**I also care about these issues:**

☐ Immigration Reform
☐ Health Insurance Equity
☐ Economic Opportunity
☐ Safe Schools for LGBT Students
☐ Transgender Healthcare Access
☐ LGBT Hate Crimes Laws

**Public Signature?** *(check box below if we can list your name, town, and denomination publicly)*

Your information will be shared with your state legislators and trusted Equality PA partners working with us to end discrimination, including the Pennsylvania Competes campaign, Keystone Progress, state/regional faith coalitions, and denomination-specific organizations.

☐ Public Signature - Please also include me on a public list of signers on the Internet at www.campaignforfairnesspa.org with my name, hometown, and denomination. (No contact information will be shared publicly.)

**Email aripple@equalitypa.org to send scanned forms or request mailing address. Please sign by Nov. 30 if possible.**

EQUALITY PENNSYLVANIA

## Congregational Outreach Guidelines

We hope many people will feel called to encourage others in their congregation to sign on in support of the Pennsylvania Fairness Act. Can you invite your congregation members to sign the faith petition?

Here is what is involved:

1) **Register as a congregational outreach volunteer** by emailing Ammon at aripple@equalitypa.org to let him know you plan to do this. He can provide additional support as needed.

**2) If possible, ask your congregation to put this in their bulletin, newsletter or eblast.**

People of faith are called to take action to support nondiscrimination protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in Pennsylvania. Most faith traditions agree that discrimination is immoral and this includes LGBT people. Please sign the faith petition at http://bit.ly/faithforfairness if you feel called to support the PA Fairness Act. Please sign today to encourage legislators to pass this bill before the holidays.

You can use language specific to your denomination if possible. Consider sharing the PA Council of Churches statement or the letters from UMC, Episcopal or ELCA bishops if relevant. See page 4 of this toolkit.

If your congregation will not communicate this officially, you can write a note to friends you think might be supportive. Or simply hand printed petition forms to friends while at worship this weekend.

**3) Collect petitions at your congregation!**

Print pages 3-4 of this document as a fact sheet, and page 16 as a petition signing form. Make copies available and use the fact sheet to make a brief announcement before, during, or after your services and invite people to sign the petition. Follow the norms of your community. Consider putting fact sheets and petitions in bulletins and having congregation members place them in the offering basket. Or having a table during coffee hour. Or having greeters hand them out. Or hand them to your friends personally.

**4) Get the petitions back to us.**

You can scan and email them as PDF files to aripple@equalitypa.org. Or email Ammon to ask for the mailing address. It is important to send them back asap so our volunteers can enter the information and share with legislators.

***THANK YOU!***

# Faith Testimonies from Pennsylvanians

**About 1700 Pennsylvania people of faith from more than 35 faith traditions have signed this faith petition:**

**I believe discrimination is immoral. It is not right that lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people can be fired, evicted, or refused services at a business based on who they are. Because of my faith, I support updating the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act to protect LGBT people from employment, housing, and public accommodations discrimination along with other minority groups.**

**Here are some of the personal testimonies they offered. If these compel you to take action, sign the petition at http://bit.ly/faithforfairness!**

*As a Christian I believe God and Christ call us to love all others, not just the ones we like or that don't offend us. In God's eyes we are equal in all things as we are made in his likeness. It is not for us to judge others but for us to accept and support and love in God's divine likeness.*

*To not treat all people in society with equal fairness is harmful. The founder of Methodism, John Wesley, advised Christians to "do no harm." As a member of the Christian faith and a United Methodist, I support legal protection of equal treatment for all members of society. Individual persons can believe what they want. Consequently, individual Christians are free to believe that LGBT persons are wrong in their behavior. However, there is no historical practice, universal doctrine or biblical imperative to support doing harm or discriminating against the freedoms of LGBT individuals.*

*As a Buddhist, I believe in the innate ability of all people regardless of sexual, romantic, or gender identity to achieve absolute happiness and that everyone is born with a unique mission!*

*As a Christian I cannot sit down any longer and allow my GLBT brothers and sisters to be discriminated against and I am asking our legislators to stand with me and do the right thing by all of us.*

*As a Christian, a mother, a citizen who has been free to live my life as best I could all of my 68 years, I feel compelled to stand with those for whom indefensible discrimination still exists. I do believe that the Lord of All Creation expects no less of each of us, than to recognize the full humanity of our brothers and sisters, and to honor and cherish those with whom we share our lives and our Earth. It is way past time to end discrimination of LGBT children of God.*

*As a Hindu, my holy scriptures bid me to remember inherent divinity in every person- God is to be found not simply in the temples and holy places, but in our fellow human beings. All people are worthy of love, compassion, and respect. This is why I support the Fairness Act- no one should be discriminated against for who they are.*

*As a Jew, I am aware that my people have faced many moments of discrimination in their past. My faith calls me to support efforts to treat all human beings as being made in Tzelem Elohim, in the image of the Divine, and that all are due the respect and dignity of that status. By discriminating against our LGBT brothers and sisters we are ultimately diminishing the Divine light in the world and contradicting our core principle of faith.*

