

Congressman Raúl M. Grijalva: AZ-03  
Committee on Oversight and Reform  
**The Administration's Religious Liberty Assault on LGBT Rights**  
Thursday, February 27, 2020 - 9:00am  
"The Administration's Religious Liberty Assault on LGBT Rights."

Chairwoman Maloney thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement today to the Committee on Oversight and Reform on the importance of ensuring all members of our community including those who identify as LGBTQ are counted and are part of the important decision-making process.

I was proud to join my Democratic colleagues in passing the Equality Act last year, long overdue legislation that prevents individuals from facing discrimination simply because of who they are, whom they love, and how they identify.

Since then, we've made progress towards ensuring that all individuals, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, are treated with respect under the law. Unfortunately, that progress is under threat by the current Administration and a team of advisors intent on rolling back these hard-fought protections and pushing LGBTQ individuals back into the shadows. This is why bills like the LGBTQ Data Inclusion Act are more critical than ever.

The LGBTQ Data Inclusion Act is simple and tackles an often overlooked yet critical component of policymaking: data. The LGBTQ community faces adversity in employment, medical care and social services. To begin to address these disparities, federal agencies must gather robust data that will help us understand the extent of the disparities and determine the appropriate policy action. While some federal data on the LGBTQ community is currently collected, there is no centralized requirement in law ensuring that federal data collection on the LGBTQ community be a priority.

Estimates are no longer good enough. We must ensure that everyone is visible and accounted for—especially in critical federal surveys like the Census. This is the only way we can properly represent our whole constituency.

The addition of voluntary, self-disclosed data on the LGBTQ community to our federal surveys will give us an accurate picture of who we represent so that we can create policies that protect LGBTQ people and their families and provide them with the resources they need to live proud, free, and healthy lives.

This bill would apply to federal surveys that currently include demographic data, information about the race or ethnicity, sex, and age of a survey participant through self-reported information or proxy reporting by a head of household, such as the Census. In addition, this bill includes the implementation of a process for federal agencies to routinely assess changes needed in the collection of this data. This will provide enough flexibility for federal agencies to use the most effective data collection methods and improve its measurement as they see fit.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to recognize Senator Baldwin for leading this effort in the Senate as well as the organizations and individuals who have humanized this issue, told their stories of discrimination and hardship, and made it much more than just data collection. This bill is about giving a voice to our constituents who are often denied one, allowing them to live proudly and be visible and counted so that those of us tasked with creating policies that affect LGBTQ individuals and their families have accurate information to make the right decisions. I would like to thank the Center for American Progress for their work on this and so many other issue areas that impact the LGBTQ community, the Williams Institute that has helped spearhead the data collection for under and misrepresented populations, and the National Center for Transgender Equality and the Trevor Project and the Human Rights Campaign for their strong advocacy efforts.