

## 1. change comes home-

Dear Friend:

This October, we'll gather in DC from all over the country to march with one simple demand: **full federal equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Americans in all matters governed by civil law. Now.**

Throughout the month of August, we have another special opportunity. While our US Representatives return home for a month of recess, we will meet with them to share our stories and to build a national movement from the ground up. If you've never met with your Representative before, don't worry...there's nothing to be afraid of! It doesn't take any special skills or experience. It just takes a passion for equal rights, and a willingness to speak up for what's right.

We encourage you to meet with your US Senator as well, but this toolkit is designed to support your visit to your Representative. By meeting with your Representative, you're helping accomplish several things:

1. We will show Congress that we are everywhere, and that we're all part of a national movement for full equality.
2. We will ask our Representatives to support specific issues that affect our lives.
3. We will show that the National Equality March in October is part of a sustained campaign, and that we're not going away.

### Here is how you can get involved:

1. Check out the map on the Equality Across America website to see if anyone is organizing in your Congressional District. If no one is organizing in your district yet, check out this page to add your group to the map:  
  
<http://equalityacrossamerica.org/organize>
2. Find a group of 3-5 friends to visit your US Representative. If more people in your Congressional District want to visit, that's great! Organize more than one visit, with 3-5 people each.

3. See the attached instructions on how to set up a visit. Even if you can't get a personal visit with your Representative, you can at least meet with her or his aides.
4. Let us know when you have scheduled a visit:  
  
<http://equalitycrossamerica.org/scheduled>
5. Check out the attached tip sheet for your local media. A couple days before your visit, edit the sheet to include your group's information, and send it out to your local press.
6. Check out the attached sheet of talking points on four key legislative issues. Choose three of these you would like to discuss during your visit. Make sure to study them, and be prepared to discuss the talking points.
7. When you meet with your US Representative, just follow this simple formula. Introduce yourselves, and let your Representative know that you're part of a national movement for full equality for LGBT Americans. Each of you should take 1-2 minutes to share your own story about why equality matters to you. Then you should discuss the talking points of the three issues you've chosen, and ask your Representative if she or he will support you on these issues.
8. You might also meet with your State Legislators to ask for their support on any specific issues in your state. See the attached resource sheet to learn about legislative issues in your state, and to find others who are organizing in your Congressional District.
9. Let us know how your visit went! Fill out the form on this page:  
  
<http://equalitycrossamerica.org/reportback>

And of course, please reach out to us with any questions or thoughts you have. We'll do our best to support you however we can. You can reach us here:

[info@equalitycrossamerica.org](mailto:info@equalitycrossamerica.org)

Peace,  
Join the Impact  
Equality Across America  
And the Change Comes Home crew

## 2. schedule a visit-

You can easily schedule a visit with your US Representative. First, you can find the phone number, fax number, and email address of your US Representative here:

<http://equalityacrossamerica.org/lookup>

We recommend that you request your meeting in writing, either by email or by fax. If you do not hear back from them, follow up by phone. You may need to be persistent in following up until an actual meeting is confirmed. They are probably not trying to avoid you...they are simply overwhelmed with requests for meetings an in already packed schedule! If you speak to a scheduler, make sure to get her or his name in case you need to call back.

Below is a sample letter that you can use. Note that the legislation mentioned in the letter is just an example. Your team may choose to reference other pieces of legislation.

# Join the Impact

*(Date)*

Attn: *(Name of scheduler, if known)*

The Honorable *(Name of your US Rep)*

United States Representative

*(Local Address)*

*(Fax #)*

Ms./Mr. *(Name of scheduler):*

I am writing to request an appointment with Congresswoman/Congressman *(Name of your US Rep)* at our district office to discuss the needs of federal legislation for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community. Legislation of interest includes the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), the Military Readiness Enhancement Act (DADT), and the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

We are requesting a meeting in August; and while my preference would be for *(day of week), (month, day and year)*, we can certainly be flexible for the Congresswoman's/Congressman's schedule.

