



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ISSUE: BEGIN A WHITE HOUSE AND STATE DEPARTMENT DIALOGUE WITH THE US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ON THE NEED FOR AMERICAN COMPANIES TO IMPLEMENT WORKPLACE POLICIES IN THEIR OVERSEAS OFFICES AND MANUFACTURING PLANTS.

POLICY DESCRIPTION: Fair-minded US companies, and the American Chambers of Commerce located in most foreign capitals, can play a powerful role in advancing LGBT equality goals in the workplace.

This effort recognizes that many responsible multinational corporations are themselves struggling to extend same-sex partnership benefits to employees worldwide. Those benefits, even when extended voluntarily, often create significant legal complications for corporations. Increasingly, in response to such legal complexities, corporations are using their economic clout to demand legal exceptions or special arrangements that allow them to provide more equitable personnel policies for same-sex employees. And once the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) eventually becomes federal law in the United States, even more companies will be forced to grapple with the inequities in personnel policies across countries and regions, along with the inherent visa complications involved in transferring LGBT employees and their same-sex spouses between global corporate locations. There is a role for US embassies to play in supporting these negotiations on behalf of US companies, and ultimately on behalf of all workers as a human rights issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE: Begin a White House and State Department dialogue with the US Chamber of Commerce on the need for American companies to implement workplace policies in their overseas offices and manufacturing plants that reflect core American values, including respect for the rights of LGBT employees.

PROCESS FOR MAKING CHANGE: This diplomatic effort would not require legislative action. The White House, in coordination with the next Secretary of State, could implant these discussions immediately.