House Republicans Vote to Allow Discrimination Against LGBT Americans

Last week, House Republicans voted twice to allow discrimination against LGBT Americans. First they included a provision in the defense authorization bill to overturn President Obama's executive order extending anti-discrimination protections to all LGBT employees of federal contractors and refused to allow a vote on an amendment to strike the provision. Later in the week, during a vote on an amendment to ban discrimination against LGBT Americans in the MilCon-VA appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2017, House Republicans held a two-minute vote open for nearly eight minutes and forced seven of their Members to change their votes, ensuring the defeat of the amendment. The proposed amendment, introduced by Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (NY-18), would have amended the bill to ensure that federal contractors cannot discriminate against LGBT employees.

Not only did Republicans vote against equality and inclusion, but they tried to do so quietly, and without identifying those who switched their votes.

> "The amendment had appeared to be heading for adoption, with as many as 217 'yea' votes on the board when voting time expired. But that number began dropping as Republican leaders held the vote open beyond the two-minute limit, and the outcome was finally reversed…**Democrats also panned Ryan for keeping the vote open after time expired, a practice Ryan said he would do away with upon taking over the speakership late last year**." [CQ, 5/19/16]

> "[A]n amendment to help protect LGBT people from discrimination failed by just one vote as **Republicans succeeded in convincing a few members of their own party to switch their votes to help ensure the measure would not pass**." [NBC News, 5/19/16]

> "**The two-minute vote was finally gaveled closed after seven minutes and 37 seconds,** just after the Republicans had secured the 213 votes to kill [Rep. Sean Patrick] Maloney's amendment." [The Hill, 5/19/16]

> "The proposal…appeared on the cusp of being adopted as the vote came to a close…**Outraged Democrats shouted 'shame' and accused Republican leaders of abusing chamber rules by holding the vote open until they could twist enough arms to kill the amendment**." [Washington Post, 5/19/16]

Their actions did not go unnoticed. The Human Rights Campaign voiced their opposition to Republican efforts to roll back protections for LGBT Americans:

> "'Today the **House Republican leadership abused the voting procedures to twist arms and flip votes to deny LGBT people equal protections under the law**,' said HRC Government Affairs Director David Stacy. 'The House today voted against the seven in ten Americans who support legal protections for LGBT people.'" [5/19/16]

House Democrats will continue to hold Republicans accountable for their actions and fight to prevent discrimination against the LGBT community.