Those in attendance at the meeting will be:

- *Name, title and address for each attendee*

Please let me know when the Congressman/Congresswoman is available. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,  
*(Your name)*

*(Your address)*

*(Your telephone number)*

*(Your email address)*

### 3. tell the local media-

Here's a sample tip sheet that you can send to your local media a couple days before your meeting.

\*\*\*TIP SHEET\*\*\*    \*\*\*TIP SHEET\*\*\*    \*\*\*TIP SHEET\*\*\*

## **Grassroots Lobbying for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights**

Local group meets with *(name of US Representative)* for full federal rights.

**WHO:** *(List the names of the key organizers participating in the event.)*

**Additional organizers:** *(include any other relevant names of local organizations or people involved.)*

**WHEN:** *(Insert the date of your visit here.)*

**WHERE:** *(The in-district office of your US Representative.)*

**WHAT:** Our group will meet with *(name of your US Rep)* on *(date)* to discuss full federal equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Americans. This meeting is happening in conjunction with similar meetings across the country as part of the build up to the National Equality March in Washington, DC, this October 10-11. At this meeting, we will discuss full federal rights, and we will focus on several key legislative issues, including:

- Employment Non-Discrimination Act
- Uniting American Families Act
- Repeal of Defense of Marriage Act
- Repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell

This visit is being organized as part of the "Change Comes Home" campaign of Join the Impact (<http://jointheimpact.com>) and Equality Across America (<http://equalityacrossamerica.org>).

**(Include name, phone number, and email for your primary media contact here.)**

## 4. learn about the issues-

Before your meeting, decide which of the following key legislative issues you will discuss with your Rep. We have provided talking points for four issues, but we recommend that you choose three to discuss during your meeting.

You don't have to know everything about these issues. Just speak from your heart about why they matter, and be prepared to share any personal stories to illustrate their importance. These talking points will give you the key information you need to advocate.

1. **Repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT)**
2. **Repeal of Federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)**
3. **Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)**
4. **Uniting American Families Act (UAFA)**

## Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) Repeal

### Bill Number

Military Readiness Enhancement Act (MREA) would repeal DADT.

House of Representatives: HR 1283

Senate: Bill not introduced as of 8/5/09

### What is this bill?

DADT is a discriminatory law passed in 1993 that mandates the discharge of openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual service members of the US Armed Forces.

### Why is it important?

- DADT costs more than \$30 million a year in recruiting and training replacement troops.
- More than 13,000 troops have been dismissed since DADT's introduction in 1993, averaging two discharges per day. This includes 757 mission critical roles and 322 language experts.
- The Urban Institute estimates there are 65,000 gay and lesbian service members and one million veterans.
- 24 nations, including Israel, Great Britain, and Canada, have lifted the ban on LGBT service members and reported no difficulties with integration.

### Where does my Representative stand on MREA?

Visit <http://www.thomas.gov> for detailed information, including which legislators have signed on to the bill as co-sponsors. Search HR 1283 with the "bill number" button selected.

### Where can I go to learn more?

Visit the website of the Servicemember's Legal Defense Network for detailed resources about DADT and why it must be repealed.

<http://www.sldn.org>

## Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) Repeal

### Bill Number

No bill has been introduced in the House or the Senate to repeal DOMA as of 8/5/09.

### What is this bill?

The Federal Defense of Marriage Act is a bill that was passed in 1996. It includes two provisions that stand in the way of marriage equality.

1. DOMA defines marriage federally as a legal union between a man and a woman.
2. DOMA stipulates that states need not recognize legal marriages performed in other states.

### Why is it important?

- More than 1100 federal benefits are denied to same-sex couples, even those married in states that have legalized same-sex marriage.
- Some of these benefits include filing joint taxes, Social Security survivor payments, and inheritance.
- Many businesses and hospitals use DOMA to deny health benefits and visitation rights to same-sex couples.

