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# EQUALITY

SUMMER 2019

HRC'S NEW PRESIDENT

ALPHONSO  
DAVID

ON MAKING  
HISTORY &  
LEADING OUR  
MOVEMENT  
FORWARD





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## DEAR FRIENDS,

When Chad Griffin came to HRC over seven years ago, we could never have predicted the game-changing victories — and incredible challenges — ahead for our community and our country.

The progress we've seen have been hard won, and would not have happened without your support. Even in the last few months alone, you have helped us make history — with the U.S. House's historic passage of the Equality Act.

This crucial victory did not come out of nowhere. The Equality Act passed in no small part because countless HRC members and supporters worked around the clock to turn out the vote and made their votes count in 2018 — including our incredible members, volunteers, and supporters. And since then, you haven't missed a step in mobilizing, organizing, and coming together to move equality forward.

The Equality Act is not only a landmark milestone for equality. It also shows LGBTQ people — especially our young people — are seen, loved and protected.

Pro-equality lawmakers in the states are also working hard to defend and uplift our community — passing crucial legislation protecting our youth, advancing our rights, and refusing to bow to lawmakers working on the wrong side of history.

Our community fought for these major milestones for equality as we marked 50 years since the Stonewall Riots, a seminal moment in the LGBTQ movement when patrons of the New York City bar rioted against oppression and brutality.

The individual acts of courage by the Stonewall rioters continue to ripple through history, reminding us of the power of protest, pride and solidarity. While the LGBTQ community — and especially transgender women of color — still face significant challenges, the resiliency of the rioters and the change

they continue to inspire give us hope that, together, we can achieve dignity and justice for LGBTQ people throughout our country and around the world.

But even as we are fighting for our nation's progress, our White House continues their campaign of division, discrimination and bigotry. While they take new steps to undermine and erase us, their intolerance and inhumanity continue to fuel a humanitarian crisis at our border and embolden the forces of hate around our world.

Through it all, Griffin has been a steadfast champion and a courageous driver of change. I'm so grateful to Griffin for his tireless commitment, his relentless optimism, and his transformational vision of where we can and must move forward.

I couldn't be prouder of what Griffin, our organization, and our grassroots army have been able to accomplish together. And today, I couldn't be more excited for our next chapter under the leadership of HRC's next president Alphonso David.

David is an accomplished and nationally recognized LGBTQ civil rights lawyer and advocate and has worked more than a decade defending and protecting civil rights across the state. As the head of New York's Office of Civil Rights, David helped lead the fight to win marriage equality in the Empire State. And under his leadership, New York banned the abusive practice of so-called "conversion therapy" on minors, expanded Medicaid coverage to cover transition-related care, made it easier to amend gender markers on birth certificates, and enacted policies and regulations to support people living with HIV.

From housing discrimination to racial discrimination and reproductive justice, Alphonso David has worked to make New York a fairer, freer place for everyone. David is a brilliant strategist, an effective leader, and a fierce and compassionate advocate.

He is the right person to take HRC and our movement forward at a time when our work could not be more urgent. Together, we're going to write the next chapter in the fight for full equality, and we're going to need your help. Join us.

Joni Madison  
Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff

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Robert Willafior *Senior Design Director*

Rokia Hassanein *Content Producer*

Ashley Sudney *Senior Designer*

Courtney Ray *Design Assistant*

## OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Asia Arminio, Olivia Alair Dalton, Steffan Declue, Alison Delpercio, Justin Giaquinto, Mitch Johnson, Jeremy Kadden, Ellen Kahn, Mollie Levin, Joni Madison, Adam Marquez, Molly Meegan, Nick Morrow, Chris Sgro, Chris Speron, Justin Snow, Kristina Williams, Matilda Young

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HRC celebrates  
50 years of Pride.



**Cover:** Alphonso David will become the first civil rights lawyer and the first person of color to serve as HRC president in our organization's nearly 40 year history.

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SUMMER 2019

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**DISCRIMINATING AGAINST LGBTQ PEOPLE IN HEALTH CARE**

“THE FINAL VERSION OF A REGULATION FROM THE TRUMP-PENCE ADMINISTRATION WOULD ALLOW MEDICAL PROVIDERS TO CITE THEIR PERSONAL BELIEFS IN ORDER TO DENY PEOPLE A BROAD SPECTRUM OF SERVICES — INCLUDING LIFESAVING CARE FOR LGBTQ PATIENTS,” said HRC Government Affairs Director David Stacy.

This decision puts LGBTQ people at greater risk of being denied critical services, while our community already faces discrimination and barriers in access to care — 56% of lesbian, gay and bisexual people and 70% of transgender and gender non-conforming people have reported that health care providers discriminated against them.

**REMEMBERING ROXANA HERNÁNDEZ AND JOHANA MEDINA**

Over the last year, two transgender asylum seekers fleeing violence in Central America have died after being held in U.S. immigration detention — Roxana Hernández from Honduras and Johana Medina from El Salvador.

Transgender detainees are often subjected to verbal and physical abuse in detention facilities. HRC thanks the Transgender Law Center and fellow advocates for their efforts to hold ICE officials accountable for these deaths.

HRC will continue to work to raise awareness about the epidemic of violence that significantly impacts transgender women of color. Read more about anti-transgender violence and more at [hrc.org/transgender](http://hrc.org/transgender).



