

June 14, 2022

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
House of Representatives
1511 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney and Congressman Grijalva:

As a group of 156 organizations committed to advancing equality and opportunity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and other sexual and gender diverse (LGBTQI+) people in the United States, we are writing to voice our enthusiastic support for the amendment in the nature of a substitute and passage of the LGBTQI+ Data Inclusion Act (H.R. 4176).

The LGBTQ Data Inclusion Act, as introduced, would facilitate the collection of voluntary, self-disclosed demographic data on sexual orientation and gender identity across federal surveys. The amendment in the nature of a substitute would add variations in sex characteristics (also known as intersex traits) to the data voluntarily collected, and would accordingly change the bill title to the LGBTQI+ Data Inclusion Act. Collecting this information in federally supported surveys (such as the Current Population Survey and National Health Interview Survey) is essential to improving the well-being of LGBTQI+ populations across key areas of life. For example, although data are limited, research indicates that LGBTQI+ communities experience disparities across multiple domains of life compared to non-LGBTQI+ populations. This includes evidence of higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and economic instability;ⁱ experiences of homelessness and housing insecurity;ⁱⁱ worse mental and physical health outcomes;ⁱⁱⁱ heightened barriers to access adequate health care^{iv}; and widespread experiences of discrimination^v. Due to the intersecting forces of racism, xenophobia, ableism, ageism, and transphobia, for LGBTQI+ communities of color, LGBTQI+ people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ older adults, and transgender people, these disparities are often even more pronounced.^{vi} LGBTQI+-inclusive data collection is a critical tool to better identify and address these disparities and to promote more equitable outcomes and opportunities for LGBTQI+ communities.^{vii}

Currently, most surveys fielded by the federal government do not collect data on sexual orientation, gender identity, or variations in sex characteristics.^{viii} For example, although some surveys, such as the decennial census and American Community Survey, ask questions that allow for the identification of cohabitating same-sex couples, it is estimated that only 1 in 6 LGBTQ individuals are captured by those kinds of questions.^{ix} Although progress has been made in recent years, the overall lack of routine

data collection on sexual orientation, gender identity, and variations in sex characteristics poses a significant obstacle for policymakers, researchers, service providers, and advocates dedicated to improving the wellbeing of LGBTQI+ communities, especially those living at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities.

The federal government collects survey data on a wide range of subjects and populations^x and is uniquely positioned to engage in LGBTQI+-inclusive data collection to generate accurate, consistent, and representative data at a scale that allows for the disaggregation necessary to describe the diversity of LGBTQI+ communities.^{xi} As demonstrated in the recent consensus report by the National Academies, questions about sexual orientation, gender identity, and variations in sex characteristics can and should be added to federally supported surveys.^{xii} By doing so, federal agencies can take meaningful steps to fulfill the Biden-Harris administration's priorities to promote equity for LGBTQI+ and other underserved communities through various actions, including but not limited to expanding data collection efforts.

Passage of this bill is essential to better understand the experiences of LGBTQI+ communities, generate policy solutions that are inclusive of LGBTQI+ people and their needs, and to evaluate the effectiveness of those policies to reduce disparities and advance equity. Again, we strongly support the amendment in the nature of a substitute for the LGBTQI+ Data Inclusion Act (H.R. 4176) and urge Congress to quickly take up and adopt this important proposal.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact Caroline Medina, cmolina@americanprogress.org, and Madeline Shepherd mshpherd@americanprogress.org with any questions.

Signed in partnership,

1Hood Power

A Better Balance

Ace and Aro Alliance of Central Ohio

Advocates for Youth

AGE of Central Texas

AIDS Action Baltimore

AIDS Alabama South

AIDS Foundation Chicago

allgo

American Academy of HIV Medicine

American Psychological Association

American Public Health Association

American Trans Resource Hub
Amida Care
APLA Health
Arizona Trans Youth and Parent Organization
Athlete Ally
Atlanta Pride Committee
Austin LGBT Coalition on Aging
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Believe Out Loud
BiNet USA
Brooklyn Community Pride Center, Inc.
Cathedral of Hope United Church of Christ
Center for American Progress
Center for Applied Transgender Studies
Center for Black Equity
Center for Disability Rights
Center for Economic and Policy Research
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Reproductive Rights
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Colors+
Compton's Table
Corktown Health
Council for Global Equality
CrescentCare
Damien Center
DBGM, Inc.
Dolan Research International, LLC
Elton John AIDS Foundation
Engel O'Neil Advertising & Public Relations
Equality California
Equality Illinois
Equitas Health
Erie County Dems LGBTQIA+ Caucus

Erie Gay News
Family Eldercare
Family Equality
Family Values @ Work
Fenway Health
Freedom for All Americans
Gay Elder Circle
Georgia Equality
GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
GLSEN
GLSEN New Mexico
Health Equity Alliance for LGBTQ+ New Mexicans
HealthHIV
Hetrick-Martin Institute
Hispanic Federation
HIV + Hepatitis Policy Institute
HIV Medicine Association
Howard Brown Health
Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation
Human Rights Campaign
interACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
John Snow, Inc.
Justice in Aging
Kachemak bay Family Planning
Lancaster LGBTQ+ Coalition
Lawrence
Lee McAvoy, LMHC
Let's Kick ASS AIDS Survivor Syndrome
LGBTQ Center OC
LGBTQ Community Center of Southern Nevada
LGBTQ Victory Institute
LGBTQ+ & Equity Consulting, LLC

