

Resolution 5 – 2013 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
In Support of Legislation Prohibiting Employment Discrimination on the
Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity
Submitted by the Reconciling in Christ Ministry Team

Whereas, It is currently legal in 29 states to discriminate in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation, and in 34 on the basis of gender identity; and

Whereas, Employees should be judged on the quality of their work and nothing more; and

Whereas, Legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for a broad religious exemption, has been introduced in every Congress since 1994; and

Whereas, The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 1397/S. 812) is an example of such legislation; and

Whereas, The ELCA's Social Statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* states that "While Lutherans hold various convictions regarding lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, this church is united on many critical issues", including;

- 1) Support for "legislation and policies to protect civil rights and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services",
- 2) Calling upon "congregations and members of this church to welcome, care for, and support same-gender couples and their families and to advocate for their legal protection",
- 3) Advocating for "public policies that support and protect families", and
- 4) Attending to the need for "equal protection, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities under the law, and just treatment for those with varied sexual orientation and gender identity" in that "[s]uch individuals are disproportionately and negatively affected by patterns of stigma, discrimination, and abuse"; and

Whereas, The 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed a memorial by approximately an 80% majority to endorse the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and to affirm advocacy "in support of laws barring discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation" (see CWA resolution CA97.06.29); therefore, be it

Resolved, That this Assembly memorialize the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call upon Congress to take up and pass legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for religious exemptions; and

Resolved, That this Assembly memorialize the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, synodical bishops, clergy, and other church leaders to speak publicly in support of legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for religious exemptions; and

Resolved, That this Assembly memorialize the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge lay leaders to make this Assembly's position and the ELCA's position known to their Members of Congress in the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate.