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The Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the House
1011 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader
235 Cannon H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi:

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 815, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2013 ("ENDA"). This bill, which passed the Senate with bi-partisan support on November 7, extends protections already granted under federal civil rights law to prohibit workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Passage of ENDA would represent a tremendous stride in advancing our commitment to eliminating all forms of invidious discrimination in the workplace, and I urge you to allow it to proceed to the full House for consideration.

Massachusetts amended its anti-discrimination laws to prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation in 1989, and on gender identity in 2011. Experience has taught us that our workforce and economy are stronger when every person may contribute without being subject to unfair discrimination and harassment. The protections provided by ENDA will help ensure that our workplaces are safe, tolerant and productive environments where all individuals, irrespective of their sexual orientation and gender identity, may earn a living and support their families.

The extension of anti-discrimination protections not only benefits employees covered by the protected categories, but also their co-workers and employers. Leaders in the private sector have already recognized the numerous benefits of providing these important protections to employees, as over 96% of Fortune 500 companies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Doing so makes good business sense, because having such policies allows these companies to attract and retain the most qualified applicants, save money on retraining, and motivate their workforces to maximize productivity. When discrimination is removed as a barrier to success, both workers and companies are better positioned to thrive.

As Massachusetts' Attorney General, I am entrusted with protecting the civil rights of all my state's residents, and am proud that Massachusetts is one of 21 states that provide sexual orientation and/or gender identity workplace protections. However, the current patchwork of protections is unfair to employees and employers alike, and individuals facing discrimination and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity deserve more comprehensive national protections.

I urge you to expeditiously bring this bill to the floor for consideration by the full House. Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Cordially,



Martha Coakley
Massachusetts Attorney General

cc: The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
The Honorable Edward Markey
The Honorable Richard Neal
The Honorable James McGovern
The Honorable Niki Tsongas
The Honorable Joseph P. Kennedy III
The Honorable John Tierney
The Honorable Michael Capuano
The Honorable Stephen Lynch
The Honorable William Keating