Roxana Hernández

Photo: Courtesy of the Transgender Law Center

**50 YEARS OF PRIDE**

We mark Pride month each June, and this year’s pride marked a critically important moment in our movement and history as we commemorated the 50th anniversary of Stonewall. The uprising at Stonewall — led by brave transgender women of color such as Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera — helped ignite the modern LGBTQ movement.

HRC proudly celebrated this historic year of Pride with our

community and allies at approximately 300 events in nearly every corner of America — our largest footprint. This Pride season, HRC members — allies and LGBTQ alike — shared their stories, celebrated equality and inclusion, and reflected on how far the movement has come and how far it has to go.

Want to see more pictures of Pride? Visit [hrc.org/pride](http://hrc.org/pride).



Photo: Jeff Zelevansky / AP, HRC



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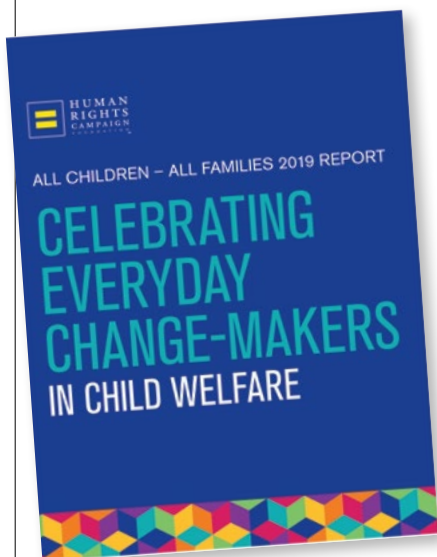
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# 70%

**Percentage of LGBTQ adults interested in foster care or adoption who fear being turned away by an agency because of their LGBTQ identity, according to a recent HRC Foundation survey.**

That's just one of the many reasons why HRC and our partners remain deeply committed to building LGBTQ-inclusive child welfare systems. The HRC Foundation's All Children — All Families project has released its first report celebrating more than 70 child welfare agencies that teamed up with the project in order to better serve the LGBTQ community. With profiles on how acceptance helps LGBTQ youth meet their full potential, the report encourages other agencies to lead with inclusion. Read the full report at [hrc.im/ACAFAAnnualReport](http://hrc.im/ACAFAAnnualReport).



## EMPOWERING LGBTQ YOUTH TO THRIVE

**“EVEN AS OUR COMMUNITY HAS SEEN SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN RECENT YEARS, WE KNOW THAT LGBTQ TEENS IN PARTICULAR ARE STILL STRUGGLING TO FEEL AFFIRMED, ACCEPTED AND SAFE IN THEIR DAILY LIVES.**

With Project THRIVE, HRC Foundation is making a historic commitment to strengthen equality and inclusion for LGBTQ young people,” said Ellen Kahn, director of the HRC Foundation’s Children, Youth & Families Program, about the HRC Foundation’s launch of Project THRIVE, a multi-year national campaign to create more support systems and communities for LGBTQ youth.



Project THRIVE will build the skills and capacities of youth-serving professionals to better meet the needs of LGBTQ young people. It’s a collaborative effort by HRC Foundation and national organizations to increase awareness about and provide resources to address the needs of LGBTQ youth, and to highlight best practices and success stories from their professional fields. Learn more about this new campaign at [hrc.im/ProjectTHRIVE](http://hrc.im/ProjectTHRIVE).

## GLOBAL ADVOCACY

This year’s summit welcomed 29 global leaders for equality from 27 countries and territories in Washington, D.C. These global innovators took part in discussions with each other and HRC staff on trends and innovative ways to advance LGBTQ equality.

“As HRC’s Global Summit comes to an end, I’m overwhelmed with the love and support I’ve received from all the incredible 30 advocates of equality who have given me a sense of optimism for the global LGBTQ+ movement,” said HRC Global Innovator Salman Khan about HRC Foundation’s Global Innovative Advocacy Summit.

The summit focused on campaign strategies, security and migration patterns as well as cutting-edge practices to bolster LGBTQ advocacy in challenging places. Read more about the global summit at [hrc.im/global-summit](http://hrc.im/global-summit).





# Equality at great heights.

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# WIN WILL WE

## INCOMING HRC PRESIDENT ALPHONSO DAVID ON MAKING HISTORY & LEADING OUR MOVEMENT FORWARD

By Carolyn Simon

ALPHONSO DAVID HAS BEEN FIGHTING FOR LGBTQ EQUALITY FOR HIS ENTIRE PROFESSIONAL CAREER — HIS COMMITMENT TO CIVIL RIGHTS BORN OUT OF HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS AN IMMIGRANT, A REFUGEE AND A BLACK GAY MAN.

When he takes the helm of the Human Rights Campaign in August, David will become the first civil rights lawyer and the first person of color to serve as HRC president in our organization's nearly 40-year history.

It's not the first time he's made history — most recently, as the head of New York's Office of Civil Rights, Alphonso helped lead the fight to win marriage equality in the Empire State

three years before the Supreme Court guaranteed that right to every American.

Under his watch, New York banned the abusive practice of so-called "conversion therapy" in minors, expanded Medicaid coverage to cover transition-related care, made it easier to amend gender markers on birth certificates, and enacted policies and regulations to support people living with HIV and drive new diagnoses to an all-time low statewide.

