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Pera lauds Congress' approval of ENDA

As an assistant Cook County State's Attorney, I have spent the last 10 years ensuring that people are equally protected under the law. I believe it is one of the bedrock principles of our country that every American is entitled to be treated fairly regardless of their age, gender, race, national origin or religion. The Employee Non-Discrimination Act (HR 3685), or ENDA, simply makes it illegal to discriminate against any American in the workplace because of his or her sexual orientation.

No American should be subject to employment discrimination or have their right to work revoked because of sexual orientation.

Congress has a responsibility to ban any form of discrimination in the workplace in order to protect the rights of all workers against the biases of their employers.

Given the opportunity, I would have proudly voted in favor of ENDA as the House approved it yesterday.

ENDA is a landmark piece of civil rights legislation. Its approval tells millions of gay and lesbian Americans that they are entitled to the same employment protections as everyone else and that they do not need to live in fear of losing their jobs due to their sexual orientation.

Unfortunately, the Congressman from Illinois' 3rd District doesn't believe all Americans are entitled to the rights already granted to them by our state government.

As he has many times in the past, Congressman Dan Lipinski sided with President Bush and the Republicans again yesterday and voted against ENDA. He was the only Democrat in the Illinois delegation to vote against the proposal.

In fact - other than the seven representatives who voted against ENDA on the grounds that it didn't go far enough - Lipinski was the only northern Democrat, and just one of 18 Democrats overall, to oppose the bill.

While Illinois is one of 30 states that already has an "ENDA" law in place at the state level, Lipinski demonstrated that he does not believe that all Americans are entitled to equal protection under the law and that employment discrimination has no place in our society.

Every American has the right to expect to be treated equally. It is appalling that a Democratic representative from Illinois fails to uphold that fundamental principle.

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