



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE MEDICINE

May 28, 2021

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Committee
Washington, DC 20510

RE: S. 393 / H.R. 5, *Equality Act*

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

On behalf of the 5,300 members of American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM), I am writing to thank you for holding a hearing on the *Equality Act* (S. 393/H.R. 5), and to urge the committee to schedule a markup to advance this important legislation to the full Senate.

AAHPM is the professional organization for physicians specializing in Hospice and Palliative Medicine. Our membership also includes nurses, social workers, spiritual care providers, and other health professionals deeply committed to improving quality of life for patients facing serious illness, as well as their families and caregivers, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or disability.

The Institute of Medicine identified equitable care as one of six specific aims for improving the 21st century healthcare system, and it is a goal that AAHPM **embraces**. To improve quality of life and quality of care for all people living with serious illness, we must tackle systemic discrimination and implicit bias, including in the education and training of the healthcare professionals who are entrusted to deliver care. Social and physical determinants of health must also be understood and addressed. HealthPeople.gov documents how LGBTQ individuals experience “health disparities linked to societal stigma, discrimination, and denial of their civil and human rights,” and further discusses the role of physical environment – from safe schools and neighborhoods to access to health services – in contributing to LGBTQ health. In so far as the *Equality Act* would prohibit discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in areas including public accommodations and facilities, education, federal funding, employment, housing, and more, **we believe this legislation would go a long way towards improving the health and well-being of millions of LGBTQ Americans.**

As you know, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 5, the *Equality Act*, on February 25, 2021. AAHPM appreciated the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary’s leadership and robust discussion about modernizing policies related to equality and dismantling discrimination during the March 17, 2021, hearing, “*The Equality Act: LGBTQ Rights are Human Rights.*” **We urge the committee to schedule a markup on S. 393/H.R. 5 and advance this landmark legislation to the full U.S. Senate for consideration,** which would be an important step in improving civil rights protections across the nation, including within America’s healthcare system.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. If you have any questions or requests for additional information, please feel free to direct them to Jacqueline M. Kocinski, MPP, AAHPM Director of Health Policy and Government Relations, at jkocinski@aahpm.org or 847-375-4841.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan E. Goldstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "N" and "E".

Nathan E. Goldstein, MD FAAHPM
AAHPM President



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE MEDICINE

May 28, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: S. 393 / H.R. 5, *Equality Act*

Dear Leaders Schumer and McConnell:

On behalf of the 5,300 members of American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM), I write to urge the Senate to consider the *Equality Act* (S. 393/H.R. 5) during the 117th Congress.

AAHPM is the professional organization for physicians specializing in Hospice and Palliative Medicine. Our membership also includes nurses, social workers, spiritual care providers, and other health professionals deeply committed to improving quality of life for patients facing serious illness, as well as their families and caregivers, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or disability.

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Nathan E. Goldstein, MD FAAHPM
AAHPM President