

 HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

EQUALITY

WINTER 2017

An aerial photograph of a massive crowd of people gathered for a protest or rally. A large rainbow flag is visible in the lower right portion of the crowd. The crowd is dense and fills a large area, with some people holding up phones or cameras. The surrounding area includes green grass and some trees on the left side.

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INSIDE:

**DEFEATING NORTH
CAROLINA'S PAT MCCRORY**
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**A LOOK AT TRUMP'S
ANTI-EQUALITY
CABINET**

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CURRENT AS OF JAN. 23, 2017



DEAR FRIENDS,

Today, we stand ready to confront some of the greatest challenges our movement has ever faced.

Everything we've fought for, and everything we're still fighting for, is on the line — and we're not backing down a single inch.

After a year in which we learned just how far and wide the roots of hate and bigotry stretch, we know we must work harder, dig deeper and fight like never before for the equal rights and fundamental dignity that all LGBTQ people deserve.

We face a president and a Congress that stand opposed to our most fundamental values, and a wave of hateful bills in state legislatures across the country. In a majority of states, LGBTQ people remain at risk of being fired, evicted or denied services simply because of who they are. Our community — particularly transgender people — still faces a scourge of hate violence, made more deadly by unfettered access to guns. Young people continue to struggle against high rates of bullying, homelessness and violence

just because of who they are. And we have yet to end the spread of HIV despite having the tools and technology to achieve an AIDS-free generation.

But thanks to you, HRC is leading the way forward. No matter who sits in the Oval Office, our fight continues for the equal dignity all people deserve, from the halls of Congress, to state legislatures, to the classroom and the church pew.

We know the road ahead will be long, but our history shows us that when we work together we can overcome what others have deemed impossible. And overcome we will. Because of you, HRC will never back down from the fight for full equality. Our community has known bad times, and we know just as well how to persevere and make a brighter future.

So as we embark on an uncertain future, I ask of you this: Continue to be proud, continue to be brave and continue to stand alongside us in our collective fight for a more just and equal world. At a time like this, we don't slow down — we double down, undeterred and focused on our mission to realize a world in which every single LGBTQ person is safe and equal and valued. Your support has allowed HRC to reach new heights. By standing with us, you make us stronger. And together, there is nothing we can't achieve.

Best,

Chad Griffin
President, Human Rights Campaign

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The film, *Moonlight*

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Cover: HRC was proud to march in Austin, TX and across the country on January 21, 2017. Photo: Holp Photography

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More Parents Are Standing Up for Their Trans Kids at the State and Local Levels

“ACTION IS THE ANTIDOTE TO DESPAIR. I AM READY FOR ACTION AND I KNOW YOU ARE, TOO.”



“The Human Rights Campaign is who we look to now for guidance, instruction and comfort. ... We will get through this and we will do it together.”

—*Transparent's* **Amy Landecker**, recipient of the Ally for Equality award at HRC's Chicago Gala, speaking about the new, post-election reality in Washington, D.C. Her great grandfather, **Joseph Welch**, was chief counsel for the U.S. Army when it was under investigation for Communist activities by U.S. Sen. Joe McCarthy. Welch famously asked McCarthy: “At long last, have you left no sense of decency?”

A little **thank-you** for your passion

Nationwide® appreciates your commitment to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). Thanks to HRC members like you, we can stand strong together to continue the fight for LGBTQ progress.

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¡ESTAMOS PARA QUEDARNOS!

A contingent of HRC staff, members and volunteers took part in the **We Are Here To Stay** rally last month for immigrant and refugee rights. Its goal? To stand with its coalition partners in speaking out against proposals by Donald Trump to target immigrants and refugees, underscoring that diversity and inclusion are American values.



Photo: Laura Franco

Speaking at the We Are Here To Stay (Estamos Para Quedarnos) rally was Javier Cifuentes (above), an HRC intern whose story about coming to the United States from Guatemala is featured in a new HRC video in English and Spanish on HRC's website. Also, HRC steering committees in Chicago, Dallas and Seattle took part in sister rallies in those cities.

HRC was a sponsor of, and fielded a contingent in, another major rally: the **Women's March on Washington**, opening its doors to members and supporters the day of the rally. And HRC took part in the **We Shall Not Be Moved March on Washington** for civil rights.

“KNOWING THAT SO MANY PROFESSIONALS EITHER WERE SEEKING INFORMATION ABOUT, OR ALREADY WORKING WITH, THE TRANS COMMUNITY, LEFT ME SPEECHLESS.”

— **Michelle Palumbo**, a trans woman and participant in HRC Arkansas' "Equal Care, Equal Lives" conference in Little Rock which drew nearly 120 healthcare providers, clinicians, social workers, students and others from across the region for several days of workshops and dialogue about improving healthcare for LGBTQ patients.

up front

RACIAL SLURS. SWASTIKAS. ANTI-LGBTQ BULLYING.

Bias and hate is escalating in schools countrywide in the wake of the elections. As a result, more and more educators are realizing they need to be better equipped to prevent and respond to such incidents.

The HRC Foundation's Welcoming Schools program is ready to assist. It trains and certifies professional development experts to help K-12 school districts meet such challenges.

In a post-election survey of 10,000 K-12 educators, 90 percent said that their school climate had been negatively affected and most of them believe it will have a long-lasting effect, according to Teaching Tolerance, a Welcoming Schools partner which conducted the online survey. It found a rise among students of racist language, swastikas, Confederate flags, anti-LGBTQ bullying and references to the KKK.

HRC's next National Facilitator Certification Training will be held in June in Washington, D.C. Participants receive an initial four-day training, monthly one-on-one coaching and access to ongoing webinars, according to Welcoming Schools Director Johanna Eager.

See www.welcomingschools.org/training to learn how to become a trainer or to find out how to have a training at your school.

The latest graphic novel by civil rights pioneer U.S. Rep. John Lewis of Georgia may be his best yet — and its release is well-timed, according to *The Washington Post*. Lewis' *March: Book Three* — a vivid window into the civil rights movement — “could not resonate more deeply” against the backdrop of the “current battle lines of engagement,” the *Post* says.

Lewis, a longtime HRC ally, wrote the award-winning trilogy with Andrew Aydin; acclaimed artist Nate Powell illustrated it.