LGBTQ+ Spectrum of Findlay
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Lyon-Martin Community Health Services
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
Methodist Federation for Social Action
Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH)
Minority Veterans of America
Movement Advancement Project
Naper Pride
NASTAD
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition for LGBTQ Health
National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC)
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National LGBT Cancer Network
National LGBTQ Task Force
National LGBTQ+ Bar Association
National Organization for Women
National Women's Law Center
National Working Positive Coalition
New York Transgender Advocacy Group
North Carolina AIDS Action Network
NW PA Pride Alliance, Inc.
one-n-ten
Out & Equal Workplace Advocates
Out To Innovate
Out Youth
OutCenter Southwest Michigan
OutNebraska
Outright Vermont
PFLAG National
PGH Equality Center
Philanthrofund Foundation

Positive Women's Network-USA
PowerOn, a program of LGBT Technology Institute
PrEP4All
Prevention Access Campaign
Pride at Work
Pride Center of New Jersey
Prism United
Project Weber/RENEW
Resource Center
Roots of Change
SAGE
SAGE Metro Detroit
San Diego Pride
SF LGBT Center
SIECUS
Silver State Equality-Nevada
Still Bisexual
The AIDS Institute
The Center on Colfax, Denver, CO
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The LGBT Center of Greater Reading
the Montrose Center
The Source LGBT+ Center
The Trevor Project
The Well Project
Thriving Mental Health Counseling NY PLLC
Trans Maryland
Transgender Education Network of Texas (TENT)
Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico
Transhealth Northampton
Treatment Action Group
U.S. People Living with HIV Caucus
Umoja Behavioral Health PC
Union for Reform Judaism

University of Nevada Las Vegas
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Vivent Health
Waves Ahead Corp
We Are Family
Whitman-Walker Institute
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
YWCA USA

ⁱ M.V. Lee Badgett, Soon Kyu Choi, and Bianca D.M. Wilson, “LGBT Poverty in the United States: A Study of Differences Between Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Groups” (Los Angeles: Williams Institute, 2019), available at <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/National-LGBT-Poverty-Oct-2019.pdf>; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, “Understanding the Well-Being of LGBTQI+ Populations” (Washington: 2020), available at <https://www.nap.edu/read/25877/chapter/1>.

ⁱⁱ Adam P. Romero, Shoshana K. Goldberg, Luis A. Vasquez, “LGBT People and Housing Affordability, Discrimination, and Homelessness” (Los Angeles: Williams Institute, 2020), available at <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-housing-instability/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, “Understanding the Well-Being of LGBTQI+ Populations” (Washington: 2020), available at <https://www.nap.edu/read/25877/chapter/1>; Amy Rosenwohl-Mack et al., “A National Study on the Physical and Mental Health of Intersex Adults in the U.S.,” PLoS ONE (2020) 15(10): e0240088, available at <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0240088>.

^{iv} Ibid; L. Zeeman and K. Aranda, “A Systematic Review of the Health and Healthcare Inequalities for People with Intersex Variance,” International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (2020), 17(18): 6533, available at <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17186533>.

^v Sharita Gruberg, Lindsay Mahowald, and John Halpin, “The State of the LGBTQ Community in 2020: A National Public Opinion Study” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2020), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/state-lgbtq-community-2020/>; Caroline Medina and Lindsay Mahowald, “Key Issues Facing People With Intersex Traits” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2021), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/key-issues-facing-people-intersex-traits/>.

^{vi} See, for example, Lindsay Mahowald, “LGBTQ People of Color Encounter Heightened Discrimination,” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2021), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/lgbtq-people-color-encounter-heightened-discrimination/>; Caroline Medina and others, “The United States Must Advance Economic Security for Disabled LGBTQI+ Workers” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2021), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/united-states-must-advance-economic-security-disabled-lgbtqi-workers/>; Caroline Medina and others, “Protecting and Advancing Health Care for Transgender Adult Communities” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2021), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/protecting-advancing-health-care-transgender-adult-communities/>.

^{vii} National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, “Measuring Sex, Gender Identity, and Sexual Orientation” (Washington: The National Academies Press, 2022), available at <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/26424/measuring-sex-gender-identity-and-sexual-orientation>.

^{viii} National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, “Understanding the Well-Being of LGBTQI+ Populations” (Washington: 2020), available at <https://www.nap.edu/read/25877/chapter/1>.

^{ix} Caroline Medina and Lindsay Mahowald, “Collecting Data About LGBTQI+ and Other Sexual and Gender-Diverse Communities,” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2022), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/collecting-data-about-lgbtqi-and-other-sexual-and-gender-diverse-communities/>

^x Jennifer M. Ortman and Karen L. Parker, “Why Do Federal Agencies Ask About Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) on Surveys?” (Washington: Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology, 2021), available at https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/pdf/FCSM_21_01_062221.pdf

^{xi} National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, “Understanding the Well-Being of LGBTQI+ Populations” (Washington: 2020), available at <https://www.nap.edu/read/25877/chapter/1>.

^{xii} Caroline Medina and Lindsay Mahowald, “Collecting Data About LGBTQI+ and Other Sexual and Gender-Diverse Communities,” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2022), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/collecting-data-about-lgbtqi-and-other-sexual-and-gender-diverse-communities/>