



**Issue
Fact
Sheet**

**Employment
Discrimination**

**The State should not discriminate against its own employees.
Support Senate Bill 1534 and House Bill 1789**

North Carolina's State Personnel Act leaves out an important category. Under state personnel law, all state departments and agencies and all local political subdivisions are prohibited from discriminating in employment and compensation on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, or handicapping condition (NCGS §126-16). However, the current law does not include protections on the basis of sexual orientation, leaving an entire class of government employees open to unfair treatment.

North Carolinians hold their government to a higher standard. They expect the State to treat its employees fairly. They expect the government to hire the most qualified candidates without regard to irrelevant characteristics like race, religion, sex, disability, and sexual orientation.

Anti-LGBT discrimination is a real problem. North Carolinians face discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and every day, even though most North Carolinians believe this category should receive the same protections as already protected categories like race and religion. Sexual orientation must be included in the list of protected classes.

Inclusive policies are the standard across the country. More than half of Americans live in jurisdictions that have prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in both public and private employment, including 16 states and the District of Columbia. An additional 10 states prohibit discrimination against public employees based on sexual orientation. Here in North Carolina, several cities and counties have already taken action to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Inclusive policies are good for business. That's why large and small businesses have implemented inclusive non-discrimination policies, including 415 of the Fortune 500 Companies. That list includes North Carolina-based Duke Energy, Bank of America, Wachovia, Lowe's, RJ Reynolds Tobacco, and Progress Energy. Other major North Carolina employers with such policies include: IBM, BellSouth, Cigna, Cisco Systems, US Airways, and Corning. By failing to include sexual orientation, the State makes it less likely that qualified workers who value fairness and diversity will apply for jobs, reducing the quality and effectiveness of the state workforce.

North Carolina must stand against discrimination. Equality NC supports House Bill 1203, State Government Equal Employment Opportunity, which would add sexual orientation to the list of classes included in the State Personnel Act's Equal Employment and Compensation Opportunity section (NCGS §126-16). Sexual orientation is defined to make sure it protects the entire LGBT community.

The Numbers

74% of North Carolinians *oppose discrimination* by public employers on the basis of sexual orientation, including **83%** of Democrats and **61%** of Republicans.

58% of North Carolinians would be *more likely* to support a legislator who voted for a bill prohibiting job discrimination for public employees on the basis of sexual orientation.

Source: Portrait of America North Carolina poll, Fall 2002. Conducted by the Lucas Group.