Born in Alabama, Lewis says he was inspired as a teen when he read a 10-cent comic book about Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Montgomery boycott that ended with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that segregation on public buses is unconstitutional.





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“

WE HAVE NO CHOICE
BUT TO ORGANIZE
AND RECOGNIZE
OUR ISSUE IS FOR
THE LONG HAUL.”

— **Caleb Orozco**, co-founder of an LGBTQ advocacy group in Belize who successfully filed suit against his government, arguing that the country's colonial-era law criminalizing homosexuality is unconstitutional.

Orozco was honored — along with Ukraine's Olena Hloba (*at right, with Orozco*), founder of a support group for parents and friends of LGBTQ Ukrainians — by HRC Global and Human Rights First at the second annual Advocates and Allies awards ceremony in Washington, D.C.



Photos: Drade Photography & Films

“DISRESPECT INVITES
DISRESPECT. VIOLENCE
INCITES VIOLENCE.
WHEN THE
POWERFUL USE
THEIR POSITION TO
BULLY OTHERS, WE
ALL LOSE.”

— Award-winning actor **Meryl Streep**, speaking at the Golden Globe Awards, will be honored this month at the 2017 HRC Greater New York Gala.



Photo: Brigitte Lacombe

75%

Nearly three-quarters of the 887 companies rated by the 2017 Corporate Equality Index offer transgender-inclusive healthcare coverage.

That's a jump from 60% of companies in the 2016 CEI and represents the largest single-year increase in the number of companies offering trans-inclusive health benefits.

Another record-breaking increase, 517 businesses earned the CEI's top score of 100 — up from 407 in the 2016 CEI.

But considerable work remains as battles keep emerging countrywide. “Business support is going to be more crucial than ever before as we enter a new chapter in our fight for equality,” said HRC President Chad Griffin.

63%

That's how many U.S. voters believe the right to marry for same-sex couples is now a permanent right in this country, according to national polling by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research.

It's quite a hike from 50% of voters who, after the 2012 elections, believed it was a permanent right. The survey, conducted last fall, also found that an impressive 69% of voters — including a 55% majority of Trump voters — support the Equality Act, a federal measure which would finally guarantee explicit, permanent protections for LGBTQ people under existing U.S. civil rights laws.

Other polling, in North Carolina, found H.B. 2, the notorious anti-LGBTQ bill, was the critical issue leading to Gov. Pat McCrory's defeat in November (*See p. 15*).



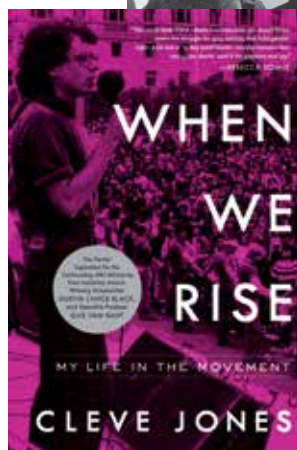
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Q+A: CLEVE JONES

“NEVER GIVE UP”



Cleve Jones has been a crusader for LGBTQ rights for more than 50 years. A protégé of Harvey Milk, a co-founder of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, a creator of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, a marriage equality activist and much more, Jones has left an indelible mark on the lives of countless LGBTQ Americans. His new memoir, *When We Rise: My Life in the Movement*, chronicles the last half-century of LGBTQ activism as well as his role in it.

Congratulations on *When We Rise*. How has it been going? Any surprises?

I'm overwhelmed by the response, particularly from young people. I think there's a real desire among the younger generations to learn our community's history, especially the time before HIV/AIDS. The reviews have been very kind. I was really thrilled to be on NPR's "Fresh Air" with Terry Gross – it doesn't get much better than that!

Your book beautifully captures both the personal and the political in our movement. Which chapters have been piquing the most interest?

People seem to be very drawn to the stories about early activism, back in the years when we were criminalized and still living very hidden lives. I've also heard from many who were moved by my account of the assassinations of Harvey Milk and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone. It's also been wonderful to hear from so many folks who volun-

teered with the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt over the years, I feel very connected to them.

You write about being mentored by Harvey Milk, before he ran for office and while he was at City Hall. What made Milk so effective politically? How did he so adeptly build political coalitions?

Harvey's greatest strength was that he genuinely loved his city and his people. He was able to connect with all kinds of people, find common ground and was eager to cross all the barriers that people create between themselves. He was never just about LGBT rights; he fought for everyone.

Certainly, your memoir is a must-read for anyone who wants to know about the building of the LGBTQ movement. What is it, do you find, that most people typically don't understand or overlook about the movement?

I think that some people have forgotten our radical roots; that our movement was about sexual liberation and part of a larger struggle against war and racism and poverty.

Already, *When We Rise*, has been made into a mini-series, and is due

to air in February. Were you able to be on the set? How was that?

I was amazed when ABC agreed to make the mini series. I had worked with Gus Van Sant, Bruce Cohen and Dustin Lance Black on *Milk* and it was exciting to work with them again and to see my stories woven together with those of many dear friends and colleagues. I spent some time on set and got to hang out with the cast and crew, which I loved.

On the final page of your book, you write, "It is easy to be overwhelmed by the challenges that face us. It is easy to be cynical. It is easy to despair." You also talk about how much hope the LGBTQ movement gave you over the years. We now face considerable hurdles in the next four years.

I begin and end the book with the statement that the movement saved my life. That's not hyperbole. As a frightened teenager I was planning to kill myself. Then I read about gay liberation and discovered that I was not alone. Then, when AIDS came, I got sick and almost died. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of AIDS activists, researchers and the medical community, I survived. There have been many times in my life when I thought it was over, that we were defeated. But then we rise, fight back and move forward again. Never give up. 🏳️

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A “PRESIDENT FOR ALL AMERICANS”?

TRUMP’S CABINET PICKS — SEVERAL ANTI-LGBTQ — UNDERGO CONFIRMATION HEARINGS

It’s no secret that Donald Trump’s Cabinet picks have deeply troubling anti-LGBTQ records. For years, they have used their rhetoric, their political power, and their votes in Congress to oppose LGBTQ rights at every turn. It’s a far cry from Trump’s victory speech pledge to be a “president for all Americans.”

