

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**REPRESENTATIVE JOE SAUNDERS APPLAUDS SUPREME COURT
DIALOGUE ON GAY RIGHTS & PUSHES LEGISLATURE TO DO SAME**

Bills protecting Floridians from discrimination blocked from consideration

ORLANDO, FL – With the national dialogue now focused on the Supreme Court’s consideration of Proposition 8 and the Federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), the issue of LGBT equality is on everyone’s mind. One of Florida’s first openly gay state representatives, **Rep. Joe Saunders (D-Orlando)** has been a leading voice calling for deeper protections.

Rep. Saunders has introduced **The Competitive Workforce Act (HB 653)**, which would ban workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, a measure supported by 73% of Americans based on recent polling. The common sense bi-partisan measure has struggled to get any attention in the Florida House despite having twenty co-sponsors including 4 House Republicans.

“The country is moving everyday toward marriage equality and basic fairness for LGBT Americans. Most opinion polls tell us that people believe gay Floridians should be treated like everyone else and yet the Florida House has done nothing to create even the most basic protections.” –Representative Joe Saunders

The Competitive Workforce Act (HB 653) has been introduced every year for consideration since 2007. Leadership in the Florida House has yet to place the bill on a single committee agenda for debate during that time.

“While the Supreme Court’s hearings on Marriage Equality for gay couples are important, the Florida House should follow its lead and have healthy debate about the civil rights and lack of protections for the LGBT community.” –Representative Joe Saunders

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If you would like more information about this topic, or want to schedule an interview with Representative Joe Saunders, please call Carlos Smith at (850) 717-5049, or email Carlos at Carlos.Smith@myfloridahouse.gov