*As a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration in Philadelphia, I have committed myself to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every individual as well as to promote justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. Sexual orientation and gender expression are an inherent part of every person in our state. No one should be denied employment or services based on their gender or sexual expression. It is long overdue for LGBT persons to live without fear of being discriminated against in our commonwealth.*

*As a pastor, I say with deep conviction that only the most superficial readings of scripture give credence to justification for opposing homosexuality on religious grounds. As a person of faith living in a democracy it is my obligation to prayerfully make welcome space for every human being - to value them as God made them, to have them be heard, their rights protected, and to encourage their flourishing. This is where faith meets the public sector.*

*Jesus always led with love. As a "little Christ", that is what I must do also. Formerly, I was a supporter, but always in silence. But a few years ago, one of my friends pointed out, "When you are silent, all we hear from the churches is condemnation." I need to speak the love of Christ for ALL people, and do it out loud.*

*As an Episcopalian, I believe in faith, tradition and reason. There is no reasonable excuse to deny any human being services, employment, housing etc. based on sexual orientation and gender identity. That discrimination is not Gospel driven.*

*Growing up in the Presbyterian Church, I was taught that God loves all and that I should follow God's example. Just yesterday, the sermon at church reminded me that I am to love my neighbor as myself. I fully support equality for all Pennsylvanians. I hope and pray that my elected officials will do the same and vote in favor of the PA Fairness Act.*

*I am a Mennonite from Lancaster County, PA. I was raised by my parents and my church (Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster) to believe that all people are known and loved by God. All people on this earth deserve equal opportunities for affordable housing, good jobs, and public accommodations. The United States is not truly a free country if we can't offer basic protections against discrimination to the people who live here. This is why I support updating the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act to protect LGBT people from employment, housing, and public accommodations discrimination along with other minority groups.*

*The first theme of Catholic social teaching says "that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society.... We believe that every person is precious...and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhance the life and dignity of the human person." This statement is not limited to heterosexuals, but includes every human being.*

*Jesus said that you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Not just your straight neighbors. Not just your non-immigrant neighbors. Not just your wealthy neighbors. It is our duty as Catholics and Christians to*

*treat ALL with dignity and respect and to not discriminate against anyone, including the LGBT community.*

*All people are beloved children of God, created in God's image. To deny basic rights and dignity to any person for any reason is an offense against the image of God present in them.*

*I am a Christian and a Lutheran pastor. Jesus NEVER turned anyone away, no matter whether they were powerful people wishing to speak to him, or the outcasts of society. I know that Jesus wills we follow his example. Not only did Jesus welcome everyone himself, he expected his followers to do so as well, and chided them when they did not. I believe Christians are called to advocate for those who are often despised by others. NO ONE should be discriminated against in matters of housing, employment and public accommodation, including people who identify as LGBT.*

*I am a Quaker, and I live in this commonwealth that was founded by Quakers seeking to live freely and openly. I was married in my Quaker meeting before that marriage was legally recognized by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the US federal government. My faith is one that pursues equality and justice. And it is because of my faith that I have grown to accept people who are different from me.*

*I am a Christian, and I am a transgender woman. I can assure you that these two features about me are not mutually exclusive. The LGBT community in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania daily faces situations where they are denied justice. Inability to be hired, lack of adequate healthcare, lack of access to education and public facilities. I am a member of First Reformed United Church of Christ in Lancaster, PA where I serve as the Vice-President of the leadership team. As I read my Bible, especially those passages in the New Testament regarding the life of Christ, I see Him in countless situations dealing with the less fortunate and the downtrodden of his day. Where He saw a need He provided a healing touch. He even healed the most wretched and ostracized of His day. He performed these healing acts to the glory of God. To those legislators that are likely not be in favor of expanding the Human Rights Act of 1955, I say this, in my opinion, granting that every citizen has the right to be themselves regardless of their sexual orientation, sexual preference or gender identity or gender expression is a matter of justice, and I believe God would approve.*

*Over and over again, Jewish Scripture exhorts us to remember that "you were strangers in the land of Egypt"--which we understand as insisting that we reach out to those in need and, therefore, never discriminate. In a sense, there are no "protected classes" in Judaism because ALL PEOPLE ARE PROTECTED. For me, then--given the fact that we have laws that single out certain groups for protection--LGBTQ individuals MUST be included.*

*I am a follower of Jesus and a regular church attendee. In PA in 2014 I was fired from my teaching job. While no reason at all was given, my attorney and I know that it was because I am gay. I have plenty of examples and much proof but no protections in this state. I was very tempted to move out of state but stayed in PA to be near my church family. Please change the law so people like me will protections when we face discrimination in the workplace. Thanks.*

*As a Christian I'm commanded to love my neighbor as myself and this legislation will give my LGBT friends and neighbors the protection to be treated with dignity and respect.*