As Senate Republicans worked to jam scores of hearings into the January schedule, Senate Democrats pushed to hold thorough vetting of the nominees. For its part, the Human Rights Campaign delved into their backgrounds, calling out anti-LGBTQ records and elevating voices of those harmed by their past actions.

continued on p. 12

Trump *cont'd* from p. 11

"This is no time for complacency," said HRC President Chad Griffin. "We must fight because lives are at stake, and so too are the fundamental values of justice and equality."

HRC has made it a top organizational priority to organize, mobilize, and fight in solidarity against hate and any attempts to roll back the rights of LGBTQ people. We will be working with allies in Congress to beat back any anti-LGBTQ legislation, and will continue to amplify our community's stories in the media to draw attention to the battle for full LGBTQ equality.

If confirmed, many of Trump's nominees could revoke, repeal and overturn the gains made under the Obama Administration. They could also block the work that still lies ahead, such as dismantling the discrimination still faced by LGBTQ Americans in employment, housing, education and healthcare. Similarly, they could stymie efforts to address the epidemic of anti-transgender violence and the backslide on HIV and AIDS prevention.

One of the earliest nomination hearings was by the Senate Judiciary Committee on January 10 for the vehemently anti-LGBTQ Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, who was tapped by Trump for U.S. attorney general. As the country's chief law enforcer, Sessions would be tasked with ensuring and protecting the freedom of all Americans. As Alabama's attorney general, Sessions led a campaign to block an LGBTQ student group from holding a conference at a public university. While in Congress, he voted against hate crimes protections, open military service and marriage equality, earning a zero on HRC's Congressional Scorecard.

It is no surprise that Trump's Cabinet choices are anti-equality. Several of his top advisers are notoriously anti-LGBTQ. Vice President Mike Pence has a long record of being on the wrong side of equality on marriage, transgender rights, HIV and AIDS and more. Most recently, as governor of Indiana, Pence's "license to discriminate" measure could have allowed businesses to deny service to LGBTQ people.

The new president's Chief Strategist — who did not need to be vetted on Capitol Hill — is Steve Bannon, who viciously attacked transgender people last spring during an interview with the American Family Association while heading Breitbart News, a white nationalist news organization known for its anti-LGBTQ, misogynistic and anti-Semitic viewpoints. Bannon has also attacked non-discrimination protections that ensure transgender people can use facilities that match their gender identity.

Additionally, Trump's choice for National Security Adviser is U.S. Army Lieutenant Michael Flynn, who has a long history of animus toward LGBTQ people, most recently launching a vile attack on transgender people at the Republican National Convention this summer during his primetime appearance.

Read further for more on Sessions' background as well as on additional Cabinet picks who have long histories of opposing LGBTQ equality.



THIS IS NO TIME FOR COMPLACENCY. WE MUST FIGHT BECAUSE LIVES ARE AT STAKE, AND SO TOO ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY." — HRC PRESIDENT CHAD GRIFFIN

JEFF SESSIONS

U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL

- Earned “zeroes” on HRC’s Congressional Scorecards
- Voted against the Employment Non-Discrimination Act
- Spoke in opposition of the U.S. Supreme Court’s historic ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*
- Co-sponsored the so-called First Amendment Defense Act, legislation that could allow Kim Davis-style discrimination against LGBTQ people countrywide
- Voted against the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act as well as expanding hate crimes to include sexual orientation, gender and disability
- Voted against repealing “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”



BEN CARSON

SECRETARY, DEPT. OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

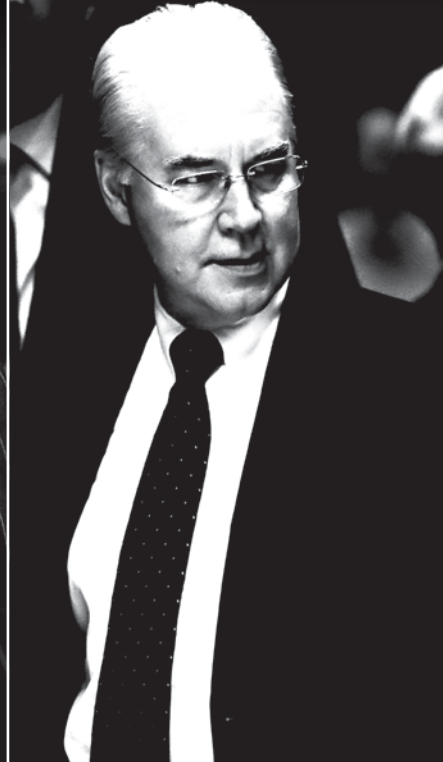
- Opposed laws that protect LGBTQ Americans from discrimination
- Opposes laws that ban the debunked practice of so-called “conversion therapy”
- Joked that same-sex couples might have their wedding cakes poisoned by anti-equality bakers
- Asserted that being LGBTQ is a “choice”
- Suggested that transgender people be required to use separate bathrooms
- Compared same-sex marriage to bestiality, saying, “...Marriage is between a man and a woman. It’s a well-established, fundamental pillar of society and no group, be they gays, be they NAMBLA, be they people who believe in bestiality... don’t get to change the definition.”



TOM PRICE

SECRETARY, DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- Earned “zeroes” on the past three HRC Congressional Scorecards
- Voted against the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act
- Voted against repealing the ban allowing LGB people to serve openly in the military
- Voted against federally funded needle-exchange programs
- Voted against the Employment Non-Discrimination Act
- Voted for a constitutional amendment to define marriage as between one man and one woman.
- Called “absurd” the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education’s guidance for school districts to ensure transgender students are treated with dignity in public and federally funded schools 🏳️‍🌈



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We're proud to show our continued support of the LGBT community.
We believe that inclusion and equality are key to cultivating relationships
and communities rich in diversity. By celebrating each other's differences,
we can learn, love, and live better.

BIG WIN IN NORTH CAROLINA

“A POWERFUL WARNING” TO OTHER STATES

In a monumental victory for equality, staunch LGBTQ ally Roy Cooper ousted Gov. Pat McCrory in a fiery race in North Carolina where HB2 — one of the country’s most horrific, anti-LGBTQ laws — was a top issue for Cooper’s voters, exit polling showed.

“McCrory’s defeat sends a powerful warning to lawmakers across the country that targeting LGBTQ people will not be tolerated,” said HRC President Chad Griffin after McCrory conceded the race, nearly a month after the election. No other sitting governor in the country lost re-election last fall. Moreover, no sitting North Carolina governor has lost a re-election bid in 45 years.

