

# ADVOCATES CALL ON D.C. COUNCIL TO PASS BILL SUPPORTING LGBTQ SENIORS AND SENIORS WITH HIV/AIDS

## For Immediate Release

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## Advocates Call on D.C. Council to Pass Bill Supporting LGBTQ Seniors and Seniors with HIV/AIDS

Written by: Abigail Seiler

*More than 30 organizations sign on in support of bill that would put D.C. at the forefront of care*

**WASHINGTON, DC (September 18, 2019)** – Today, on National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day, 32 organizations have [released a letter](#) calling on the D.C. Council to pass the Care for LGBTQ Seniors and Seniors with HIV Amendment Act of 2019, Bill 23-37. The bill, which has garnered broad support from council members but was not passed last session, would amend D.C. law to specifically address the unique needs of these populations. If passed, D.C. would be a national leader in such standards of care.

"Recent studies showing that LGBTQ older adults are at greater risk of dementia and Alzheimer's powerfully illustrate some of the consequences when our seniors experience profound social isolation and loneliness," said David Mariner, Executive Director of the The DC Center for the LGBT

Community. "LGBTQ older adults deserve the same friendly and supportive networks that other seniors have access to, and this call for equity in funding is long overdue."

Federally, there are no laws that explicitly protect LGBTQ older adults and older adults living with HIV/AIDS from discrimination while accessing home and community-based services (like transportation, congregate meals, or home-delivered meals) and in long-term care facilities. The proposed legislation would change that for D.C. residents and ensure that these vulnerable populations are included in the planning and delivery of these services.

This bill would also add LGBTQ older adults and older people living with HIV/AIDS to the targeted groups for programs funded by the Older Americans Act in D.C., and introduce regulations aimed at protecting individuals in those groups who live in long-term care facilities. D.C. would be one of a limited number of states with these vital protections that serve a very vulnerable population.

"Evidence shows that older people with HIV/AIDS face unique health disparities due to stigma and complex health conditions," said Carrie Stoltzfus, Executive Director of Food & Friends. "We see this gap in care through our work delivering meals and it is one of the reasons Food & Friends was founded 30 years ago. This bill is an innovative step forward to serve an often unseen need and we urge the council pass it this session."

Last week, the Mayor's LGBTQ Advisory Committee unanimously passed a resolution in favor of the bill. Bill 23-37 is sponsored by Council Members Mary Cheh (lead sponsor), Charles Allen, Anita Bonds, Vincent Gray, Kenyon McDuffie, Brianne Nadeau, Elissa Silverman, Brandon Todd, Robert White and Trayon White.

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## **ABOUT FOOD & FRIENDS**

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