

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Hart Research Associates
DATE: March 16, 2021
RE: Americans' Views on the Equality Act

From March 12 to 15, 2021, Hart Research conducted a national online survey among 1,005 voters across the country. The survey's credibility interval is $\pm 3.1\%$ for the full sample, with higher tolerances for subgroups. This memorandum outlines findings from this survey.

- **Americans firmly and widely endorse the federal Equality Act.** Fully seven in 10 (70%) voters say they favor the Equality Act after reading the following description of the legislation, including a plurality of 41% who strongly favor it:

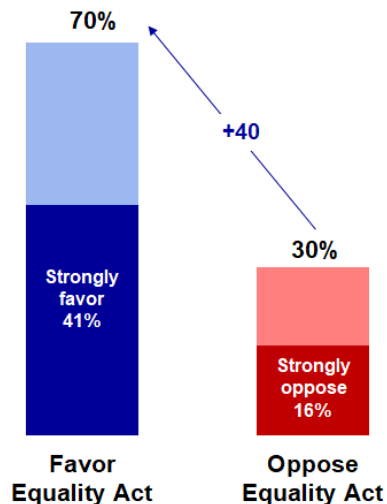
The Equality Act would add to existing laws that currently protect people based on race, sex, religion, and other characteristics to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

This law would ensure that LGBTQ people are protected from discrimination in key areas of life, including employment, housing, credit, education, and jury service. And it would also add protections based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity to use of public spaces and services and federally funded programs.

The Equality Act would update current laws to prevent services that are open to the public, such as retail stores, banks, legal services, and transportation services, from refusing service for LGBTQ people. It prevents businesses from using religious objections as a basis for refusing service to LGBTQ people.

Overwhelming Support for the Equality Act

Do you favor or oppose this potential law?

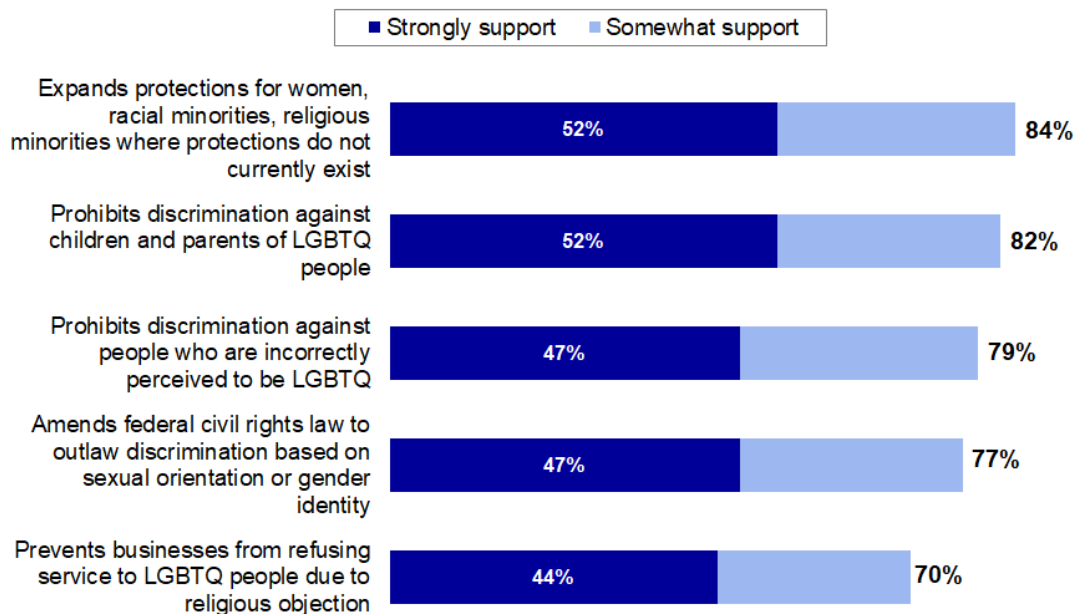


- **Importantly, support for the Equality Act spans demographic and partisan groups.** Overwhelming, majorities of voters across all age, race, religion, and partisan cohorts say they favor the Equality Act with just two exceptions: Republicans and white evangelical Christians divide down the middle with support and opposition evenly split for both groups.

Equality Act Support			
	<u>Favor</u> %	<u>Oppose</u> %	<u>Net Favor</u> ±
Democrats	88	12	+76
Independents	74	26	+48
Republicans	50	50	-
Age 18 to 34	72	28	+44
Age 35 to 49	74	26	+48
Age 50 to 64	68	32	+36
Age 65+	67	33	+34
Whites	67	33	+34
Blacks	81	19	+62
Latinx	76	24	+52
White Mainline Protestants	66	34	+32
White Evangelicals	50	50	-
White Catholics	76	24	+52

- **Key individual components of the Equality Act are extremely popular.** Voters express substantial support for each of the components of the Equality Act that we asked about in the survey.