For months, HRC mobilized its members and supporters across the state to unseat McCrory, teaming up with Equality North Carolina and other groups to organize weekly phone banking, canvassing, lobbying of state legislators, voter registration, email and social media campaigns and more. HRC sent more than 50 HRC staffers to help out, and released, with ENC, a series of ads targeting pro-equality voters, including “Lennie & Pearl for Roy Cooper,” a poignant video about a longtime North Carolina couple. HRC was also key in rallying major business-

es, CEOs, leading artists and allies to strongly speak out about the harm of the bill to their employees, consumers, players and fans.

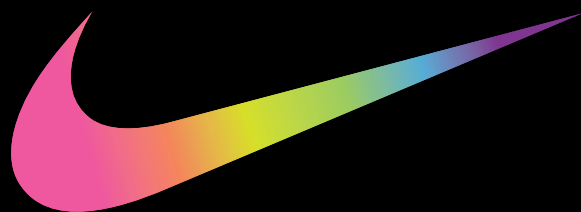
Now, HRC and ENC have a campaign infrastructure and tested tactics to make more gains in the state, according to Griffin. That includes repealing HB2, restoring Charlotte’s non-discrimination ordinance and passing comprehensive protections for LGBTQ people statewide. HB2 overturned a Charlotte non-discrimination ordinance that would have expanded protections for LGBTQ individuals and allowed transgender individuals to use the bathroom of their gender identity.

In addition, HRC’s new Equality Voter Model can be replicated in other state battles on the horizon, Griffin said. This year, LGBTQ equality will be under assault in a number of states by lawmakers who are bent on undermining existing protections, eroding marital

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BETRUE



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DAVID FURNISH

FULLY COMMITTED TO THE FIGHT

...AND SOME ADVICE FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

As the chairman of the Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF), David Furnish is a leading advocate in the battle against HIV and AIDS. Launched 25 years ago by music icon Elton John, EJAF is one of the world's powerhouses fighting the epidemic. Based in both the United States and the United Kingdom, it has raised a total of more than \$350 million for the cause.

Furnish — who lives in London with Elton John, his husband, and their two sons — is also the chief executive officer of Rocket Entertainment, comprised of three enterprises: TV and theater production, artist management and sports management.

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation has been working closely with EJAF, the primary funder of the HRC Foundation's HIV 360° Fellowship Program which trains young nonprofit leaders who are working toward ending HIV. In an interview with *Equality* magazine, Furnish underscored a number of challenges ahead.

In 1992, Elton launched his foundation in this country. What prompted him to do so?

Without a doubt, it was the tragic death of young Ryan White in April of 1990

that motivated Elton to make several major changes in his life, including bringing better focus to his philanthropic efforts to end the AIDS epidemic by forming the Elton John AIDS Foundation.

Unfortunately, the stigma and discrimination that Ryan faced is still with us today. So, we continue to work hard to support and protect people living with and at-risk for HIV.

What advice would you give young leaders working in their local communities to end the epidemic?

Given the results of the recent elections, we all need to be diligent to ensure that access to treatment and prevention services remain a high priority and to constantly challenge discrimination against LGBT people.

The issues we face in addressing HIV are linked to issues confronting immigrants, sexual and reproductive health, and protecting human rights in our criminal justice systems. Therefore, we need to develop partnerships and collaborations with other like-minded organizations that may be approaching similar problems from a different perspective.

You don't need to "go it alone." Seek out mentors among experienced advocates and administrators from other social change programs. But above all,

stay focused on the goals and mission of your organization — you cannot be all things to all people. Stay focused, lean, and efficient.

Your foundation is the largest HIV-related funder of programs for transgender people. Is there a common theme among groups working with the transgender population?

Yes! The needs of transgender people are chronically overlooked, and I am so proud of our work with these communities.

Based on our experiences funding transgender advocacy and service organizations, we see an urgent need to simultaneously address both the legal rights and basic health needs of transgender people. We need to create systemic change through advocacy while also filling immediate gaps in access to treatment, prevention, care and services.

Year after year, we hear about the high risk of HIV among gay and bisexual men of color in the southern United States.

Gay and bisexual men of color in the South experience more acute racism, aggressive policing, social isolation, and

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Pride 昂首闊步 Orgullo गौरव
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الفخر Pride เกียรติ Orgulho
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Furnish *cont'd* from p. 17

poverty than elsewhere in the U.S. The challenges they face from racist and homophobic governments and institutions are what cause the higher rates of HIV infection.

Through the work and experiences of EJAF-funded organizations, I've learned the ways in which many southern states address the health needs of their citizens is a national embarrassment.

The subset of Southern states — Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas — that have higher rates of HIV disease are also the ones that have failed to expand Medicaid eligibility, and have overall poorer health outcomes, high poverty rates, an insufficient supply of medical

care providers, and some of the highest rates of HIV deaths in the U.S.

There is nothing unique or different about LGBT people in the South themselves that causes them to be at higher risk for HIV disease — it is the failure of their governments to meet their needs that puts them at risk.

Any advice for the Trump Administration on HIV and AIDS policy?

There is tremendous opportunity for the U.S. to truly end the AIDS epidemic using all the tools we have right now at our disposal. But that will require increased investments in HIV testing, counseling, prevention, treatment and care. It requires access to healthcare for ALL. It requires access to drug rehabilitation, needle exchange and other harm reduction services for all who need them. It requires continuing efforts to reduce

the stigma and discrimination experienced by racial minorities, LGBT people, women and girls.

Our primary advice to the new Administration is to apply evidence-based approaches that we know work to reduce the risk of infection and keep people alive and well. We are concerned about the rhetoric of the campaign that promoted racism, sexism and homophobia. We are concerned that the new Congress has made repealing Medicaid expansion and the Affordable Care Act their number one priority.

These are direct threats to the lives of people living with and at risk for HIV. Know that we are watching, and we are ready to take action. Together, we can end the AIDS epidemic once and for all — and that would really make America great! 🇺🇸

KEY FACTORS: FEAR, ACCESS & STIGMA

WE'RE ACTUALLY SEEING A LOT OF PROGRESS AGAINST HIV, BUT TOO MANY PEOPLE ARE STILL GETTING INFECTED AND STILL FALLING ILL WITH HIV. ...AT LEAST THREE ISSUES ARE DRIVING THE HIV EPIDEMIC:



“The first issue is fear of HIV, even now. Too many people avoid talking about HIV, and too many people don't know that HIV is both preventable and manageable. People who are HIV-positive and know their HIV status, take daily treatment and have “undetectable” levels of virus in their blood, cannot infect their sexual partners.