### CIVIL RIGHTS IN NEW YORK

He has also helped lead efforts to expand access to reproductive healthcare, restore voting rights to New Yorkers, advance workplace protections for disadvantaged communities, and require access to free translation services in essential state services. Prior to his work for New York State, David served as a staff attorney at Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.

David has fought tirelessly to make New York a fairer, freer place for everyone.

Now, he will lead the nation's largest LGBTQ civil rights organization as our new president.

"Alphonso has devoted his career to expanding the civil rights of LGBTQ people across New York State and the nation," said HRC Board Foundation Board Chair Deb Taft. "At a time when LGBTQ people, women, people of color, immigrants and refugees, and so many others are being confronted with daily attacks on our most basic rights, Alphonso is the fierce, compassionate, and strategic leader HRC and our broader movement for equality needs."

David has known from a very young age about the struggle for freedom and equality. He was born in the U.S. but grew up in Liberia, where his uncle and father were political leaders.

*continued on p. 13*

STAND  
AS ONE

*The Coca-Cola Company*

proudly supports the HRC with Pride.



Alphonso David has served in New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration since 2011. Starting in August, he takes the helm at the Human Rights Campaign



Photo: Jeff Zelenovsky / AP

**“ I BELIEVE THAT TOGETHER, ALL OF US, WE CAN HARNESS THE STRENGTH THAT’S INHERENT IN OUR DIFFERENCES, TO STAND TOGETHER IN THE FACE OF FEAR AND DIVISION.”**

**WE WILL WIN *cont'd from p. 11***

In 1980, his uncle was assassinated and his father was incarcerated during a violent military coup.

At the age of 14, his family escaped Liberia for a new life in Baltimore. In Baltimore, he was acutely aware about what it meant to be different. He was often the target of ridicule.

“I soon learned what it meant to be different: an immigrant, an African and a Black person in the United States,” said David.

Eventually, he came to understand that he wasn't just a Black man, an immigrant and a child of refugees. He was also gay.

“I had to, at a very young age, understand the purpose of life, the value of democracy, and really think about, ‘Why am I here? What am I going to do?’” said David.

He became a civil rights lawyer and built a career on fighting for equality.

Despite monumental gains for LGBTQ equality in New York and across the country, we now find ourselves at a perilous time in our nation's history.

Time and again, the Trump-Pence administration has attempted to undermine the rights of the LGBTQ community. They have banned brave transgender troops from serving in the U.S. military. They have nominated anti-LGBTQ extremists to judicial positions. They have remained silent on anti-LGBTQ violence abroad. They have targeted transgender and gender non-conforming people's access to critical healthcare. And they are attacking children and parents in the child welfare system.

Meanwhile, anti-equality legislators at the state level are trying to ram through legislation that targets our community. There is an epidemic of violence that targets the transgender community, especially Black transgender women.

**TAKING ON TRUMP-PENCE**

Since Donald Trump and Mike Pence took office, LGBTQ people have been under attack by an administration hell-bent on ripping away our progress. David is ready to lead HRC as we take on Trump-Pence — and all foes of equality — together.

“I see a tremendous opportunity to overcome these attacks,” said David. “I believe in the single mother trying to access affordable healthcare for her family. I believe in the Black trans woman who is preparing for that big interview. I believe in the teenager wondering if others will see them as they see themselves when they look in that mirror. I believe in the construction worker who is building the courage to come out to his peers. And I believe in the young, queer immigrant who came to this country so that they could live authentically.

“I believe that together, all of us, we can harness the strength that's inherent in our differences, to stand together in the face of fear and division,” said David.

Chad Griffin, HRC's outgoing president, knows better than anyone what it takes to lead the organization and the challenges that David will face from day one in the position.

“Alphonso David is a brilliant strategist, leader and civil rights lawyer, a fierce and passionate advocate for LGBTQ equality — and he's someone I've truly admired for years,” said Griffin,

*continued on p. 15*

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Incoming HRC President Alphonso David and outgoing HRC President Chad Griffin celebrated the 50th anniversary of Stonewall with HRC staff and volunteers at World Pride in New York City in June.

WE WILL WIN *cont'd from p. 13*

who served the organization for 7 years. "With Alphonso's selection as HRC's next president, I am confident that this powerful organization and our grassroots army of 3 million members & supporters will have the leadership we need to win the critical battles ahead and continue propelling this movement forward."

Members of Congress, leaders of social justice organizations, celebrities and others lauded the Human Rights Campaign board's selection and expressed excitement about next steps for David, HRC and the LGBTQ movement.

"Thrilled to hear the news about #AlphonsoDavid," tweeted Planned Parenthood Federation of America President Leana Wen. "LGBTQ people are our patients, our supporters, and our staff, and the fight for LGBTQ rights is critical in the fight for equality and justice for all. On behalf of @PPFA & @PPact, I look forward to working alongside you."

Vanita Gupta, the president and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, pointed to

David's lengthy civil rights advocacy experience when she congratulated him.

"Congrats, #AlphonsoDavid!" Gupta tweeted. "In this crucial moment for our country & the fight for equality, Alphonso brings a tenacious determi-



nation & long track record of advancing civil rights. I look forward to working with him to continue defending our democracy & advancing equality."

