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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, voted today for historic legislation to protect Americans from employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. The House voted 235 to 184 to approve H.R. 3685, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA).

"Sexual orientation should never be a factor in deciding whether to hire, fire, promote, demote or compensate an employee," Eshoo said. "Passing ENDA is a major victory for the civil rights of all Americans and one that helps fulfill the Constitution's guarantee of equality."

Eshoo has been an original cosponsor of ENDA since it was first introduced in 1994 and has supported the legislation ever since then.

Federal law currently prohibits workplace discrimination based on race, religion, gender, national origin, age and disability. Yet in 30 states it remains legal to fire an otherwise qualified employee based on their sexual orientation. A recent study in the Journal of Applied Psychology found that 37 percent of gay and lesbian workers have faced discrimination based on sexual orientation.

ENDA prohibits employers, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating in employment decisions based on actual or perceived sexual orientation. The legislation also prohibits preferential treatment on the basis of sexual orientation.

A Gallup Poll found that nearly 90 percent of Americans support equal treatment for gays and lesbians when it comes to employment opportunities. 9 out of 10 Fortune 500 companies have also adopted nondiscrimination policies based on sexual orientation.

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