“And for the uninfected (people who are HIV-negative), a daily pill — PrEP — is very effective in helping people prevent infection. People need to know that HIV treatment and PrEP are effective. The best way to end AIDS in our communities is to take an HIV test, and then get onto treatment if you test positive or consider using PrEP if you test negative.

“A second issue is access to services.

People living with HIV, as well as people who have a greater risk of getting infected, often have really limited access to the key services they need to stay healthy, including health care, mental health services, drug treatment and harm reduction services, affordable housing, and HIV prevention support that includes condoms and access to PrEP.

“I've talked to young people who tell me they have a really hard time even getting condoms. And let's face it, talking about sex, especially right before you have it, is often difficult and counter-intuitive. That's why comprehensive sexual health education programs, including discussions on how to talk about sex and safer sex practices with your partner, are so important for young people — for ALL of us!

“Open and frank discussions about drug use are also difficult for most people today. Without the ability to get HIV prevention and sexual health information, support services, and high quality health care, it's hard to stay safe and stay well.

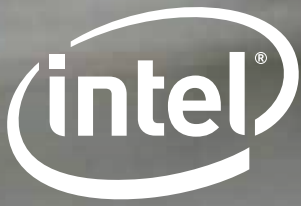
“The third issue is stigma and discrimination.

Even when services are available, at EJAF, we still hear countless stories from gay men, transgender people, people who use drugs, sex workers and poor women of color about how they are so often mistreated as they try to seek out HIV testing, health care, education and other services they need to stay healthy.



“The last thing you want when you see the doctor is to feel disrespected because you are gay or transgender or use drugs or engage in survival sex work.”

— David Furnish



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CONVERSION THERAPY

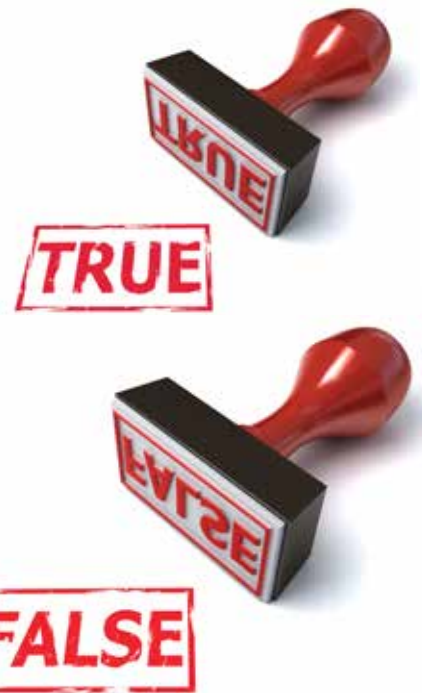
STILL AT LARGE?

For decades, the topic of so-called “conversion therapy” was in the news regularly, drawing considerable attention. Its proponents — many of them faith-based — promoted a “gay cure,” falsely claiming the practice can change a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. “Children and adults alike can be ‘saved,’” they declared on TV, on the radio and in op-eds.

But public dialogue about the practice seemed to wane. Exodus International, the powerful, high-profile

organization providing conversion therapy which had more than 400 ministries in the United States, Canada and abroad, closed its doors. The major medical and health professions denounced the practice as dangerous and ineffective. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released a guide about its harmful effects, calling for its end. Huge numbers of LGBTQ youth are coming out, and more families support them.

Is conversion therapy still a major concern? Have things really changed? Find out for yourself. Take our test.



The overwhelming majority of states in this country have no state law or regulations that expressly prohibit conversion therapy.

TRUE. Forty-four states have no such bans. Even in those states that do, faith communities and other associated groups find ways to circumvent the bans. One challenge is that the bans do not extend to unofficial programs and practices offered to families by churches or ministries. Further, members of the clergy do not need a license to practice pastoral conversion therapy. If unlicensed clergy members believe homosexuality is “against God’s wishes,” they may work to convert you from who you are to who they think you should be.

But the Human Rights Campaign and the National Center for Lesbian Rights have worked to pass protections in six states (California, New Jersey, Oregon, Illinois, Vermont and New York) and the District of Columbia. In 2016, more than 20 states considered bills to protect youth from conversion therapy. U.S. cities also are taking a stand, enacting ordinances banning the practice within city boundaries. Among them are Cincinnati, Ohio; Pittsburgh, Penn.; Seattle, Wash.; and several cities in Florida.

“Pray away the gay” camps are simply a relic of the past.

FALSE. Many of these camps still exist — all too often under the radar screen. Parents often send their children to such “church camps,” unaware of what is happening. Church leaders may begin their messaging with nuanced language from the pulpit and in Bible class.


And while Exodus has shut its doors, a number of smaller faith-based groups — some once associated with the organization — continue to offer conversion therapy locally. Some have changed their names and operate independently abroad. A number of families in immigrant communities send their children to camps in Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Africa, India and elsewhere.

Support for conversion therapy is now an official plank of the Republican Party’s platform.

TRUE. Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, a national, anti-LGBTQ group, pushed to include affirming language about the practice in the GOP platform last summer. Republicans cited “parental rights” to justify supporting the practice despite the proven harms — including suicidality — it poses to youth. Meanwhile, on his campaign website in 2000, Mike Pence called for cutting funding for HIV prevention and redirecting the funds “toward those institutions which provide assistance to those seeking to change their sexual behavior.”

But the good news: Laws protecting youth from conversion therapy have received bi-partisan support. Republican governors in Illinois and New Jersey have signed anti-conversion therapy bills into state law.

Conversion therapy is a form of consumer fraud.

TRUE. In 2015, a New Jersey Superior Court judge ruled that misrepresenting homosexuality as a disorder violates the state’s consumer protection law. The case against the 13-year-old group, Jews Offering New Alternatives for Healing, led to its closure after a jury unanimously found that it committed consumer fraud. Moreover, Illinois’ anti-conversion therapy law expressly classifies selling or advertising conversion therapy as consumer fraud. Last year, HRC, the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the Southern Poverty Law Center (which filed the New Jersey complaint) filed a historic federal consumer fraud complaint urging the Federal Trade Commission to put an end to the fraudulent practice. 

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COMING OF AGE IN MIAMI

MOONLIGHT DIRECTOR BARRY JENKINS MAKES HIS MARK

If he couldn't play ball in college or professionally, Barry Jenkins decided, he would study to become a high school English teacher. But one day, as Jenkins was entering a football stadium to see a game, he happened to spot a sign that read "Film School." Something clicked, and he decided, "Why not?" As he recalls, "I knew nothing about filmmaking. I literally did not know you needed light to expose film."

More than 12 years and just one feature film later, Jenkins again took a chance — on writing a screenplay and directing a second feature film based on a little-known play about a gay, black youth growing up on the margins in Florida. Critics and audiences everywhere are hailing Jenkins as a top

Oscar contender for best film and best director. *Moonlight* is simply "painful and powerful and gorgeous," wrote *New York* magazine.

Meanwhile, he has another big project ahead. He has been tapped to adapt author Colson Whitehead's best-selling book, *The Underground Railroad*, for a limited TV series.

Jenkins, who is straight, grew up in Miami's Liberty City housing project, as did openly gay playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney, upon whose play the film is based. (See p. 25.) Both attended the same elementary and middle school, although a few years apart. Both grew up in grueling households, with mothers who struggled with severe drug addiction. Jenkins recently sat down and talk-

ed with *Equality's* Janice Hughes over coffee.

In your film, you so deftly capture what it is like to be young, to be bullied — the daily terror, the split-second decisions to try to stay safe, and even the loss of hope ...

Growing up where we did, I saw kids like Tarell be bullied. And I did nothing. This is not my attempt to make amends, but I've been a witness to these things. I know what they're like, and I know how constant they are. We describe these things as micro-aggressions. I think they're f----- aggressions. Plain and simple.

continued on p. 25

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Jenkins *cont'd* from p. 23

What did you find was essential to capture growing up in Liberty City?

The quality of the light, for sure. Both the daylight and also the light at night. Sometimes the color of the moon, and the very yellow street lights and the neon, the backgrounds. ... We grew up in a world that was very, very tough. There were very dark things going on all around us. And yet we were surrounded by just rampant beauty. The colors on the walls — it was a housing project that hadn't been painted in 40 years — and yet the pastels are beautiful. They inform this idea of a character who's in-between two worlds, in a certain way. And in-between two different experiences. He is a character who the world is telling him repeatedly — negative reinforcement — “Don't be that way... Don't look that way. Don't walk that way. Don't talk that way.” When internally, all he's feeling is to look at another man this way, to talk to another man this way. There's always this tension.

How do you feel, post-election?

It feels, with this election, that we're living in two different Americas. And I think, any time we can create a piece of work that can show people on both sides of those Americas — how alike they are, how some of their lives may be, how similar their struggles and their triumphs may be, despite the fact that their physical lives are very different, it just brings us closer together.

What do you say to young people who want to be artists, to create?

People on Twitter say very flattering things to me, and one of my go-to replies is that there's nothing extraordinary about me. I'm a very ordinary person who just works diligently, and tries to be honest and make things personal. And so the distance between me and whoever this young person is who wants to tell their story is not very great. Not at all. 🇺🇸

We grew up in a world that was very, very tough.... And yet we were surrounded by just rampant beauty.



Photo: David Bornfriend

The Personal Story Behind *Moonlight* Spurring Conversations about Bullying, Masculinity

In the first few moments of *Moonlight*, a young boy is breathlessly tearing through the back of a housing project, trying to outrun a couple of bullies. At school, on the streets, at home — it's never easy. Told in three parts — when the main character, Chiron, is 9, 17 and in his 20s — *Moonlight* vividly captures what it is like to struggle to find oneself in a world that dictates who you are supposed to be. The film is based on a play by openly gay playwright **Tarell Alvin McCraney**.

McCraney says his play, *In Moonlight, Black Boys Look Blue*, was “born from the smells and sights and threats and bruises” of his childhood. The film — directed by Barry Jenkins — is a rare look at black male sexuality, against the backdrop of the Miami's bright colors and heavy air.

In December, McCraney — a winner of a MacArthur Fellows “Genius” Grant — was named as the new chair of Yale University's playwriting department. He recently spoke with *Equality* from Florida, where he has taught theater arts and civic engagement at the University of Miami, mentored youth of color in arts leadership and helped launch a special program for teen girls.

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Photo: Aaron Davidson / Getty



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We think of ourselves as more educated when we talk about homophobia. But at the end of the day, if we look at all real homophobia, it's anti-feminism. It's really misogyny dressed up, or pointed at men."

McCraney *cont'd from p. 25*

The role of theater made headlines when Donald Trump said the call by *Hamilton's* cast for diversity and respect violated the idea of a "safe space."

The theater, at its core, is a spiritual and political place. If we look at any of the origins of theater in any culture, it is where we went to hear our stories about ourselves, and about where we came from. Think of the Greeks. Think of the African stories of how the world became. But also they were there to depict the problems in the community, and put them up in a way so that we all could have a discussion about them. ... Even today, Donald Trump has called the theater a "safe space." It is a safe space for dangerous dialogue and always should be.

Barry was drawn to your story for its treatment of masculinity and of black men. You've said that the idea of masculinity all too often means "a need to perform, to harden up, to not be soft."

Well, "masculinity" has been force-fed to us in many ways, through a kind of patriarchal oppression of many communities and many people. What it means to be a man has been written down for us. ... And so, it is a performance, and those of us who can perform it, sometimes do in order to gain the privilege that it affords. Those of us who cannot, those of us who refuse to, are often punished for that.

We think of ourselves as more educated when we talk about homophobia. But at the end of the day, if we look at all real homophobia, it's anti-feminism. It's really misogyny dressed up, or pointed at men.

What is the term in which we denigrate men for being homosexual? It is that they're a "girl" or they're "weaker." ... And God forbid that you live in some sort of mixture of the two, of man and woman. Then society doesn't have a place to put you, and things become more problematic.

I think what Barry did best, especially in the first two parts of the film, is that he told that story of the middle, which is what I experienced as a young person, where I didn't necessarily attribute my life to being feminine or masculine. I thought I was being my full self, and then it became dangerous to be that self. Then one has to start to perform in a way that you think will help you survive. But what does one lose in that survival?



Are you hearing from people in our community and beyond? This kind of story has rarely been on the big screen before — nascent same-sex desire, of men being very sensitive with each other.

Yes, people are reaching out. They are taking these stories and feeling a certain ownership about having conversations about them and in healthy ways. People are bringing their personal experiences, starting a really important dialogue: "Well, my child was like this" and "Here was what I had to endure." ... For those who have never been able to speak up, and have something to speak to, I think it's really important.

Black men who don't identify as queer or gay are having conversations about the same kind of bullying and hypermasculinity that they feel stopped them from having really close friends. ... and there are conversations about how the gulf between "straight" men, and men who are queer-identifying, is not helping the black community move forward.

What is it like to teach now, post-election? We have students who are really concerned about their well-being, and my job is to help make sure that we are engaging with those who feel most vulnerable in our community.

Our students who may not be citizens, whose parents may not be citizens, who are of Muslim faith may feel as if they may not be wanted on campus, in our community. ... And we have to combat that. And that may mean some hard work. 🏳️



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A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

Like many parents of transgender children, Peter and Sarah Tchoryk of Michigan think of themselves as “sleeping giants,” awakened to the need of the LGBTQ community through their 8-year-old son, Jacq, who happens to be transgender.

Although Peter likes to say he and his wife “are not born advocates,” they have become resolute activists in the fight for LGBTQ equality. The couple, who live near Ann Arbor with Jacq and their two daughters, tell the family's story in the media, at public forums and in workshops to raise awareness. Peter is among a handful of parents who advised Michigan's Department of Education to pass LGBTQ-inclusive policies. The Tchoryks are also members of the HRC Foundation's new groundbreaking Parents for Transgender Equality Council, which has more than 20 members from across the country, including many prominent parent-advocates.

On Capitol Hill: Members of the HRC Foundation's new Parents for Transgender Equality Council and HRC staff meet with Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla.

Days after HRC unveiled the council, more than 300 parents contacted HRC to ask how they could get involved in advocacy at the local level, said Ellen Kahn, director of the HRC Foundation's Children, Youth & Families Program. “They're just the ‘tip of the iceberg’ of the many parents who want to join in the fight.”

Concerned parents, as most everyone knows, are a force to be reckoned with. “I believe there are no more powerful voices,” said Kahn at the council's fall launch in Washington, D.C.

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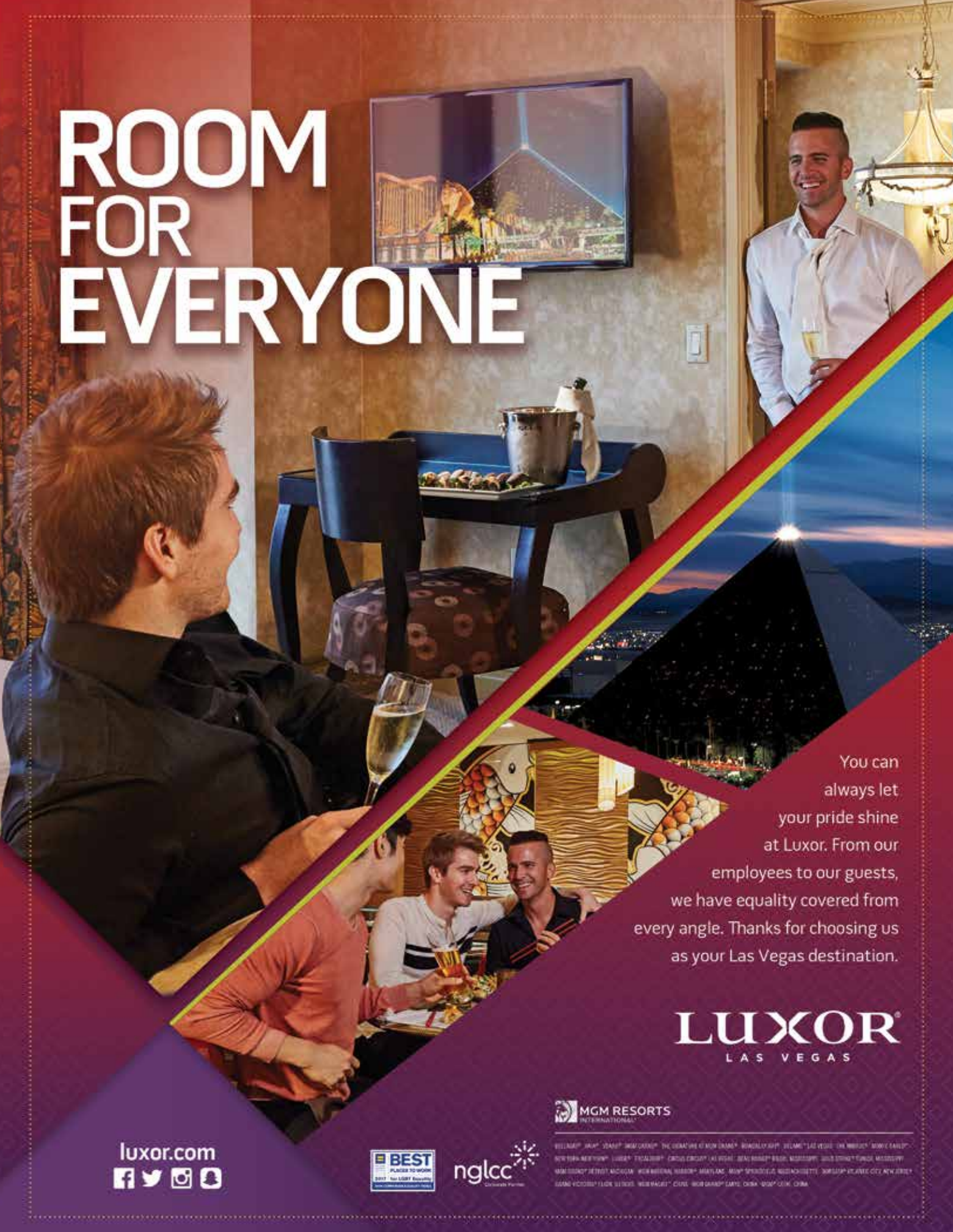
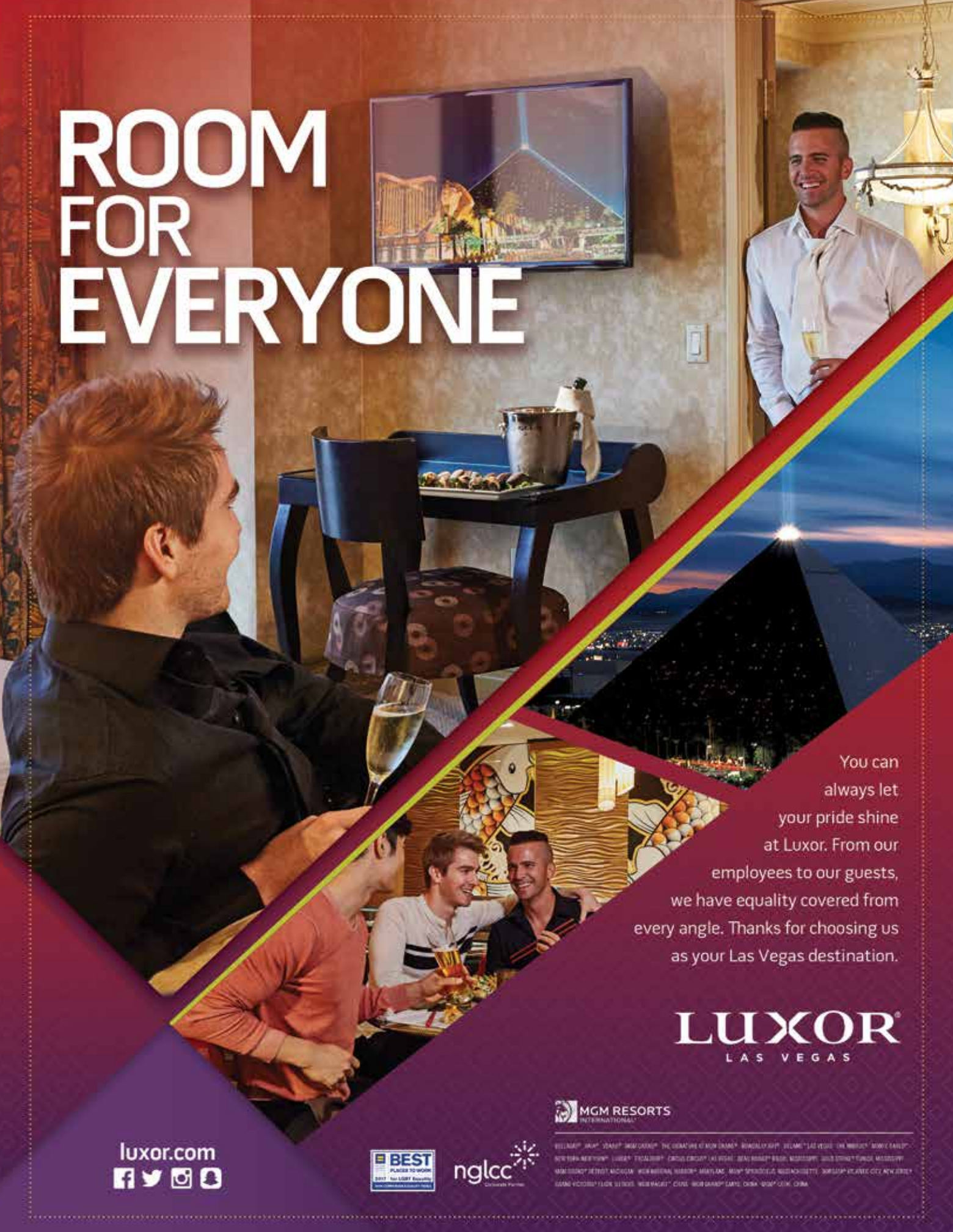
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“PARENTS CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS. THEY CAN SIT IN FRONT OF AN UNFRIENDLY LEGISLATURE, TALK ABOUT THEIR FAMILY AND FIND A HUMAN CONNECTION.”

