

Global Respect Act

Supporters: Human Rights Campaign, the Council for Global Equality, Human Rights First, PFLAG National, and American Jewish World Service

There is an alarming trend of violence and discrimination directed at LGBT individuals around the world. Every year, thousands of individuals are targeted for harassment, attack, arrest, and murder on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Many who commit crimes against LGBT individuals do so with complete impunity.

This year, Russia has continued its ban on arbitrarily-defined “homosexual propaganda,” and recently extended its ban to all foreign NGOs working to improve the situation of LGBT persons in the country. Similar bills in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan are passing through national legislatures with high levels of support. Recently, Gambia emulated a harsh anti-LGBT bill enacted in Uganda by extending life sentences of imprisonment to those found guilty of committing homosexual acts. In Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the latter of which punishes homosexual acts with death, social media sites have been used to draw out and entrap gay people with increasing regularity.

The effects of these legislative and penal measures extend beyond parliaments and prisons. They legitimize state-sanctioned homophobia, and therefore can have a chilling effect measured in assaults, blackmail, harassment, and murder.

Legislative Summary:

The **Global Respect Act** would ensure that violators of the human rights of LGBT individuals worldwide are not permitted to travel to the U.S. Specifically, it would:

- Require the Administration to send Congress biannually a list of foreign persons responsible for, complicit in, or who incited extrajudicial killing, torture, or other gross violations of human rights based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Deny or rescind visas to individuals placed on the list, with waivers for national security or to allow attendance at the United Nations;
- Allow for a person to be removed from the list if the President determines that credible information exists that the person did not engage in the alleged activity, has paid an appropriate consequence for the behavior, or if the person has credibly demonstrated a significant change in behavior;
- Require a section on LGBT international human rights in the annual State Department Report on Human Rights; and
- Require the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to designate a staffer responsible for tracking violence, criminalization, and restrictions on the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms in foreign countries based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

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