It won't be long before David makes his first trip to Capitol Hill as HRC president to meet with members of Congress to talk about HRC's legislative priorities such as the Equality Act, which would provide consistent and explicit non-discrimination protections for

LGBTQ people across key areas of life, including employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs, and jury service. (see page 18)

"Big congrats to #AlphonsoDavid!" tweeted U.S. Rep. Joe Kennedy III, D-Massachusetts. "A great choice to spearhead @HRC at a critical time. Look forward to partnering together in the months and years ahead."

Of course, HRC's mission will always be to fight for full LGBTQ equality and nothing less.

"If we want to win full equality, that's going to require us to come together, to dig deep, to be resilient, to embrace our differences, to tenaciously defend the most vulnerable among us, to fight with every ounce of determination we have," said David. "I promise you this, I will fight for each and every one of us. All I ask is that you join me, that you join the Human Rights Campaign in our fight for true equality. In unity, we will fight back and we will win."

*David shares how his life story and career as a civil rights attorney prepared him to lead HRC forward in a new video, [Difference Is Our Strength](#). Watch it now at [hrc.im/meetalphonsodavid](http://hrc.im/meetalphonsodavid).*



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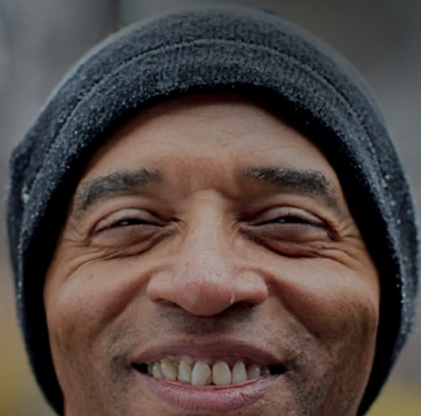
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Carter Brown, who was fired for being transgender, joins members of Congress and advocates at an Equality Act press conference.



Photos: Kevin Wolf / AP

## MONUMENTAL MOMENT FOR EQUALITY

### FOLLOWING TIRELESS EFFORTS OF HRC AND ADVOCATES, THE U.S. HOUSE PASSES THE EQUALITY ACT

#### TOGETHER, WE MADE HISTORY.

In a major milestone for equality, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Equality Act in May with a bipartisan vote of 236 to 173 — the first time in history a chamber of Congress has passed comprehensive LGBTQ non-discrimination protections. It sends a powerful and profound message to LGBTQ people, especially LGBTQ youth, that the House has their backs.

After the bill was passed, U.S. Rep. Sharice Davids, D-Kan., the first openly LGBTQ Native woman elected to Congress, spoke about how the legislation positively impacts LGBTQ and Native communities.

"There will be a whole bunch of LGBTQ youth and Native youth who will feel like their experience is validated... that there's hope... that people who are

in decision-making positions will see them and know that their experience is important," said Davids. "This is the kind of thing that can literally save people's lives."

This victory wouldn't have been possible without HRC's dedicated and engaged members, supporters and volunteers — our grassroots army of more than 3 million strong.

"This is a historic moment," U.S. Rep. Katie Hill, California's first openly bisexual member of congress, told HRC outside the U.S. Capitol after the vote. "We know that the fight is not over... but the fact that we got it through this body has been a long time coming, and I could not be more proud to be in the Congress that actually gets this done."

U.S. Rep. Stephanie Murphy, D-Fla., told HRC after that vote that she was honored to be a part of the 116th

Congress, led by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who made passing the Equality Act a legislative priority.

"It was incredibly moving to be on the floor in this historic moment, and also as a member who represents the community that was so deeply touched by the Pulse Nightclub shooting... it was incredibly moving and significant to finally be able to pass legislation that would protect the community," Murphy said.

As HRC Legal Director Sarah Warbelow testified in a congressional hearing about the Equality Act prior to its passage in the House, this legislation is vital for LGBTQ people.

"LGBTQ people live in every state and every county, coast to coast. We are your neighbors, co-workers, friends and family... No one should be subjected to discrimination based on who they are," Warbelow said.

## HOW YOUR SUPPORT LED TO THIS HISTORIC VICTORY

### 300+

HRC volunteers took to Capitol Hill one day after the introduction of the Equality Act to participate in #HRCOnTheHill Lobby Day. From calling their representatives to scheduling in-district meetings, sharing their stories and signing on as Community Co-Sponsors of the legislation, their efforts to ensure basic rights for LGBTQ people in this country has not gone unnoticed by Congress.

**Over the last several months, HRC helped organize more than:**

### 240+

Businesses to support the Equality Act

### 500

Medical, child welfare, religious and social justice organizations in support of the Equality Act

### 165,000

Signatures that HRC collected and delivered to Congress from Americans nationwide who become Community Co-Sponsors of the legislation. In April, HRC held the Equality Act Month of Action. While Congress was in recess, HRC joined with partners in 14 key states to host dozens of in-district grassroots events to build support for the legislation, including phone banks, lobbying training, door-to-door canvasses and in-district meetings with members of Congress.

### 70

Faith groups and leaders who support the bill

### 70%

Of Americans support the bipartisan Equality Act, its highest-ever approval rating.