*I am a senior citizen and an advocate for the LGBTQ community. I am also a Unitarian Universalist and we have a covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person and affirm and*

*promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Our living tradition also draws from many sources such as the words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love. LGBT equality is a must if we, as human beings, are to live in a manner that Jesus wanted us to.*

*I am a transgender woman who after a lifetime of hiding her true feelings went through a gender transition in 2013 to begin living my life as my authentic self. I am a graduate of Gettysburg College where I majored in Physics, was in the marching band, on the bowling team and was chapter president of my fraternity. I have been married for 30 years to my college sweetheart and have a son (27) and a daughter (23). My wife and I taught Sunday School in my Lutheran ELCA Church prior to my transition and we continue to do so after my transition. We raised our family in this church and it was extremely important to continue to be members of this church. We are so thankful of the acceptance, but so many of my transgender friends have not been welcomed in their faith communities and in their lives. We need this legislation to help protect all people from being discriminated against AND let everyone know that discrimination is wrong and immoral!*

*I believe that Jesus was about love and welcoming all people. And I want to live in state that protects all people under the law rather than discriminates against them because of sexual orientation. Let's act like Jesus acted when he acted on love.*

*I have been a church musician since the age of 16, and during many of those years, I was a closeted gay man working in a very discriminatory environment. At last, many denominations (e.g., Presbyterians, Episcopalians, United Church of Christ, Unitarians, ELCA, and others) are coming to accept LGBT people as part of God's creation, to be valued and loved as we are loved by God. God has opened their eyes; may God open the eyes of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania also.*

*I take The Baptismal Covenant very seriously to "strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being."*

*It is through God's son Jesus that I am saved, but it is by God using me as his tool that I can make a difference for all LGBT Pennsylvanians.*

*Jesus ministered to everyone without regard to anything that other people might see as different or "unworthy." If I am to follow Jesus faithfully, I feel it is my responsibility to assure that every child of God is treated with respect and fairness because, as God said about creation after we humans joined the party, it is "very good." All are welcome at God's table and it should be no different on earth from the way it is in heaven!*

*Jesus taught us to love our neighbors, and in the parable of the Good Samaritan, taught us that everyone is our neighbor and to love all of our neighbors. Love does no harm to a neighbor, but discriminating against people because of what some perceive as a sin is itself a sin.*

*Judaism understands every person is created in the image of God. I am committed to this understanding and its clear implication of equality for all.*

*My faith journey has led me to understand that the grace of God is freely given, our of unfailing love, to all humanity. We are called then, to bring this grace to all, and to do so in concrete ways of caring for*

*each other's earthly needs while we journey together here. To deny any person food, shelter, dignity, etc. is to deny them the gift of love that we are to share as best as we can.*

*My faith says and I believe ALL people have inherent worth and dignity. Our nation was founded on words of equality for ALL people. We need to make our nation truly have equality for all people.*

*My God loves ALL people. Only God can judge whose love is true and genuine. Love is the same in any language, color or gender. If we love like God loves, there are no issues.*

*No one should be discriminated against for who they are. God doesn't make mistakes. He made everyone exactly how he wanted. We need to love each other. This is the most important thing that God has taught us. And, our constitution says that we are all entitled to equal rights. We must treat each other the way we would want to be treated. Therefore, I support equal rights for all that no one can take away.*

*Quakers have a testimony that the Light of God is found in all people, and shines on all of us. No one can hide from the judgement of God, and no one is loved more or less by God. As a Friend I believe that treating everyone equally brings us closer to living fully in the Gospel Order. The Kingdom of Heaven is here on Earth, and it's not the right of Men to to judge others. It is our responsibility to treat everyone equally, and give judgement to God.*

*The arc of our faith bends toward inclusion. As the people of a loving God, as believers in the reconciling power of Jesus Christ, and as those inspired by the work of the Holy Spirit, we are called to celebrate the love and salvation that is available to all people. In this spirit, with God at the center of faith, there is no room for discrimination and no place for bigotry.*

*When I was in sixth grade, my teacher, Sister Christina Marie, faced a lot of tough questions about social and moral issues from my classmates and I. We were all learning and realizing how difficult it would be to follow the Church's teaching in a secular world. One of my classmates asked, "What about gay people?" Without missing a beat, Sister said, "All people are created in the image and likeness of God. If God created one of us to have black hair, and one of us to be a talented singer, and one of us to be a homosexual, what question can remain? That is how God made them." It was as simple as that. I am always surprised when other Catholics don't have the same viewpoint on LGBT people as I do. I'm surprised because it's so simple. God created us, and God loves us. It's one of the first lessons we learn in religion class. It's probably the most basic and important element of our faith. And it's so easily cast aside. I'm pro-life, which means all life is valued, important, and equal. There is no middle ground. I'm so proud to sign this document because it confirms beliefs I've had since a twelve-year-old kid in middle school.*