



TECHNET
THE VOICE OF THE
INNOVATION ECONOMY

August 16, 2016

TechNet Urges Armed Services Conference to Eliminate Language Sanctioning Discrimination Against LGBT Americans in Defense Bill

Washington — TechNet, the national, bipartisan network of innovation economy CEOs and senior executives, today urged a joint House-Senate conference of the Armed Services Committees to remove a section of the *National Defense Authorization Act* (H.R. 4909 and S. 2943) that would legally sanction discrimination against Americans on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

In a letter sent to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Senate and House Committees on Armed Services, TechNet President and CEO Linda Moore wrote: **“We fear that this language would nullify Executive Order 13672, President Obama’s landmark order prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation in hiring by federal contractors, and legally sanction discrimination against LGBT Americans.”**

“The technology industry is the nation’s most innovative sector precisely because it values and embraces a talented and diverse workforce. Unfortunately, Section 1094 undermines these values by placing prejudice and fear above inclusion and diversity, which is bad for our employees and bad for business.”

“To ensure that our nation’s economy remains robust and innovative, we must support the best and brightest people. While Section 1094 might intend to promote religious freedom and liberty, in reality it sanctions discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, which has no place in our country.”

TechNet has engaged in North Carolina, Massachusetts, and other states to advocate for policies that promote equal protection of employees under the law.

The text of the letter follows.

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed
Services
218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Armed
Services
2208 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed
Services
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Armed
Services
2264 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman McCain, Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Reed, and Ranking Member Smith,

TechNet is the nation's preeminent, bipartisan network of innovation economy CEOs and senior executives. I am writing today to commend the House and Senate for ensuring our men and women in uniform receive the funding needed to defend our nation. Both H.R. 4909 and S. 2943 – each chamber's respective *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017* – affirm the crucial role our armed forces and national security agencies play in protecting the rights and safety of every American citizen. To that end, we are deeply troubled by Section 1094 of H.R. 4909 and urge the conference committee to remove it during reconciliation.

Section 1094 of H.R. 4909 provides that the Federal Government must extend exemptions consistent with Sections 702(a) and 703(e)(2) of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and Section 103(d) of the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* to federally contracted religious entities. We fear that this language would nullify Executive Order 13672, President Obama's landmark order prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation in hiring by federal contractors, and legally sanction discrimination against LGBT Americans.

The technology industry is the nation's most innovative sector precisely because it values and embraces a talented and diverse workforce. Unfortunately, Section 1094 undermines these values by placing prejudice and fear above inclusion and diversity, which is bad for our employees and bad for business.

To ensure that our nation's economy remains robust and innovative, we must support the best and brightest people. While Section 1094 might intend to promote religious freedom and liberty, in reality it sanctions discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, which has no place in our country.

On behalf of our members, I urge the conference committee to remove Section 1094 from the final *National Defense Authorization Act*.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you as the conference moves forward.

Sincerely,

Linda Moore
President & CEO

cc: Rep. J. Randy Forbes (R-VA)
Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL)
Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC)
Rep. Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ)
Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT)
Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH)
Rep. John Kline (R-MN)
Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL)
Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ)
Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA)
Rep. Mike Conaway (R-TX)
Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-CO)
Rep. Rob Wittman (R-VA)
Rep. Chris Gibson (R-NY)
Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO)
Rep. Joe Heck (R-NV)
Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY)
Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA)
Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA)
Rep. James Langevin (D-RI)
Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA)
Rep. Jim Cooper (D-TN)
Del. Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU)
Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT)
Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-MA)
Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA)
Rep. Hank Johnson (D-GA)
Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA)
Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA)
Sen. John McCain (R-AZ)
Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK)
Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL)
Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS)
Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-NH)
Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE)
Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR)
Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD)
Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA)
Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC)
Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK)
Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT)
Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC)
Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX)
Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI)
Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL)
Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO)
Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV)
Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)
Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)
Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-IN)
Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI)
Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA)
Sen. Heinrich (D-NM)
Sen. Angus King (I-ME)

About TechNet

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. TechNet's diverse membership includes dynamic startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents more than 2.5 million employees in the fields of information technology, e-commerce, advanced energy, biotechnology, venture capital, and finance. TechNet has offices in Washington, D.C., Silicon Valley, San Francisco, Sacramento, Austin, Boston, Seattle, Albany, and Tallahassee.

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