To help mobilize support for its passage, HRC launched its "Americans for the Equality Act" video series, a public education and advertising campaign filmed by award-winning directors Paris Barclay and Dustin Lance Black. It featured prominent figures in entertainment, sports and beyond speaking about the need for the legislation. Sally Field and her openly gay son Sam Greisman, Shea Diamond, Justina Machado, Adam Rippon, Karamo Brown, Jesse Tyler Ferguson and Justin Mikita, Alex Billings, Gloria Calderon, Marcia Gay Harden, Blossom Brown, Jamie Lee Curtis, Jane Lynch and Ryan O'Connell gave voice to the cause.

"The message that this legislation really sends to young LGBTQ people is that your identity should never be something that you feel is going to hold you back," Rippon said.

Our work is not over. As the bill heads to the U.S. Senate, HRC and our coalition partners will continue to build our political power to pass it. And HRC will fight to turn out the more than 10 million LGBTQ voters and millions more allies to elect a pro-equality president in 2020 who will sign the legislation into law.

HRC will also continue to collect and amplify stories from people like Carter Brown, a transgender man who experienced a hostile work environment and was eventually fired because of his gender identity. These stories change the

hearts and minds of people to ensure an equal and equitable society remains critical for our community's progress.

"I was living the American dream. All of that was stripped from me in seconds," he told HRC. "I had a family to think about at this point, like any person would who's a provider for their family... What do I do now?"

His story, and many others, underscore the importance of passing the Equality Act in both chambers of Congress, and they've been inspiring our nation's leaders to take action.

"As a member of the LGBTQ community, I know how painful discrimination can be... People really need to be engaged, tell your stories, transform hearts and minds by talking about the way you've experienced discrimination," said U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., the first openly LGBTQ person elected to the Senate.

As we celebrate this victory and fight to pass the Equality Act in the Senate and to elect a pro-equality president that will sign this legislation into law, HRC will continue to work with members of Congress, coalition partners and allies to advocate for the Equality Act.

To learn more about the Equality Act, visit [hrc.org/EqualityAct](http://hrc.org/EqualityAct). To send a letter to your senator urging them to support the bill, visit [hrc.im/SupportEqualityAct](http://hrc.im/SupportEqualityAct). 🇺🇸





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# OUR RIGHTS AT STAKE: KEY CASES BEFORE SCOTUS

**A**fter coming out as transgender to her employer, Aimee Stephens was fired from her job as director of a funeral home in Michigan.

The business owner would not allow Stephens to live her truth at work, saying it would be “unacceptable.” In March 2018, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that firing Stephens for being transgender violated Title VII, the federal law prohibiting sex discrimination in employment.

“No one should be denied a job or fired simply because of who they are or who they love, including LGBTQ people,” said HRC Legal Director Sarah Warbelow.

Stephens’ case, *R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes v. EEOC and Aimee Stephens*, is one of three cases the U.S. Supreme Court is set to review that would impact federal non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people nationwide.

Several federal courts have already ruled that anti-LGBTQ discrimination is a form of sex discrimination that violates federal law. These courts have found that discrimination against LGBTQ people violates laws including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the

Education Amendments of 1972, the Affordable Care Act and the Fair Housing Act.

“The growing legal consensus is that our nation’s civil rights laws do protect LGBTQ people against discrimination under sex non-discrimination laws,” Warbelow said.

The Trump-Pence administration, however, has recently threatened to undermine federal sex discrimination protections through regulations attempting to erase protections for transgender people. They have also asked the Supreme Court to bar LGBTQ people from receiving federal employment non-discrimination protections — critical protections in areas of life including employment, housing, health care and education.

The cases before SCOTUS involve employment discrimination against LGBTQ people. In *Altitude Express Inc. v. Zarda*, skydiving instructor Donald Zarda was fired from his job after telling a client he is gay. He sued on the basis of sexual orientation discrimination, but a federal trial court rejected his discrimination claim, saying that the Civil Rights Act does not protect him from being fired for being a gay man.

Zarda’s estate appealed, and in February 2018, the full Second Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that discrimination based on sexual orientation is a form of discrimination based on sex and is prohibited under Title VII. The court recognized that when a lesbian, gay or bisexual person is treated differently because of discomfort or disapproval that they are attracted to people of the same sex, that’s discrimination based on sex. Tragically, Zarda died in an accident in 2014 without witnessing his court victory, but his family continued the case for him.

At its core, these discriminatory cases hurt LGBTQ people and those who love them. In the third case the high court is set to review, *Bostock v. Clayton County*, Gerald Lynn Bostock was fired from his job as a county child welfare services coordinator when his employer learned that he is gay. Despite appealing, in May 2018, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals refused to reconsider a 1979 decision wrongly excluding sexual orientation discrimination from coverage under Title VII’s ban on sex discrimination.

Now, the Supreme Court has a chance to confirm the protections recognized by federal courts already.

“The Supreme Court has an opportunity to clarify this area of law to ensure protections for LGBTQ people in many important areas of life. The impact of this decision will have very real consequences for millions of LGBTQ people across the country,” Warbelow said.

While the Supreme Court prepares to hear these cases, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Equality Act — which would provide clear, comprehensive protections for LGBTQ people across key areas of life, including employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs and jury service. Now, the ball is in the U.S. Senate’s court.

