

April 25, 2019

Senator Jeff Merkley
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Merkley,

The International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR) supports the provisions in the Equality Act (S. 788) that would amend Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to provide protection from employment discrimination that is based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

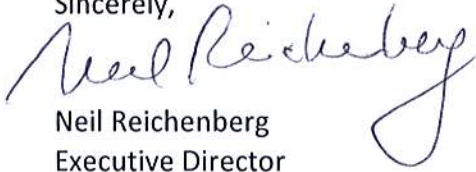
IPMA-HR represents public sector human resource professionals and human resource departments and promotes public sector human resource management excellence. IPMA-HR members are opposed to all forms of employment discrimination and the association embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Your legislation would establish a national framework that would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the protected classes included in the coverage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Currently, there is a split among the judicial circuits on this issue resulting in confusion and inconsistency. While the United States Supreme Court has accepted three cases for review during its next term, passage of the employment provisions in S. 788 would clarify this issue. Applicants and employees should be hired and evaluated based solely on their ability to perform a job. A national standard that ensures non-discrimination is needed.

Employers across all sectors today are struggling to recruit employees. A recent report titled Job One: Reimagine Today's State Government Workforce noted that state chief administrators and state human resource directors cited difficulty attracting new employees as the top workforce management challenge. From 2013 through 2017, the number of job postings has increased by 11% while the number of applicants has declined by 24%. The situation is critical in public safety, where the report noted that the number of applicants has declined by 63%. If government is to provide the vital services their citizens depend on, they cannot afford to exclude potential employees based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Thank you for your sponsorship of this important legislation. Please let me know if IPMA-HR can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Neil Reichenberg". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Neil Reichenberg
Executive Director