

Congressman Rothman Introduces the Juror Non-Discrimination Act

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Washington, DC – Congressman Steve Rothman (NJ-9) introduced the Juror Non-Discrimination Act (HR 5848) on May 18, 2012. This bill would bar discrimination against jurors on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

“The fact that it is still lawful for lawyers to dismiss potential jurors solely on the basis of a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity is wrong and has to change,” said Congressman Rothman. “Until the 20th century, women in many states were barred from serving on juries and it was not until the 1980s that prosecutors were prohibited from systematically excluding African-Americans from juries. It is past time for America to take the next step against bigotry and inequality and pass the Juror Non-Discrimination Act.”

As recently as 2011, the US Department of Justice told a panel of judges that it “takes no position” on whether the law that prohibits attorneys from removing jurors based on race or sex should be extended to cover sexual orientation.

The Juror Non-Discrimination Act of 2012 would prohibit potential jurors from being dismissed on solely based on ‘‘sexual orientation” or “gender identity.”

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