### Where does my Representative stand on DOMA?

We need to work with our legislators to build support for the introduction of a bill to repeal DOMA. When a bill to repeal DOMA has been introduced, this information can be found at <http://www.thomas.gov> by searching for a bill number.

### Where can I go to learn more?

Please visit the website of the Human Rights Campaign for details about states that have won marriage equality, and for more reasons that marriage equality is important.

<http://www.hrc.org/issues/5517.htm>

## Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)

### Bill Number

House of Representatives: HR 3017

Senate: S. 1584

### What is this bill?

ENDA extends current federal non-discrimination law to prevent employers from discriminating based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

### Why is it important?

- Currently only 12 states and more than 100 localities include sexual orientation and gender identity in their non-discrimination laws.
- Federal legislation is necessary to consistently address workplace discrimination.
- Working people need to be able to apply for, perform, advance in, and keep their jobs without fear of discrimination.

### Where does my Representative stand on ENDA?

Visit <http://www.thomas.gov> for detailed information, including which legislators have signed on to the bill as co-sponsors. Search HR 3017 with the “bill number” button selected.

### Where can I go to learn more?

Visit the website of the National Center for Transgender Equality for more resources on ENDA.

<http://nctequality.org>

## Uniting American Families Act (UAFA)

### Bill Number

House of Representatives: HR 1024

Senate: S. 424

### What is this bill?

UAFA would eliminate discrimination in immigration laws by permitting permanent partners of US citizens to sponsor their foreign-born partners for immigration.

### Why is it important?

- Bi-national families are often forced to separate or move abroad to stay together.
- The bill is aimed at permitting permanent partners of US citizens and residents the ability to obtain lawful permanent resident status.
- High profile cases include the attempted deportation of Shirley Tan, and the resignation of Mayor Lown of San Angelo, TX, who resigned to be with his partner from Mexico.

### Where does my Representative stand on UAFA?

Visit <http://www.thomas.gov> for detailed information, including which legislators have signed on to the bill as co-sponsors. Search HR 1024 with the “bill number” button selected.

### Where can I go to learn more?

Visit the website of Immigration Equality for detailed information about UAFA.

<http://immigrationequality.org/template.php?pageid=42>

## 5. get local-

Although our campaign focuses on federal equality, we encourage you to meet with your state legislators as well. Here are resources for you to find more information on what is happening in your state and to connect with other folks in your district.

### **ALABAMA**

Equality Alabama  
P.O. Box 13733  
Birmingham, AL 35202  
205-445-4838  
[www.equalityalabama.org](http://www.equalityalabama.org)

Equality Fund of Alabama  
P.O. Box 401  
Montgomery, AL 36101  
[www.equalityfundalabama.org](http://www.equalityfundalabama.org)

### **ARIZONA**

Equality Arizona  
PO Box 25044  
Phoenix, AZ 85002  
602-650-0900  
[www.equalityarizona.org](http://www.equalityarizona.org)

### **ARKANSAS**

Center for Artistic Revolution  
P.O. Box 2300  
North Little Rock, AR 72114  
501-244-9690  
[www.artisticrevolution.org/](http://www.artisticrevolution.org/)

### **CALIFORNIA**

Courage Campaign  
[www.couragecampaign.org](http://www.couragecampaign.org)

Equality California  
2370 Market Street, 2nd floor  
San Francisco, CA 94114  
415-581-0005  
[www.eqca.org](http://www.eqca.org)

### **CONNECTICUT**

Love Makes a Family  
576 Farmington Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06105  
860-525-7777  
[www.lmfct.org](http://www.lmfct.org)

### **FLORIDA**

Equality Florida  
PO Box 13184,  
St. Petersburg FL 33733  
813-870-3735  
[www.eqfl.org](http://www.eqfl.org)

Securing Our Children's Rights, Inc.  
11705 Boyette Rd. Suite 238  
Tampa, FL 33569  
[www.ourchildrensrights.org/](http://www.ourchildrensrights.org/)

