Dear Senator/Representative [select one] [last name],

I urge you to support legislation to ban the gay and trans panic defense.

The gay and trans panic defense is a legal argument asking a jury to rule that a same-gender sexual advance is enough of a provocation to excuse a defendant’s violent reaction, even including murder.

In 1998, Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old college student in Laramie, Wyoming, was violently beaten, tortured, and left to die by the side of a road. The defense lawyer claimed that the attacker was driven to temporary insanity by alleged sexual advances from Shepard.

Using a victim’s gender or sexual identity as a defense for murder is an assault on the dignity and human rights of LGBTQ+ people.

The gay and trans panic defense is banned in 17 states. The American Bar Association urges its ban nationwide and in all local, state, and Tribal jurisdictions. Please support a ban on the gay and trans panic defense.

Sincerely,
[Your name]