



**NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
REALTORS®**

July 24, 2023

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cory Booker
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Merkley, Baldwin, and Booker:

The National Association of REALTORS®, representing 1.5 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries, writes in support of S.5, “The Equality Act,” particularly its inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity as prohibited bases for discrimination under the Fair Housing Act.

As stewards of the right to own, use, and transfer private property, our livelihood and business as REALTORS® depend upon an open housing market that is free from discrimination. Discrimination in housing transactions limits the property rights of sellers and buyers and the ability of REALTORS® to conduct business. More fundamentally, housing discrimination is repugnant to our shared sense of fairness and decency. For over half a century, the Fair Housing Act has helped level the playing field by protecting housing providers and consumers from the adverse impacts of discrimination based on race, color, religion, and national origin, and later, sex, familial status, and disability.

In 2009 and in 2013, REALTORS® adopted policy affirming that the right to buy or rent housing of choice should not be abridged due to a homeseeker’s sexual orientation or gender identity. Our commitment to equal housing opportunity is enshrined in NAR’s Code of Ethics, which commits REALTORS® to provide equal professional service to all without regard to sexual orientation or gender identity, in addition to the other prohibited bases for discrimination under the Fair Housing Act.

REALTORS® celebrated the Supreme Court’s decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, in which it held that the prohibition on discrimination “because of sex” under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 included discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. We also applauded HUD’s quick action to implement the January 20, 2021 Executive Order on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation.

By enacting the Equality Act, Congress can codify what is effectively the law of the land. As NAR continues to work to ensure the American Dream is available and accessible to all Americans, we stand ready to work with Congress to support and promote the Equality Act.

Sincerely,

Kenny Parcell
2023 President
National Association of REALTORS®