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URGENT ACTION ALERT

DATE: October 24, 2007
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau

NAACP-Supported Employment Non-Discrimination Act Scheduled to be Considered by the Full U.S. House this Week

THE ISSUE

Blatant employment discrimination strips away the right of each individual American to be judged on their merits and abilities. Every American must be allowed to contribute to society without facing unfair discrimination on account of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability or sexual orientation. It exacerbates our ongoing national fight against bigotry and intolerance when anyone is left unprotected.

It is currently legal in 38 states to fire or otherwise discriminate against someone solely because they are **perceived to be** gay or lesbian. Thus the majority of Americans may be discriminated against, regardless of their job performance, simply because of who they are or who they may seem to be. Employment discrimination based on sexual orientation, whether such orientation is real, perceived, or simply used as an excuse for other forms of discrimination, denies qualified Americans their basic civil rights.

To combat this blatant discrimination, Congressman Barney Frank (MA) has introduced H.R. 3685, the *Employment Non-Discrimination Act* (ENDA); **this legislation is scheduled to be considered by the full U.S. House of Representatives as soon as Wednesday, October 24, 2007.** During consideration of the legislation, Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin (WI) is scheduled to offer an amendment to include transgender people under the protections offered by the bill. Because the NAACP opposes discrimination of any individual based on who they are, we also strongly support the Baldwin amendment and urge all Members to support it as well.

Together H.R. 3685 and the Baldwin amendment would extend civil rights protections that are currently based on race, religion, gender, national origin, age and disability to include gays and lesbians. It would prohibit employers from making decisions about hiring, firing, promoting or compensating an employee based solely on their perceived sexual preferences. It further makes it clear that preferential treatment and quotas are strictly prohibited, and it provides exemptions to members of the Armed Services and religious organizations. ENDA is a fair and balanced approach to ensure that all Americans are given the opportunity to meet their fullest potential in the workplace.

More...

MEMBERSHIP IS POWER! JOIN THE NAACP TODAY.

For more information, call your local NAACP branch or visit www.naacp.org

THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:

Contact your Representative and **URGE HIM OR HER TO SUPPORT THE EMPLOYMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT (H.R. 3685) ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.** To contact your Representatives, you may:

✓ **Make a Phone Call:**

Call your Representative in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Congressman's office. The switchboard phone number is **(202) 224-3121** (see message section, below).

✓ **Write a Letter**

To write a letter to your Representative, send it to:
The Honorable (name of Representative)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

**A SAMPLE
LETTER IS
ATTACHED**

✓ **Send a Fax**

If you would like to send a fax, call your Representative's office (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for his or her fax numbers (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ **Send an E-Mail**

To send an e-mail to your Representative, go to www.house.gov, and click on "write your representative." This will help you identify who your congressman is and how to contact him/her. Unfortunately, not all Members of Congress have e-mail addresses.

THE MESSAGE

- ◆ Every American deserves to be judged on their merits and abilities and be allowed to contribute to society without facing unfair discrimination.
- ◆ The fact that it is legal in 38 states to fire someone simply because of their perceived sexual orientation is morally, and should be legally, wrong.
- ◆ The legislation currently being considered, H.R. 3685 in the House does not call for quotas or preferences; furthermore, it provides for specific exemptions for the Armed Services and for religious schools and organizations. These bills provide a balanced approach to a serious national problem.
- ◆ The *Employment Non-Discrimination Act* would allow people to pursue employment opportunities without fear of discrimination or reprisal based on who they are. It is another weapon in our ongoing fight against bigotry and intolerance, in our country and in our hearts.
- ◆ We as a nation must embrace diversity in all its forms, as it is our greatest strength and asset.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!

If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

Sample Letter

(date)

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

**RE: SUPPORT FOR THE EMPLOYMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION
ACT, H.R. 3685**

Dear Representative _____;

As your constituent, I am writing today to let you know of my strong support for the *Employment Non-Discrimination Act* (ENDA) (H.R. 3685) and to urge you to support this important legislation when it comes before you on the floor of the House of Representatives. Every American deserves to be judged on their merits and abilities and be allowed to contribute to society without facing unfair discrimination.

The fact that it is legal in 38 states to fire someone simply because of their perceived sexual orientation is wrong. ENDA does not call for quotas or preferences; furthermore, it provides for specific exemptions for the Armed Services and for religious schools and organizations. ENDA provides a balanced approach to a serious national problem.

The *Employment Non-Discrimination Act* would allow people to pursue employment opportunities without fear of discrimination or reprisal based on who they are or who they are perceived to be. It is another weapon in our ongoing fight against bigotry and intolerance, in our country and in our hearts. We must accept and promote the diversity that makes this nation great.

Again, please support H.R. 3685, the *Employment Non-Discrimination Act*. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future to know what you are doing to see the speedy enactment of the *Employment Non-Discrimination Act*, and what I can do to help.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name
and include your address)