



New Harris/Out & Equal poll: Most Americans say employers should never discriminate

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SAN FRANCISCO, WASHINGTON and NEW YORK – Twenty years after its introduction, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) is still being debated in Congress and across the United States. While most Americans continue to give the bill strong support, a new national survey shows that most Americans simply don't believe that employer exemptions are justified when it comes to basic workplace safeguards for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Americans. Slightly over half (55%) of all adults don't believe that any employers should be exempt if federal law were expanded to include protection from job discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

When asked specifically, some Americans do agree with certain exemptions. The latest survey shows only about a third (35%) of all adults believe churches or other houses of worship should be exempt, and three in ten (30%) believe privately held businesses with owners citing religious beliefs should be exempt. Also, just a fifth (21%) of adults believe publicly held businesses citing religious beliefs should be exempt, and 19% believe small businesses generally should be exempt.

"This year's survey reinforces what we are seeing in companies, government agencies and businesses around the country – even around the world– that more and more business leaders are supporting workplace equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees," said Selisse Berry, Founder, CEO, Out & Equal Workplace Advocates. "While this is good news we still have work to do to protect employees who can still be fired in 29 U.S. states for being LGBT and in 32 if one is transgender. Out & Equal will continue to work with our partners to build workplace equality for all members of our LGBT community."

The 2014 Out & Equal Workplace Survey was conducted online between September 10 and 17, 2014, by **The Harris Poll**® in conjunction with Out & Equal Workplace Advocates and Witeck Communications, among 2,543 U.S. adults, of whom 2,068 indicated they are heterosexual and 354 self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (which includes an over-sample of gay and lesbian adults). Begun in 2002, this survey has become a trusted annual barometer of attitudes surrounding LGBT issues in the workplace and is the longest-running national survey of its kind. (Full results, including data tables, available [here](#))

Strong Support for Transgender Employees

The survey also showed continued support for federal policies that end job discrimination for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals, as well as transgender employees. Two-thirds (65%) of American adults agree that federal law should be expanded to include protection from job discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Also, when it comes to protections for transgender employees, more than half (54%) of all adults strongly agree that transgender workers should be treated equally and fairly as all other workers.

Marriage Equality and the LGBT Workforce

Since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned significant portions of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) last June, many states

also have repealed their bans against same-sex marriage. With this sea change, growing numbers of LGBT employees wish to live and work in states that recognize their legal relationships today. The 2014 Out & Equal Workplace Survey reports that:

- Three out of five (60%) LGBT adults prefer a job with an employer in a state where same sex marriages are recognized over an employer in a state that does not recognize same sex marriages, other factors being equal, compared to 51% in 2012.
- Nearly a third (30%) of LGBT adults would consider changing jobs if their employer required them to transfer to a state where same sex marriages were not recognized, compared to 20% in 2012.
- Thirty percent (30%) would also consider declining a job promotion if it required them to transfer to a state where same sex marriages are not recognized, compared to 22% in 2012.
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“This finding tells us that America’s economy itself is bending towards marriage equality,” said Bob Witeck, President of Witeck Communications. “Is there any wonder that same-sex couples and families bristle or object when job security conflicts with their family’s security?”

2014 Out & Equal Workplace Summit

The Out & Equal Workplace Summit will open on Monday, November 3, and close on Thursday, November 6, 2014 in San Francisco, California. Nearly 2,500 attendees are expected from more than 30 countries. LGBT employees and straight allies, along with human resources and diversity professionals, representing a broad cross-section of the nation’s leading companies—a majority from the Fortune 500—are now set to participate in this year’s Summit, focused on achieving workplace equality.

For more information about the Summit or to register, please visit www.outandequal.org.

Methodology

This **Harris Poll** was conducted online (in partnership with Out & Equal and Witeck Communications) within the United States between September 10 and 17, 2014, among 2,543 adults (ages 18 and over), of whom 2,068 indicated they are heterosexual and 354 self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (including an over-sample of lesbian and gay adults). Figures for age, sex, race, education, region and income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. In addition, the results for the gay and lesbian sample were weighted separately based on profiles of the gay and lesbian population that Harris Interactive has compiled through many different online surveys. Propensity score weighting also was used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, The Harris Poll avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Poll surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Poll, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

<http://lgbtweekly.com/2014/10/31/new-harrisout-equal-poll-most-americans-say-employers-should-never-discriminate/>