### **GEORGIA**

Georgia Equality  
P.O. Box 95425  
Atlanta, GA 30347  
404-327-9898  
[www.georgiaequality.org](http://www.georgiaequality.org)

# Join the Impact

## **EQUALITY★ACROSS★AMERICA**

\*\*\*\*\*EQUALITYACROSSAMERICA.ORG\*\*\*\*\*

### MEGA Family Project

PO Box 29631

Atlanta, GA 30359

404-808-3350

[www.megafamilyproject.org](http://www.megafamilyproject.org)

### **HAWAII**

Family Equality Coalition

P.O. Box 11444

Honolulu, HI 96828

808-673-5222

[www.familyequalitycoalition.org/](http://www.familyequalitycoalition.org/)

### **IDAHO**

Idaho Equality Coalition

PO Box 704

Boise, ID 83701

208-331-7028

[www.idahoequality.org](http://www.idahoequality.org)

### **ILLINOIS**

Equality Illinois

3712 N. Broadway, Suite 125

Chicago, IL 60613

773-477-7173

[www.eqil.org](http://www.eqil.org)

### **INDIANA**

Indiana Equality

P.O. Box 20621

Indianapolis, IN 46220-0621

888-567-0750

[www.indianaequality.org](http://www.indianaequality.org)

### **IOWA**

One Iowa

500 E. Locust St. Suite 300

Des Moines, IA 50309

515-288-4019

[www.oneiowa.org](http://www.oneiowa.org)

### **KENTUCKY**

Kentucky Fairness Alliance

PO Box 1280

Frankfort, KY 40602

866-205-3239

[www.kentuckyfairness.org](http://www.kentuckyfairness.org)

### **LOUISIANA**

Forum for Equality

336 Lafayette Street, Suite 200

New Orleans, LA 70130

504-569-9156

[www.forumforequality.com](http://www.forumforequality.com)

### **MAINE**

EqualityMaine

P.O. Box 1951

Portland, ME 04104

207-761-3732

[www.equalitymaine.org](http://www.equalitymaine.org)

### **MARYLAND**

Equality Maryland

1319 Apple Ave.

Silver Spring, MD 20910

301-587-7500

[www.equalitymaryland.org](http://www.equalitymaryland.org)

# Join the Impact

## MASSACHUSETTS

MassEquality  
11 Beacon St., Suite 1125  
Boston, MA 02108  
617-878-2300  
[www.massequality.org](http://www.massequality.org)

Massachusetts Transgender Political  
Coalition (MTPC)  
PO Box 301897  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
617.983.0219  
[www.masstpc.org](http://www.masstpc.org)

## MICHIGAN

Triangle Foundation  
19641 W. Seven Mile Rd.  
Detroit, MI 48219  
313-537-3323  
[www.tri.org](http://www.tri.org)

Michigan Equality  
P.O. Box 13133  
Lansing, MI 48901  
517-484-5120  
[www.michiganequality.org](http://www.michiganequality.org)

## MINNESOTA

Outfront Minnesota  
310 38th Street, Suite 204  
Minneapolis, MN 55409  
612-822-0127  
[www.outfront.org](http://www.outfront.org)

## MISSOURI

PROMO  
438 N. Skinker Blvd.,  
St. Louis, MO 63130  
314-862-4900  
[www.promoonline.org](http://www.promoonline.org)

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire Freedom to Marry  
Coalition  
P.O. Box 4064  
Concord, NH 3302  
603-223-0309  
[www.nhftm.org](http://www.nhftm.org)

## NEW JERSEY

Garden State Equality  
500 Bloomfield Ave.  
Montclair, New Jersey 07042  
973.473.5428  
[www.gardenstateequality.org](http://www.gardenstateequality.org)

NJ Lesbian & Gay Coalition  
P.O. Box 11335  
New Brunswick, NJ 08906  
732-828-6772  
[www.njlgc.org](http://www.njlgc.org)

