



Fact Sheet on House Bill 538

Freedom from Workplace Discrimination Act

Equality Texas Supports HB 538

Bill Number:	House Bill 538
Unofficial Name:	Freedom from Workplace Discrimination Act
Bill Author:	Representative Michael Villarreal
Joint Author:	Representative Ellen Cohen
Short description:	The Freedom from Workplace Discrimination Act would prohibit discriminatory practices in employment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.
Committee Assignment:	State Affairs
Current Status:	2/18/09 – Referred to State Affairs Committee 1/12/09 – Filed

SUPPORTIVE STATEMENTS:

Discrimination against someone because of who they are is wrong, and 80% of Texans believe it's wrong, too. We support legislation and policies that eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression so that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons have the same opportunities and benefits granted to every other Texan.

Over 90% of the Fortune 500 Companies ban discrimination based upon sexual orientation. 40% prohibit such discrimination based upon gender identity/expression. Businesses are leading the way. It's time the State of Texas caught up.

Our state was founded on ideals of individuality and hard work. **No Texan should have to live in fear of losing their livelihood because of who they are.** HB 538 helps ensure they won't.

Current Texas law ensures that employers can't discriminate based on race, religion, gender, national origin, age and disability. This bill would end employer discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Putting an end to discrimination in a state that values hard work and individual effort is simply the right thing to do.

QUICK FACTS:

HB 538 prohibits employers, employment agencies and labor unions from using an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity as the basis for employment decisions, such as hiring, firing, promotion or compensation, or from subjecting an individual to different standards or treatment based on that individual's sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Religious organizations or educational institutions controlled or owned by a religious organization are not affected; also, no preferential treatment or quota is established for hiring persons of diverse sexual orientations or gender identities. HB 538 simply ensures that employers can't discriminate based on real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.