

*Then-Treasurer Jack Markell's June 20, 2007 testimony to the Senate Insurance and Elections Committee on behalf of S.B. 141, an LGB antidiscrimination bill.*

My name is Jack Markell and I am the State Treasurer of Delaware.

I'm here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 141 because it would guarantee civil rights for all Delawareans and because I believe it would be good for Delaware's economy.

It is now well accepted that our state is competing in a very new and different global economy. In this competition for the best jobs, the high wage jobs, people are our greatest assets. They are the key to ensuring that Delaware companies thrive in this new economy. We need the best people regardless of their sexual orientation.

Across America, hundreds of companies have enacted policies forbidding discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Some corporations, including some very well respected and successful companies, have gone further and endorsed legislation forbidding any company from discriminating in this way.

The leaders of Kodak said that this type of legislation "is in step with trends in the nation's most successful businesses and is in tune with the fundamental sense of fairness valued by Americans."

The CEO of a major bank said that this type of legislation "upholds the values that make this country work, without imposing costly mandates that make our work harder."

I want to emphasize this last point.

Some opponents of this type of legislation argue that it would lead to costly litigation.

But the federal General Accounting Office released a report finding that there is "no indication that these laws have generated a significant amount of litigation" and that "the data do not reveal any obvious growth trend in the number of complaints."

Business leaders are not the only ones arguing in favor of this kind of legislation. Across the country labor leaders have similarly spoken out.

Many states, cities and counties have laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Last week, I sent an email to friends and supporters asking them to make their voice heard on this issue. In 100 hours, more than 650 people signed up in support of SB 141. To me, the public sentiment is clear.

As a Democrat, I want to note that I close with a quote from, of all people, the late Senator Barry Goldwater, long recognized as the father of the modern conservative movement. Before his death, he declared, "It is time America realize that there was no gay exemption in the 'right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' clause in the Declaration of Independence. Anybody who cares about real moral values understands that this isn't about granting special rights – it is about protecting basic rights."

**Thanks for your attention.**