

Deseret News

Topic of the day: Adding sexual orientation and gender identity protection clauses to the Non-Discrimination Act

By: [Freeman Stevenson](#) – November 8, 2013

A round up of opinions from around the web on the changes to the Non-Discrimination Act adding protections for the LGBT community.

On Monday, the Senate agreed 61-30 to take up a bill at the end of the week that adds clauses to the Non-Discrimination Act that ban firing employees based on their sexual preferences and gender identities. It is expected to pass the Senate but faces an uncertain future in the House, where GOP representatives are expected to oppose the measure.

These are some opinions from around the Web on the issue.

“The Employment Non-Discrimination Act goes to the heart of a core value — that people who work hard and perform well on the job ought to be rewarded based on their work and nothing else,” writes the Washington Post Editorial Board. “The legislation would extend employment discrimination protections that now cover race, religion, gender, national origin, age and disability to include sexual orientation and gender identity. It would prevent employers and labor unions, among others, from using sexual orientation or gender identity as the basis for decisions such as hiring, firing, promotion or compensation.”

The New York Times Editorial Board, while equally supportive of adding the protections, objects to measures taken to pass the bill, chiefly the adding of an exemption clause for religious institutions. “The exemption — which was inserted to appease some opponents who say the act threatens religious freedom — is a departure from the approach of earlier civil rights laws. And though the law would protect millions of workers from bias, the exemption would give a stamp of legitimacy to the very sort of discrimination the act is meant to end. Any attempt to further enlarge the exemption should be rejected.”

USA Today’s Editorial Board tackles the argument among GOP members of the House that passing the legislation would have a negative impact on job growth and lead to frivolous lawsuits. “At least 21 states and numerous cities, along with most Fortune 500 companies, already have bans against gay discrimination in the workplace,” and “statistics ... indicate that they do not serve in practice as a basis for litigation as often as one might expect,” says Cato Institute senior fellow Walter Olson, who is against the bill.”

And the Editorial Board at the Los Angeles Times argues that if the Republicans are smart, they won’t shoot down this bill in the House. “If Boehner blocks a vote, it might not hurt individual Republicans in

reliably red districts. But it would associate the national party with a form of bigotry that increasingly both baffles and offends Americans across the board, but especially younger voters, including many who might otherwise be receptive to a Republican message.”

What are your thoughts and opinions on the matter?