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MICHIGAN SENATE DEMOCRATS

Friday, August 11, 2017

Michigan Civil Rights Commission
110 W. Michigan Ave., Ste. 800
Lansing, MI 48933

Co-Chairs Reyes Kopack and Demashkieh:

We are writing in support of Equality Michigan's request for the Michigan Civil Rights Commission to issue an interpretive statement that discrimination based on an individual's gender identity and sexual orientation be included under the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act.

The Commission has already acknowledged that protecting LGBT citizens is the right thing to do. Its 2013 report, "Michigan Department of Civil Rights Report on LGBT Inclusion Under Michigan Law with Recommendations for Action," explains it as follows:

"People, LGBT and heterosexual alike, are leaving not just to chase professional opportunities elsewhere, but also to flee the denial of personal opportunities here. Michigan is not seen as a safe, welcoming state in which all may reside. Testimonials suggest, and the survey confirms, that positive public policy changes, including prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression would be a step toward creating a more welcoming state and equitable social environment."

Michigan loses highly talented professionals and college graduates to other, more welcoming, states each year, and businesses in our state suffer as a result. They lose their competitive advantage in recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce, struggle to attract a diverse customer base, and see a decrease in employee productivity and morale.

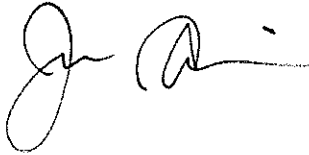
We simply cannot ignore the impact that social issues have on Michigan's economy, which impacts all of us, and if we intend to cultivate a diverse and inclusive state — that we know will yield economic growth — we need to remove these barriers.

As a state, when we fail to protect this large segment of our population, we are actively choosing to disenfranchise our friends and neighbors. Every person should have the opportunity to earn a living and support their family.

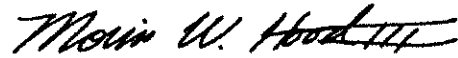
It is not acceptable to enjoy the benefits of LGBT participation in Michigan's economy and culture while their right to some of the most basic human needs is neglected.

We urge you to consider this request to support all of Michigan's citizens.

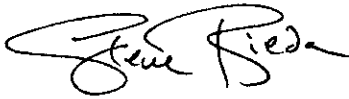
Sincerely,



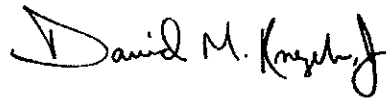
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District 27



Morris W. Hood, III
Minority Floor Leader
District 3



Steve Bieda
State Senator
District 9




David Knezek
State Senator
District 5



Ian Conyers
State Senator
District 4



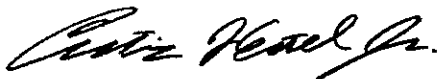
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District 18



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State Senator
District 11



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