Regardless of the outcomes of these cases, LGBTQ people and others need Congress to pass the Equality Act to ensure and expand their federal protections under our nation’s civil rights laws. To learn more or to urge your senator to vote for the Equality Act, visit [hrc.org/EqualityAct](http://hrc.org/EqualityAct). 🏳️



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HRC staff, members and supporters advocate for pro-equality legislation nationwide.

# HISTORIC ELECTORAL GAINS FOR EQUALITY LEAD TO PRO-LGBTQ BILLS BEING PASSED IN THE STATES

By Nick Morrow

Historic pro-equality electoral gains in state legislatures in 2019 led to several important legislative victories around the country.

Opponents of equality also tried to pass several horrible anti-LGBTQ bills this legislative season. While many of these were defeated by HRC and our partners on the ground, a few have passed and been signed into law. However, it is clear that there has been positive, productive progress in the states toward ensuring that LGBTQ people are equal, everywhere. And much of that started at the ballot box in November.

In the 2018 elections, a record number of Equality Voters helped usher in pro-equality lawmakers across the country, at all levels of government. These victories sparked legislative action from coast to coast, and helped to stymie anti-equality efforts.

## SO-CALLED ‘CONVERSION THERAPY’

A growing number of states have stepped up to protect youth from the dangerous, debunked practice of so-called “conversion therapy.” Bills were passed and signed into law this year in New York, Massachusetts, Maine and Colorado. Also, Puerto Rico’s governor signed an executive order to extend these protections to LGBTQ youth in the U.S. territory. In Colorado, newly elected Gov. Jared Polis signed that state’s protections, in a historic moment for the first openly gay man elected governor. There is no credible evidence that so-called “conversion therapy” can change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity and there is abundant research demonstrating its harms, particularly for LGBTQ young people.

Earlier this year, on the same day it passed protections against so-

called “conversion therapy” the New York Legislature passed the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act – a victory years in the making. GENDA solidifies existing law by explicitly adding gender identity and expression to the New York Human Rights Law. HRC has been working with local advocates and leaders for over a decade to advance these protections, and this victory was only possible because of the strong and persistent leadership of pro-equality lawmakers. For several election cycles, HRC has worked on the ground in New York to elect pro-equality legislators up and down the ballot, all across the state, leading to a pro-equality majority in both houses of the legislature and this historic action.

A suite of pro-equality bills were passed and enacted in Nevada as well, including a bill to outlaw the so-called

*continued on p. 35*



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## API & LGBTQ: NEW DATA REVEALS CHALLENGES OF INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

As a transgender activist, HRC Global Innovator Fumino Sugiyama's right to exist is at risk every day in Japan. Sugiyama has been raising awareness about LGBTQ equality since 2006, and he works to increase visibility of LGBTQ people in Japan through organizing and participating in Pride events.

Although Sugiyama has been helping drive progress in Japan, much work remains. Sugiyama is not eligible to be legally recognized as a parent, and marriage equality is not law. Through his activism, he is aiming to change that.

"We would like to gather all of our energy and realize a society that enables LGBTQ people and all the citizens to live their lives freely," Sugiyama said.

From their coming-out experiences to navigating their communities and families alongside cultural expectations and religious backgrounds, many Asian Pacific Islander individuals — including Sugiyama — still face challenges to living their lives openly and authentically. API communities are broad and diverse and, all too frequently, these individuals — particularly API youth — experience barriers that prevent them from fully thriving.

To better understand and address these difficulties, the HRC Foundation partnered with researchers at the University of Connecticut to release the *2019 LGBTQ Asian and Pacific*

*Islander Youth Report*, a groundbreaking resource detailing the experiences of API LGBTQ youth in the U.S.

The report revealed that only 19% of LGBTQ API youth say they can "definitely" be themselves at home; 29% say they can "definitely" be themselves in school; 84% of respondents rate their average stress level a 5 or higher on a 10-point scale; 9% of respondents said they would be very comfortable discussing a question about their LGBTQ identity with a counselor; and more than half of transgender and gender-expansive API youth surveyed can never use the restroom that aligns with gender identity at school.

For Sugiyama, resources such as the API youth survey — which aims to improve the lives of API youth everywhere, at home and abroad — are important educational tools for global advocates.

"We should keep in touch with worldwide advocates since we have plenty of things to learn from the activities across the world," Sugiyama said. "We activists in Asia would like to overcome barriers such as language differences and take action for further association."

Actor Jake Choi says his experience as a young LGBTQ Asian American mirrors the challenges faced by many in the API community in coming out and being accepted.

"Growing up in a Korean immigrant

household in Queens, I faced strict traditional values at home," said Choi while accepting the HRC Visibility Award at the HRC Columbus Gala this spring. "Queerness was not an option I knew about growing up at all, and add to that our rough neighborhood, where each morning when I left our home, I remembered to wear my straight, hyper-masculine attitude like armor to just make it through the day."

Choi's experiences and those shared in HRC Foundation's API youth report underscore the need for visibility for LGBTQ API youth.

"I remember the kids like me growing up in all kinds of neighborhoods, some afraid, some lost and confused, some thrown out by their families because of who they are or who they love," said Choi. "Some — too many — who have taken their own lives due to bullying either by peers or their families and relatives... I see a world that shines our visibility on all of them and gives them that hope."

