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November 20, 2009

Dear Friends,

Thank you for allowing me to deliver a statement for the 11th annual Transgender Day of Remembrance. Today we mourn those Americans who have lost their lives to senseless violence, and we raise awareness of the struggles transgender people face every day. We must never forget those who have had to endure horrific acts of violence just because of who they are.

Our nation took an important step when Congress and President Obama approved hate crimes legislation earlier this month. But Congress has other important work to do in the field of discrimination, specifically with regard to employment discrimination.

It is my hope that in the near future, Congress will mark-up a strong and inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), legislation that will bar employers from making employment decisions on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. This historic legislation would ensure that employment decisions are based on merit and performance, not prejudice. This addition to our nation's civil rights laws is long overdue.

For decades, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans have fought tirelessly for the simple right to be treated equally in the workplace. No one can deny the long, ongoing, and well-documented problem of workplace discrimination against LGBT Americans.

The committee I chair heard testimony just two months ago from Vandy Beth Glenn, a Georgia state legislative aide who was fired when she told the director of her office that she planned to transition from a man to a woman. Although many co-workers and her immediate supervisor came to accept the transition, and although she had excellent work performance, the head of her office immediately fired her. Because Vandy lived in Georgia, she had no statutory recourse to get her job back. This is profoundly unfair and un-American. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act would end this practice.

We are currently working with a broad array of LGBT organizations, including the National Center for Transgender Equality, to improve the Employment Non-

Discrimination Act so that it will more likely withstand attacks from conservative judges after it is signed into law.

Thank you once again for allowing me to deliver this message and thank you for your advocacy and your courage. I urge you to keep up the fight to ensure that every American is treated justly, fairly and equally.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "G".

George Miller
Member of Congress