



Message from EDC President: Major LGBTQIA Victory Reached in the Supreme Court—More Work Remains

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 16, 2020) — In a 6-3 decision reached yesterday morning, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that if an employer fires an employee on the sole basis of that individual identifying as LGBTQIA, this unequivocally violates Title VII discrimination protections in the Civil Rights Act, with the majority opinion written by Justice Neil M. Gorsuch.

The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action joins advocacy organizations around the country in celebrating this landmark decision by the Supreme Court. Prior to Monday’s decision, it was fully legal in more than half of the states in the country for employers to lay off someone simply for identifying as LGBTQIA.¹ This Supreme Court decision will extend basic workplace discrimination protections to millions of LGBTQIA Americans—a protection long overdue.

According to a study released this year, individuals who experience LGBTQIA-based discrimination in the workplace were twice as likely to have attempted suicide in the past year.² This ruling’s impact on the lives of LGBTQIA persons across the country is the latest indication that our voices will not be silenced and our fight for fundamental rights continues.

While this decision will rightly be celebrated by communities across the country, the EDC intimately understands the magnitude of this decision, as LGBTQIA individuals are at a higher risk for the development of an eating disorder due to unique stressors. While gay males only represent 5% of the total male population, 42% of males with an eating disorder identify as gay.³ Overall, elevated rates of binge-eating and purging was found to be more common for people who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or mostly heterosexual in comparison to their heterosexual peers.⁴

However, while this is a momentous victory, it by no means represents the final victory for the LGBTQIA population in its long fight against legally sanctioned discrimination. Last Friday, the Trump administration and the Department of Health & Human Services finalized a rule related to Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, that would remove nondiscrimination protections for transgender and nonbinary individuals. This rule allows health care providers, hospitals and health insurance companies that receive federal funding to refuse to provide care or coverage for individuals that identify as LGBTQIA. Further, the cruelty of releasing this final rule during a pandemic and on the anniversary of the tragic Pulse Nightclub shooting in Florida underscores our need to once again fight for our humanity.

The EDC will continue to fight alongside each of you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chase Bannister', is positioned above the typed name.

Chase Bannister, MDiv, MSW, LCSW, CEDS
President, Board of Directors
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action

The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a Washington, DC-based, federal advocacy organization comprised of advocacy organizations, academics, treatment providers, family/loved ones of children with eating disorders and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States. Additional resources can also be found at eatingdisorderscoalition.org.

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¹ Liptak, A. (2020). Civil Rights Law Protects Gay and Transgender Workers, Supreme Court Rules. Retrieved 15 June 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/us/gay-transgender-workers-supreme-court.html>

² The Trevor Project Commends Supreme Court for Historic, Life-saving Decision Affirming LGBTQ Workers’ Rights – The Trevor Project. (2020). Retrieved 15 June 2020, from https://www.thetrevorproject.org/trvr_press/the-trevor-project-commends-supreme-court-for-historic-life-saving-decision-affirming-lgbtq-workers-rights/

³ Eating Disorders in LGBTQ+ Populations. (2020). Retrieved 15 June 2020, from <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/learn/general-information/lgbtq>

⁴*Ibid.*