March 2, 2022

**Minnesota House of Representatives**100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155-1298

**Minnesota Senate**95 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606

 RE: In Support of HF 3270, SF 3088

Dear Senators and Representatives:

We write in support of house and senate bills that eliminate civil rights exemptions targeting LGBTQ+ Minnesotans.

HF 3270 and SF 3088 update the Minnesota Human Rights Acts’ protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity from the time these protections were originally passed in the 1990s. Gender Justice Legal Director Jess Braverman and I wrote about the need to update the Minnesota Human Rights Act in the March/April 2020 edition of Hennepin Lawyer. [[1]](#footnote-1)

The Minnesota Human Rights Act provided groundbreaking protections for LGBTQ+ people. After a 20-year battle in the legislature, Minnesota was the first state to add these state-level protections to its human rights law in 1993. At the time, champions for civil rights in the legislature made compromises with anti-gay legislators to reassure them that voting for civil rights for LGBTQ+ Minnesotans “was not an endorsement of homosexuality, but ‘an affirmation of the premise that all people have right[s].’”[[2]](#footnote-2) This bill would update protections to eliminate some of the most egregious and harmful compromises in the law.

Among those compromises included exemptions that single out LGBTQ+ people for lesser protections. These exemptions are particularly insulting because they focus on youth-oriented contexts and housing, endorsing and reinforcing bigoted myths about sexual orientation. The overall effect of these discriminatory exclusions has been to suggest that the state of Minnesota thinks that it is a lot harder to tolerate LGBTQ+ people than other protected groups, so discrimination against LGBTQ+ people is acceptable in many more contexts. The bill eliminates these exemptions.

This bill also eliminates the outrageous “Construction of Laws” section that rejects the idea that the State of Minnesota “condones homosexuality or bisexuality or any equivalent lifestyle.”[[3]](#footnote-3) This kind of language has no place in a civil rights law, and its erasure is long overdue.

We would like to thank Representative Athena Hollins and Senator Karla Bigham for authoring and championing this long-needed update to our state’s groundbreaking civil rights law.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Christy L. Hall*

Christy L. Hall
Senior Staff Attorney, Gender Justice

1. Braverman, Jess and Hall, Christy. Groundbreaking Minnesota Human Rights Act: In Need of Renovation. Hennepin Lawyer March/April 2020, 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Preston, Joshua. Senator Allan Spear and the Minnesota Human Rights Act. Minnesota History Fall 2016, 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Minn. Stat. § 363A.27. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)