June 27, 2019

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
U.S. Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Merkley,

On behalf of the American Academy of Nursing (Academy), thank you for introducing the Equality Act (S.788). The Academy serves the public by advancing health policy and practice through the generation, synthesis, and dissemination of nursing knowledge. The Academy’s more than 2,600 fellows are nursing’s most accomplished leaders in education, management, practice, and research who have been recognized for their extraordinary contributions to the promotion of health through evidence-based practices. The Academy applauds this legislation as it advances health equity, one of our central policy priorities.

The Equality Act is an important step towards eliminating discrimination based on one’s sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Academy has long supported policies and proposals aimed at eradicating this type of discrimination, which can have a detrimental psychological and mental health impact on the individuals affected. Not only will this legislation continue to protect men and women from sex-based discrimination, but expanding the legal definition to include one’s sexual orientation and gender identity will have a profoundly positive impact on the health and wellbeing of those who identify outside the male-female biological binary.

Again, the Academy thanks you for your introduction of the Equality Act and appreciates your commitment to eliminating all forms of sex-based discrimination. We are encouraged by the tremendous show of support already in place for this bipartisan legislation with 46 cosponsors. If the Academy can be of any assistance to you or your staff, please do not hesitate to contact the Academy’s Strategic Outreach Manager, Ellie Cook, at ecook@aannet.org or at 202-777-1175.

Sincerely,

Karen Cox, PhD, RN, FACHE, FAAN
President