

February 3, 2020

To the Honorable Members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly:

As bishops of the Episcopal Church and citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we urge the General Assembly to update the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act to protect LGBT Pennsylvanians from discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations.

Such legislation would prohibit discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations such as hotel lodgings or restaurant service against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. It would also preserve existing protections that ensure faith communities have sole discretion in determining whom to hire and whom to include in their religious rituals.

Our support for eliminating discrimination against LGBT people is rooted in our faith. Sacred scripture teaches us that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and must therefore be treated with dignity and respect. As Christians, we follow a savior who spent much of his earthly ministry among the cast off and the cast out, and we are called to advocate on behalf of the vulnerable and the marginalized. Jesus commanded us to love one another, and he listed no exceptions.

Through decades of prayer and struggle, the Episcopal Church has worked to eliminate its own discriminatory policies and practices toward LGBT people. In that struggle, we have come to understand the gifts that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are to their family, their friends and our churches and communities. We are proud to stand with our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and House of Deputies President Gay Clark Jennings, who recently declared our church's commitment to ending discrimination against LGBT people as lead signers on an *amici curiae* brief to the Supreme Court of the United States. Today we stand with them and with LGBT Christians across our communities in asking you to make Pennsylvania a more just state.

We are richer for the presence of LGBT people in Pennsylvania, and it is past time for us to acknowledge that we share a common humanity and must be equal in the eyes of the law.

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. Daniel G. P. Gutiérrez, Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania

The Rt. Rev. Dorsey W. M. McConnell, Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh

The Rt. Rev. Kevin Nichols, Bishop of the Diocese of Bethlehem

The Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe, Bishop of the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania

The Rt. Rev. Audrey Scanlan, Bishop of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania