

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN



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MISSISSIPPI

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

WITH FAITH FRONT AND CENTER, HRC LAUNCHES HISTORIC NEW PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN PROMOTING LGBT EQUALITY IN THE SOUTH

WHAT IS ALL GOD'S CHILDREN?

- **All God's Children is a groundbreaking new public education and engagement campaign — the first of its kind in the history of the South —** that aims to strengthen the foundation of public support for LGBT Mississippians, aid in the passage of pro-equality legislation, and bolster efforts to win marriage equality for Mississippi's LGBT couples.
- Driven by research that explored **how to best engage Southerners and people of faith on the issue of LGBT equality**, this campaign is designed to provide a replicable model for future efforts.
- According to *Gallup*, Mississippi is the most religious state in America, and an estimated *55% of its population is Baptist* — one of the most conservative Christian denominations in the country. It would be nearly impossible to successfully engage a large majority of Mississippians about LGBT equality **without discussing it in the context of faith**. For this reason, faith is a critical part of the messaging and outreach of *All God's Children*.
- The campaign will feature Mississippians from all walks of life. **It will begin with a mother who's a Bible lecturer, a trailblazing state legislator, an Iraq War veteran, a student and a preacher** will be highlighted, among others. Some are LGBT and some are straight allies. Most important, they all share two common values: **they're proud to call Mississippi home, and they support LGBT equality**.
- **The \$310,000 campaign is built around four consecutive weeks of television ads in the Magnolia State — 2,000 gross rating points in total.** This will be amplified by robust door-to-

door, direct mail and phone bank operations, as well as telephone town halls, billboards and online advertising.

- This campaign is intended to **change hearts and minds, improve the public perception and overall awareness of LGBT people, begin to reduce the painful stigma that many face in their daily lives, and help future efforts to enact pro-equality legislation.**
- **The campaign's overarching message is straightforward:**

"WE LIVE HERE. WE WORK HERE. WE GO TO CHURCH HERE. HAVE CHILDREN HERE. PAY TAXES HERE. WE SERVE IN THE ARMED FORCES. WE VOLUNTEER IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

"WE ARE YOUR NEIGHBORS, CO-WORKERS, FRIENDS AND FAMILY. WE ARE YOUNG AND OLD, MEN AND WOMEN.

"WE ARE ALL GOD'S CHILDREN. IT IS ONLY FOR GOD TO JUDGE, NOT US. WE NEED TO TREAT EVERYONE WITH RESPECT."

At its conclusion, the campaign's effectiveness will be carefully assessed through a rigorous post-campaign survey.

- **All God's Children** is the latest large-scale effort by HRC's recently launched *Project One America* — a comprehensive, \$8.5 million initiative with a dedicated staff of 20 — to dramatically expand LGBT equality in Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas.
- **HRC is the single largest national LGBT organizer in the South**, with a decades-long track record of political and field campaigns, grassroots education efforts, as well as volunteer communities stretching from Texas to Florida, from North Carolina to Georgia.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE ADS

- **Faith is at the core of the messaging and outreach for *All God's Children*.** This includes consistently highlighting the Golden Rule — treat others as you wish to be treated. The maxim is thousands of years old, and versions of it are prominently featured in Scriptures from virtually every major world religion.
- **A major 2,000 gross rating point (GRP) television ad buy** allows for ads to air for four consecutive weeks in homes across Mississippi. Six separate ads were commissioned — some will air on television and others will air through paid placements online. **One ad features a transgender woman** — a first in the history of public education campaigns on LGBT equality.

THE ADS

"MARY JANE" FEATURING MARY JANE KENNEDY

"ALYCE" FEATURING ALYCE CLARKE

"MOTHERS" FEATURING ALYCE CLARKE, MARY JANE KENNEDY AND PASTOR STAN WILSON

"LOVE" FEATURING JEREMY AND KATHRYN COLE

"STUDENT" FEATURING BLOSSOM BROWN

"SOLDIER" FEATURING JUSTIN KELLY

MEET THE FACES OF ALL GOD'S CHILDREN'S TELEVISION AND ONLINE ADS



MARY JANE KENNEDY is a Southern Baptist mother and has taught Bible study and Sunday school at her church. She's also a stay-at-home mother who has lived in Mississippi for most of her life. Through deep personal prayer and reflection, she believes that her faith compels her to love her fellow human beings and value the worth of all.



ALYCE CLARKE is a lifelong resident of Mississippi and is the first African-American woman to serve in its state legislature. Born in Yazoo City, she's served her community for more than 25 years as a lawmaker. Alyce attends a Baptist church, and she loves and supports her gay son, in part because of her faith. She simply wants all people — including LGBT people — to be treated equally.



REVEREND STAN WILSON is a pastor at Northside Baptist Church. For his congregation, all LGBT people are welcomed into his church. Pastor Wilson knows that his faith encourages him to speak up for the dignity of all people and that no one should deny LGBT people a place at God's table.



JEREMY AND KATHRYN COLE are proud residents of Hinds County. The Coles were both born and raised in Mississippi, and they want their two kids to live here. They want their children to understand that all God's people should be treated with dignity and respect, and they firmly believe in the Golden Rule.



BLOSSOM BROWN is a transgender woman from Greenwood and grew up in Jackson. Currently a student at the Mississippi University for Women, she is pursuing a degree in Public Health Education. Blossom loves Mississippi and wants all LGBT Mississippians to achieve full equality.



SERGEANT JUSTIN KELLY is an openly gay Iraq War veteran from Mississippi's Delta region. Born in Greenville, Justin is a fourth-generation Army soldier and a medic in the U.S. Army Reserves, and he believes that true freedom means freedom for everyone, including LGBT Mississippians.

WHO IS PRODUCING THE ADS?

The acclaimed media consulting firm Putnam Partners is producing the television and online ads.

- Its founder, Mark Putnam, was recently featured in *The New York Times* because of his prominent and impactful work.
- In addition, the firm's staff has received many accolades for their work, including: 57 Pollie Awards for Excellence in Political Television Advertising, Five Telly Awards for Outstanding Commercial Production and a Silver Microphone Award for Excellence in Radio. The firm also shared two Grand Prix Awards at the 2009 Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival.



TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

In order to maximize the television and online ads' impact, and soften the ground for future efforts to achieve full equality for LGBT Mississippians, the campaign also includes engaging Mississippians in a number of ways:



Person-to-Person Engagement — Campaign representatives will go door-to-door with campaign materials, aiming to reach more than 10,000 homes. In addition, staff will start conversations in prominent public spaces in communities across the state. This includes reaching out at one of Mississippi's most prominent in-state college football games, the Egg Bowl.



Telephone Town Halls — More than 50,000 Mississippians will be asked to participate in a statewide telephone town hall to discuss the importance of treating LGBT people equally.



Direct Mail and Phone Calls — Two rounds of direct mail pieces will be delivered, and they will be followed up with complementary calls from staff to reinforce the campaign's message.



Online — Online ads will be placed prominently on select websites, and will be promoted on social media.



Billboards — The campaign will also be promoted on billboards.

Post-Campaign Survey At the end of the campaign, a survey will be conducted to measure the campaign's effectiveness and develop guidelines and best practices for future efforts.



WHO IS LEADING THIS EFFORT?

The Human Rights Campaign is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality. HRC envisions a world where LGBT people are embraced as full members of society at home, at work and in every community.

WHAT RESEARCH WAS USED?

Earlier this year, HRC's *Project One America* commissioned a comprehensive survey to understand how many folks in the South approach LGBT people and their issues — and to determine the most effective ways to engage with them successfully on LGBT equality.

Conducted by Anzalone Liszt Grove Research, the survey focused on 625 voters in Mississippi and produced several key findings:

While nearly nine-in-ten Americans say they know someone who is LGBT, only half of Mississippians say they do.

And while a large majority of Mississippians have seen or read about LGBT people in the media, barely more than a third say they've discussed LGBT issues with their friends or family.

A faith-driven, Christian values-focused message is the most effective way to boost support for LGBT equality in the South.

Discussing LGBT rights in the context of faith is the top-tested message in increasing support for LGBT rights.

That message is most potent with those who expressed reluctance in supporting the rights of LGBT people.

There is a strong connection between having conversations with LGBT people and supporting LGBT equality.

Mississippians who know LGBT people and discuss their experiences are much more likely to support their rights.

There is an opportunity to engage voters in Mississippi about why it's important to treat LGBT people equally.

After providing voters in Mississippi's largest media market with messages focused on the fair, equal treatment of LGBT people, support for employment protections increases by a net 17 points — from 47% / 45% to 57% / 38%.

WHY WAS MISSISSIPPI CHOSEN?

Although the road to full equality and acceptance remains long for millions of LGBT people across the country, few face more roadblocks and greater obstacles than LGBT Mississippians.

- Mississippi has no non-discrimination protections for LGBT people at the state or local level in employment, housing or public accommodations.

- Mississippi's state constitution explicitly prohibits marriage equality, and in 2013, statistics guru Nate Silver *ranked it dead last out of all 50 states* to grant marriage equality based on public opinion.
- A December 2013 story in *The New York Times* revealed that for every openly gay male high school student on Facebook in Mississippi, there are 5.5 in Rhode Island — even though Mississippi's total population is roughly 3 times bigger.

The passage of the *Mississippi Religious Freedom Restoration Act* in 2014 was a clear signal to LGBT Mississippians: their way of life was under attack. This noxious law is a license to discriminate, and while most of the country is moving toward greater equality for LGBT people, this was a sign that Mississippi could be moving in the opposite direction.

In April, HRC commissioned a needs assessment survey that revealed deeply troubling findings about the lived experiences of LGBT Mississippians:

24%

of LGBT Mississippians have experienced employment discrimination

38%

have experienced harassment at work

41%

have experienced harassment by members of their own family

48%

have experienced harassment in public establishments

23%

have experienced harassment from a public servant like a police officer or firefighter

22%

have experienced harassment monthly or more at their respective houses of worship

46%

have experienced harassment at school

42%

of respondents say harassment is common at the high school level