No coming out experience is the same and, for many API people navigating their identities in the U.S. and abroad, coming out is a long process and often a difficult choice to make. Learn more about life at the intersections of API and LGBTQ identities at [hrc.im/APIComingOut](http://hrc.im/APIComingOut) and read the full API Youth Report at [hrc.im/APIYouthReport](http://hrc.im/APIYouthReport). 🏳️

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From L to R: Nia, voiced by Storm Reid, and her two fathers, Sir Cedric, voiced by T.R. Knight and Prince Andrew, voiced by Wilson Cruz, teach children about bravery.



# ANIMATED INCLUSION

## HULU'S NEW ANIMATED CHILDREN'S SERIES IS SHOWCASING FAMILY DIVERSITY

By Rokia Hassanein

When Actor T. R. Knight was growing up, there weren't many shows that featured positive representations of LGBTQ people.

Today, in "The Bravest Knight," Hulu's animated children's series about a child who discovers their bravery, Knight is the voice of one of her two loving dads.

"I think being a part of something that shares a message of love and inclusion... I think anyone would've accepted that opportunity," Knight told *Equality*.

"The Bravest Knight," based on Daniel Errico's children's book of the same name, spotlights a two-dad family and highlights the intersections of being same-sex parents of a multicultural family formed through adoption. Ellen Kahn, director of the HRC Foundation's Children, Youth and Families program,

said this type of representation is important to children with different family structures and backgrounds.

"It's a very affirming story for kids who were adopted by parents of a different race or ethnicity. The greater the diversity of families and people we see as we grow up, the more possibilities we see for ourselves," Kahn told *Equality*.

HRC Foundation's Welcoming Schools program worked with the show's creators to develop the characters and help them navigate a variety of topics about their family structure and the adoption theme.

"The folks behind the creation of 'The Bravest Knight' are very committed to diversity and inclusion, and that's why they choose projects such as this show," Kahn said. "They were very committed to telling this story in the right way, so

we helped them shape a language that strikes the right chord with regard to family diversity."

Like Knight, many of the characters are voiced by people who are part of the HRC family and the broader LGBTQ community. They include former HRC Foundation youth ambassador Jazz Jennings, openly gay Latinx actor Wilson Cruz, Wanda Sykes, RuPaul and more.

For Knight, working on a series such as this has been a dream of his. The project is even more meaningful, he says, because he understands the importance of normalizing representations of LGBTQ people on TV — especially for LGBTQ youth who may be struggling with a lack of acceptance within their own families.

*continued on p. 31*

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“The Bravest Knight” features same-sex parents of a multicultural family formed through adoption.

BRAVEST KNIGHT *cont'd from p. 29*

“THERE ARE A LOT OF STEPS FORWARD TO MAKE UP FOR ALL OF THE SINS IN THE PAST, AND IN EVERY PART OF THE COUNTRY, IT’S STILL ROUGH... [IT DEPENDS ON WHO RUNS EACH] HOUSEHOLD, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE CLOSED HEARTS WHICH ARE FULL OF FEAR AND NOT ACCEPTING, AND THAT’S DEATH FOR A CHILD,” KNIGHT SAID.

Ensuring that LGBTQ youth are included, supported and encouraged to thrive is why HRC Foundation’s Welcoming Schools program uses books and lesson plans and highlights other mediums — including programs like “The Bravest Knight” — to help schools embrace diverse families, create LGBTQ- and gender-inclusive schools,

prevent bias-based bullying and support transgender and non-binary students.

Kahn encourages families to watch “The Bravest Knight” together and have conversations about it, and to let teachers and other educators know about it as well.

“If kids are only exposed to a limited slice of who we are, whether it’s about our gender, race, ethnicity or cultural and religious backgrounds... If kids are not really exposed to broad diversity, they won’t necessarily be as equipped when they go out to the world to navigate schools,

workplaces or even the overall community once they get older,” Kahn said.

A show such as “The Bravest Knight” is a way for the younger generation to see what might be possible, whether you’re a part of the LGBTQ community or not.

“It’s a very simple story, and yeah, it looks different from what we’re used to seeing,” Knight said. “I hope that people are open to receive that.”

To learn more about supporting LGBTQ youth in their homes, schools and communities, visit [welcomingschools.org](http://welcomingschools.org). 🇺🇸

(clockwise)  
RuPaul, Wilson Cruz,  
Jazz Jennings, Wanda  
Sykes, T.R. Knight



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PRO LGBTQ BILLS *cont'd from p. 23*

LGBTQ “panic” defense in courtrooms and one to strengthen workplace protections for LGBTQ Nevadans. These victories were made possible by pro-equality majorities elected by voters in the 2018 election; Nevada has been a priority state for HRC’s Rising program, and these investments paid dividends this year.

**‘SLATE OF HATE’**

Regrettably, anti-LGBTQ lawmakers continued to introduce discriminatory legislation. Tennessee was one of the worst offenders, with a “Slate of Hate” that sought to discriminate against LGBTQ people in all areas of life. Unfortunately, the legislature passed one bill which could embolden harassment of transgender people. However, due to constant pressure from the Tennessee Equality

Project, the business community, HRC members and more, the rest of the slate was defeated this year.

