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April 1, 2019

House Committee on the Judiciary
United States House
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, we thank members of the House Committee on the Judiciary for holding this hearing on H.R. 5, the Equality Act, legislation we enthusiastically support.

NEA members believe that LGBTQ students and educators must be safe from all forms of discrimination. The Equality Act would add sexual orientation and gender identity as protected characteristics under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The legislation would help cultivate school environments that are nurturing and supportive, where students experience a greater sense of acceptance and safety.

Discrimination against LGBTQ citizens violates our core American values of equality and fairness. It tells LGBTQ students—already more likely than other students to face bullying and harassment—that they are second-class citizens.

The protections that the Equality Act would afford are crucial for LGBTQ educators as well. Most states lack non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity. This makes LGBTQ educators, critical allies and resources for their students, vulnerable to discrimination themselves.

The Equality Act is an important step in our nation's continuing march toward fairness for all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We thank you once again for holding this important hearing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Egan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association