Key Elements of the Equality Act Garner Wide Support



It is especially important to note that 59% of white evangelical voters support the bill's prohibition on businesses refusing service to LGBTQ people based on religious objection.

- **Equality Act support is especially important given the disconnect between Americans' belief in the degree to which LGBTQ people *are* and *should be* protected by federal law.** A 57% majority of voters believe that LGBTQ people are already totally (20%) or somewhat (37%) protected from discrimination by federal law. However, this is well below the 82% who say that LGBTQ people *should be* totally (51%) or somewhat (31%) protected. And these attitudes are expressed before the Equality Act is mentioned or described to survey respondents.

- **Americans are overwhelmingly supportive of the rights of and protections for transgender people.** Sixty-three percent (63%) recognize that transgender people face a lot or a fair amount of discrimination in the United States today—appreciably higher than the proportion who say this of

women, LGB people, Black people, or Christians. This belief aside, there is a clear sense among the voting public that:

- Transgender people should be able to live freely and openly according to their gender identity (85%)
- Transgender people should have equal access to medical care as other Americans (92%)
- Transgender youth should be able to access medication that delays puberty if they have advice from their doctors and consent from their parents to do so (69%)

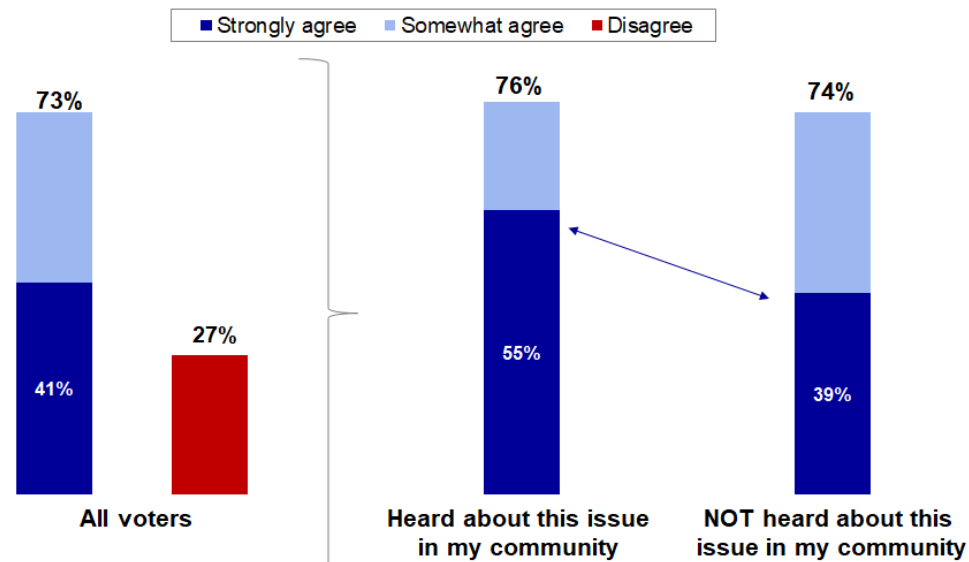
■ **Transgender youth participation in sports is not yet a settled issue with the public, but their strong inclination is on the side of fairness and equality for transgender student athletes.** Initially, voters lean toward transgender youth being able to participate in sports consistent with their gender identity—38% say this, versus 34% who say these youth should have to participate in sports consistent with the gender they were assigned at birth; 28% do not have an opinion.

The picture changes substantially with just a small amount of additional information: respondents read that “local schools, state athletic associations, and the NCAA have already implemented policies that ensure a level playing field for all students while also protecting transgender youth.” After reading this, they were asked whether they agree or disagree with the following statement:

Sports are important in young people’s lives. Young transgender people should be allowed opportunities to participate in a way that is safe and comfortable for them.

Strong Agreement about Transgender Youth Participation in Sports

"Sports are important in young people's lives. Young transgender people should be allowed opportunities to participate in a way that is safe and comfortable for them."



As shown above, voters agree with this sentiment by a margin of nearly three to one. And, significantly, voters are equally likely to agree regardless of whether they have heard in their own communities about transgender youth wanting to participate in sports, but those who have heard about this issue in their community (who make up 20% of voters) are appreciably more likely to *strongly* agree with the statement.

Majorities of Democrats (89%), independents (79%), and Republicans (56%) agree with this statement. It is also worth noting that agreement among voters who have children under age 18 is even higher than average—80% agree, including 48% who strongly agree.

■ **There is a political upside for members of Congress who support the Equality Act.** Overall, 53% of voters say they would feel more favorable toward their member of Congress if they were to vote *in favor* of the Equality Act; just 22% say it would make them feel less favorable. The political advantage of supporting the Equality Act is not purely generational. Indeed, a majority of younger voters who are 18-34 (63%) and 35-49 (56%) would feel more favorable. But this is also true of pluralities of older voters: 50-64 (50% more favorable, 19% less) and 65 and older (44% more, 25% less). Moreover, independents are much more apt to feel more (49%) rather than less (6%) favorable.