In Texas, where there is often an onslaught of anti-LGBTQ legislation, only one anti-LGBTQ bill was passed this session, after more than 20 were introduced. Pro-equality Democrats gained 12 seats and many far-right legislators, including the House sponsors of the “bathroom bill,” were defeated or had extremely close victories. Republican Rep. Sarah Davis ran on a pro-equality platform and successfully defended challenges from both parties to win re-election. And, for the first time, Texas had enough out members to form an LGBTQ Caucus led by five women: Reps. Julie Johnson, Jessica González, Mary González, Celia Israel and Erin Zweiner.

HRC worked with its partner organizations to mobilize voices for equality

to speak out against anti-LGBTQ proposed legislation. Through Action Alerts, emails, digital ads, videos, text banks and phone banks, we engaged thousands of HRC members and supporters to defeat the onslaught this year.

Around the country, nearly 100 anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced, but only five passed. Despite the best efforts by many of these politicians, HRC and our partners were able to defeat these problematic bills and keep them from harming LGBTQ Americans. This is an extraordinary success rate, and we’re grateful to the efforts of HRC members and volunteers for consistently raising the bar for engagement around their state legislatures.

Moving forward, we will continue passing pro-equality bills and fighting any attempts to discriminate, anywhere. ■

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**ORANGE COUNTY GARDEN PARTY**

AUGUST 3, 2019  

- Coldwell Banker Atrium
- Audrey Prosser, David Hendryx & Paul Thompson
- [hrcorangecounty.org](http://hrcorangecounty.org)

**PORTLAND DINNER**

AUGUST 3, 2019  

- The Nines
- Miguel Cobian & Shannon Scott
- [hrc.org/portlanddinner](http://hrc.org/portlanddinner)

**SAN DIEGO DINNER**

AUGUST 10, 2019  

- Hotel del Coronado
- Tessa Cabrera & Isabel Cordova
- [hrc.org/sandiegodinner](http://hrc.org/sandiegodinner)

**CLEVELAND DINNER**

AUGUST 17, 2019  

- Hilton Cleveland Downtown
- Nathan Matuszewski & Gayle Marks
- [hrc.org/clevelanddinner](http://hrc.org/clevelanddinner)

**ST. LOUIS DINNER**

SEPTEMBER 14, 2019  

- Marriott St. Louis Grand
- Amy Bornstein & Aaron Finnegan
- [hrc.org/stlouisdinner](http://hrc.org/stlouisdinner)

**NATIONAL DINNER**

SEPTEMBER 28, 2019  

- Walter E. Washington Convention Center
- Sherie Hughes & Hudson Young
- [hrcnationaldinner.org](http://hrcnationaldinner.org)

**TWIN CITIES DINNER**

OCTOBER 12, 2019  

- Hyatt Regency Minneapolis
- Brent Nelson & Andrea Ramberg
- [hrc.org/twincitiesdinner](http://hrc.org/twincitiesdinner)

**SAN FRANCISCO DINNER**

OCTOBER 19, 2019  

- Hyatt Regency San Francisco
- Lisa Allen & Stephen Gossman
- [sfhrcgala.org](http://sfhrcgala.org)

**CHEFS FOR EQUALITY**

OCTOBER 22, 2019  

- Washington National Cathedral
- [chefsforequality.org](http://chefsforequality.org)

**SEATTLE DINNER**

OCTOBER 26, 2019  

- Sheraton Grand Seattle
- Andy LaBadie & Lindsey Warnick
- [hrcseattle.org](http://hrcseattle.org)

**TO BUY TICKETS FOR HRC GALA EVENTS, PLEASE VISIT [HRC.ORG/BOXOFFICE](http://HRC.ORG/BOXOFFICE).**

Her will provides for her best friend, her niece and nephew and a future where every kid feels 100% safe and secure just being who they are.



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THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO FOR HRC!

**HRC MEMBERS MATTER** – and whether you’re a member of our **Federal Club, Federal Club Council, an HRC Partner or an Automatic Annual Renewal member** – you make an enormous impact on the progress HRC is making for LGBTQ equality.

You’ve been with us through good times and bad, and not once have you shied away from our work together.

**We are grateful for your generosity, activism and never-ending energy to push equality forward!**

**Your reliable support of HRC is changing the world in incredible ways by:**

- Electing openly LGBTQ people to office in historic numbers;
- Passing laws that ban dangerous so-called “conversion therapy” practices across the country;
- Advocating against anti-LGBTQ laws that would allow discrimination;
- Mobilizing people nationwide to visibly support LGBTQ equality, and proudly take action in their hometowns and at the ballot box every time equality is on the line.

**Thank you for everything!**

Whether you give every month or every year, your automatic donations give us the consistent support that lets us be nimble against threats and protect our progress.

If you’re not giving monthly, but would like to start – please reach out to get started. You can even make your monthly gift through electronic bank transfer to make it even easier!

**Please drop us a line if you have any questions or just want to say “Hi!” We would love to hear from you!**

**MEMBER SERVICES:**  
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At Apple, we're committed to using our voice to advocate for LGBTQ people and the freedoms they deserve. Because we believe everybody should have the right to be free from discrimination.

We proudly support the Human Rights Campaign and stand with you to build a better future.