



Editorial: Say 'No-thanks' to compromised ENDA

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The long awaited Employment Nondiscrimination Act was due to go to a vote in the U.S. House this week with transgendered people included. That was up until late last week when U.S. Rep Barney Frank and others were willing to exclude the "trans" issue with the promise that "we'll pick you up later," implicitly and explicitly meaning that "we'll get around to you, maybe, after the important groups are protected."

Pragmatic politics - incremental steps - all the language of painful, continued exclusion for our trans brothers and sisters. **Thanks to the unhesitating leadership of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and 90 other LGBT and allied organizations across the country, the attempt at this shameful, expedient political maneuvering was met with an outcry of "No thanks" from across the U.S. and as we go to press Frank and others in the U.S. House have issued an official statement postponing the vote till later this month.**

Our community - the LGBT community - the grassroots, set this in motion and all who raised their voices should be proud as we head into October and LGBT History Month. If we leave anyone behind, especially the most vulnerable among us, then our cause becomes vacuous.

We cannot stand for equality for some, but not others. We cannot argue that we deserve to be treated fairly at the expense of others. The definition of "special rights" are those that are limited to defined group. We do not want "special rights" for the LGB community and limited rights for the "T" community. We want equal rights for all.

Also this week we saw certain individuals within our community object when the Human Rights Campaign took a stand in support of the "Jena 6," a half dozen black teenage students in the south accused of beating a white classmate.

We are astonished that this is still an issue at this point in our community's life cycle. We wonder if the individuals voicing concern about HRC's principled position are the some of the same people who become indignant when black groups hesitate to jump on our civil rights bandwagon.

Our society is riddled with injustice and inequality. Our brightest moments have been when we have eradicated inequality by shining the bright lights of justice on our lesser selves.

We need this to be one of those times, when the LGBT community stands up as one and voices our collective insistence that the trans community be included in ENDA, that the Jena 6 represents age-old oppression which is intolerable to us, and that we understand the responsibilities that go along with the equal rights we so dearly want.

If we do not understand this basic truism of equal rights, then we will become merely a "special interest group" seeking "special rights" for the few of us. We find that a repugnant goal.