## NEW MEXICO

Equality New Mexico  
1410 Coal Ave SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87104  
505-224-2766  
[www.eqnm.org](http://www.eqnm.org)

# Join the Impact

## **NEW YORK**

Empire State Pride Agenda  
16 West 22nd St., 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10010  
212-627-0305  
[www.prideagenda.org](http://www.prideagenda.org)

New York Association for Gender Rights  
Advocacy (NYAGRA)  
24 W. 25th St., 9th floor  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 675-3288, ext. 338  
[www.nyagra.com](http://www.nyagra.com)

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

Equality North Carolina  
P.O. Box 28768  
Raleigh, NC 27611  
919-829-0343  
[www.equalitync.org](http://www.equalitync.org)

## **OHIO**

Equality Ohio  
50 West Broad St., Suite 1970  
Columbus, OH 43215  
614-224-0400  
[www.equalityohio.org/](http://www.equalityohio.org/)

## **OKLAHOMA**

Oklahomans for Equality  
P.O. Box 2687  
Tulsa, OK 74101  
918-743-4297  
[www.okeq.org](http://www.okeq.org)

## **OREGON**

Basic Rights Oregon  
P.O. Box 40625  
Portland, OR 97240  
503-222-6151  
[www.basicrights.org](http://www.basicrights.org)

## **PENNSYLVANIA**

Equality Advocates Pennsylvania  
1211 Chestnut St., Suite 605  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
215-731-1447  
[www.equalitypa.org](http://www.equalitypa.org)

## **RHODE ISLAND**

Marriage Equality Rhode Island  
99 Bald Hill Rd.  
Cranston, RI 02920  
401-463-5368 x 345  
[www.marriageequalityri.org](http://www.marriageequalityri.org)

## **SOUTH CAROLINA**

SC Equality Coalition  
PO Box 544  
Columbia, SC 29202  
803-708-6442  
[www.scequality.org](http://www.scequality.org)

## **SOUTH DAKOTA**

Equality South Dakota  
610 Grand Ave.  
Harrisburg, SD 57032  
[www.eqsd.org](http://www.eqsd.org)

# Join the Impact

## TENNESSEE

Tennessee Equality Project  
PO Box 3308015  
Nashville, TN 37203  
615-390-5252  
[www.tnep.org](http://www.tnep.org)

Tennessee Transgender Political  
Coalition  
P.O. Box 92335  
Nashville, TN 37209  
615-293-6199  
[www.ttgpac.com](http://www.ttgpac.com)

## TEXAS

Equality Texas  
PO Box 2340  
Austin, TX 78768  
512-474-5475  
[www.equalitytexas.org](http://www.equalitytexas.org)

## UTAH

Equality Utah  
175 West 200 South, Suite 3001  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101  
801-355-3479  
[www.equalityutah.org](http://www.equalityutah.org)

## VERMONT

Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force  
P.O. Box 481  
Burlington, VT 05402  
802-388-2633  
[www.vtfreetomarry.org](http://www.vtfreetomarry.org)

Outright Vermont  
P.O. Box 5235  
Burlington, VT 05402  
1-800-GLB-CHAT (1-800-452-2428)  
[www.outrightvt.org](http://www.outrightvt.org)

## VIRGINIA

Equality Virginia  
403 N. Robinson St.  
Richmond, VA 23220  
804-643-4816  
[www.equalityvirginia.org](http://www.equalityvirginia.org)

## WASHINGTON

Equal Rights Washington  
209 Harvard Avenue East  
Seattle, WA 98102  
206-324-2570  
[www.equalrightswashington.org](http://www.equalrightswashington.org)

## WEST VIRGINIA

Fairness West Virginia, Inc.  
PO Box 315  
Charleston, WV 25414  
304-932-4597  
[fairnesswv.org](http://fairnesswv.org)

## WISCONSIN

Fair Wisconsin  
122 State St, Suite 500  
Madison, WI 53703  
608-441-0143  
[www.fairwisconsin.com](http://www.fairwisconsin.com)

## 6. acknowledgements-

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