

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION ITEM
Emilly Osterling, NEA Director (Ohio)

ADVANCING EQUALITY IN HOUSTON

MOTION:

The National Education Association will investigate appropriate ways to demonstrate support of LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex) non-discrimination rights during the 2019 Annual Meeting in Houston.

This will include, but will not be limited to:

- Securing letters from the convention center and all potential/contracted hotels that they will welcome and treat all our NEA members, including LGBTQI members, with dignity and respect;
- Working with the city of Houston to assure the safety of all NEA delegates and guests;
- Collaborating with Houston LGBTQI activists on visible and vocal support for their quest for equal rights and protections leading up to and during the 2019 Annual Meeting;
- Working with the NEA SOGI Committee on a year-long recognition of the 50th Anniversary of Stonewall culminating in events, speakers and engagements at -- but not limited to -- venues such as the NEA Joint Conference on Women and Minorities, the Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner, and the NEA Representative Assembly;
- Making delegates aware of, encouraging participation in, and actively lobbying Congress on the Equality Act to amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to add “sexual orientation and gender identity” in the protected class of people who have historically suffered discrimination;
- Exploring other initiatives to show our support for equal rights and protections of the LGBTQI community.

RATIONALE:

In May of 2014, a fully inclusive nondiscrimination ordinance was passed by the Houston City Council. Known as HERO, this ordinance ensured that the City of Houston provided an environment that was free of any type of discrimination based on gender, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, familial status, marital status, military status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, or pregnancy. However, in November 2015, Houston residents voted heavily in favor of *Proposition 1 - City of Houston Anti-Discrimination HERO Veto Referendum*. This vote repealed the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance and eliminated the protections for sexual orientation and gender identity. Inasmuch as the 2019 NEA Representative Assembly will be held in the city of Houston, the NEA has the opportunity and responsibility to help ensure ALL its members are safe and protected against discriminatory treatment.

NEA Bylaw 3-5 states that “No meeting shall be held in any location where any delegates are likely to experience discriminatory treatment.” This Board action would be a positive and effective step in assuring equality and justice not just for all NEA members, but for the residents of Houston and beyond.