



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

September 23, 2009

The Honorable George Miller
Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Kline
Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Kline:

On behalf of the 150,000 members of the American Psychological Association (APA), I am writing to thank you for your leadership in convening today's hearing to discuss H.R. 3017, the *Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) of 2009*. This important legislation would prohibit employers from making decisions about hiring, firing, promoting, or compensating an employee based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

APA is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. Comprising researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and students, APA works to advance psychology as a science, a profession, and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare.

APA has a longstanding commitment to ending discriminatory practices targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) persons. Specifically, APA adopted a resolution on "Opposing Discriminatory Legislation and Initiatives Aimed at Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Persons" in 2007, and another policy statement on "Transgender, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression Non-Discrimination" in 2008 (both enclosed for your consideration). As stated in these resolutions, not only is there no basis for discrimination against LGBT individuals, but also such discrimination is harmful to their mental health and the public good.

Psychological research supports the conclusion that people who accept and integrate their sexual orientation and gender identity are psychologically better adjusted than those who do not. To promote psychological well-being among workers, individuals should have the opportunity to disclose personal information without the threat of negative ramifications. Furthermore, research has consistently found that heterosexuals who have contact with LGBT populations have more positive attitudes towards LGBT individuals as a group. Taken together, these findings suggest that the presence of LGBT coworkers does not undermine employee morale or relationships, but rather may strengthen worker rapport.

Allowing an atmosphere of intolerance based on sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace is detrimental for LGBT individuals as well as for everyone in the workplace. In addition, employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity inadvertently legitimizes other forms of prejudice and discrimination, including anti-gay violence.

I strongly urge your support of the *Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2009* and look forward to working with you to ensure that this proposal becomes law. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Jutta Tobias, Ph.D., in our Government Relations Office, at (202) 336- 5668.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. Keita".

Gwendolyn Puryear Keita, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Public Interest Directorate