

5.5

The Equality Act on Twitter

The Equality Act is federal legislation that if passed would extend protection against discrimination to explicitly include lesbian, gay, and transgender Americans. In this activity, you will investigate how members of Congress are using social media to discuss, promote, or oppose the Equality Act and then consider how you might respond as well online.

At the end of February, 2021, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the [Equality Act](#), a bill designed to amend the [1964 Civil Rights Act](#) by banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The 1964 legislation banned discrimination based on "sex."

The Equality Act was one of the policies that President Joe Biden wanted to have passed during his first 100 Days in office. It was reintroduced in Congress by Democrats in June 2023.



[Watch on YouTube](#)

Support and opposition for the bill is sharply divided along partisan lines - Democrats support and Republicans oppose. Both sides cite the importance of individual freedoms to support their views.

Court decisions are divided as to what is **discriminatory conduct**. In [Bostock v. Clayton County](#), the Supreme Court ruled that an employer cannot fire an employee for participating in a gay recreational softball league. But, the Court also ruled

in [Masterpiece Cakeshop, LTD v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission](#) that a baker can refuse to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple.

Activity: Compare and Contrast Politicians' Use of Twitter Regarding the Equality Act

Read the following articles:

- [AOC Hits Back at Qanon Congresswoman Over Transphobic Opposition to Equality Act](#)
- [Rep. Greene criticized for escalating Equality Act debate by hanging sign outside office](#)

Then, critically evaluate how members of congress used Twitter to discuss, promote, or oppose the Equality Act. Use the [Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Social Media](#) (Questions About Social Media Content) as well as the following prompts to guide your analysis.

- Do you think their tweets were effective in persuading their viewers' thoughts about the Equality Act? Why or why not?
- What are common themes or central ideas presented in the tweets?
- How was language used to try to convince people to support one side or the other?
- Do you think the language and visuals used were effective? Why or why not?
- What might you have done differently if you were a member of Congress trying to persuade your constituents to think a certain way about the Equality Act?

Present your critical media analysis via a video, blog, or paper.

Additional Resources

- [House Passes The Equality Act: Here's What It Would Do](#), *NPR*
- [House passes Equality Act which would expand LGBTQ protections](#), *CNBC*
- [Democrats Reintroduce Equality Act Amid Pride Month](#), *The Hill* (June 21, 2023)

Connecting to the Building Democracy for All eBook

[Building Democracy for All: Gender - Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972](#)

Connecting to the Standards

- [Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards](#)
 - *Explain the historical context and significance of laws passed by Congress that have expanded the civil rights and equal protection for race, gender and disability.* (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) **[8.T5.4]**
- [ISTE Standards](#)
 - Knowledge Constructor
 - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
 - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
 - Creative Communicator
 - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
 - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
 - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.
- [DLCS Standards](#)
 - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
 - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
 - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
 - Research (DTC.c)
- [English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards](#)
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8



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