Force *cont'd from p. 29*

“Parents can move mountains. They can sit in front of an unfriendly legislature, talk about their family and find a human connection.

“They want to ensure their children have the same opportunity to learn and thrive as all students do — be it in the hallways, in the classrooms or practicing sports,” said Kahn.

Increased advocacy by parents comes at a time when anti-LGBTQ lawmakers are poised to unveil harmful, discriminatory bills in Wisconsin, Georgia, Texas and many other states, seeking to erode progress made in 2016, according to the HRC Foundation's recently released **2016 State Equality Index**.

Last year, there were more than 200 anti-LGBTQ bills at the state level, many of them specifically targeted transgender students. Other hateful measures are already on the books, too. For instance, eight states — Alabama, Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and Utah — have laws that restrict the inclusion of LGBTQ topics in schools, the report said.

A number of leaders at the state and national levels also could challenge the Obama administration's effort to protect transgender children under Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.

Fortunately, powerful national organizations like the National Parent Teacher Association are taking a stand. In July, the National PTA adopted its first-ever resolution recognizing LGBTQ individuals as a protected class. It includes a commitment to political advocacy and implementing stronger anti-LGBTQ bullying policies and programs. It also calls for PTAs countrywide to be welcoming and inclusive of LGBTQ parents and parents of LGBTQ children.

“The vast majority of LGBTQ students are bullied, physically assaulted and feel unsafe in school because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or identity,” said NPTA President Laura Bay. NPTA delegates “have taken a stand to push for policies and protections for LGBTQ youth to ensure they have positive school experiences.”

In a formal collaboration, HRC and the National PTA have teamed up to offer webinars and trainings for the organization's members. Some other major groups with supportive policies are the National Education Association, the National Association of School Psychologists and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Meanwhile, the Tchoryks and other parents are charged up, ready to meet anyone to discuss LGBTQ equality, particularly on the topic of transgender youth.

“I know it can be difficult to wrap your head around this topic,” Peter wrote on Facebook. “If you've never met or talked to a transgender kid or a transgender kid's parent, now's your chance. We can arrange a play date. Park your pitch forks by the door. Or we can talk at the next State Board of Ed meeting.”

Tchoryk encourages parents to speak to state and local leaders. “If you feel your voice has not been heard, then by all means write to the state,” he says. “Go to the meetings. If you have data or best practices to support your claims, great. Submit it. That's what this is all about. ... Let's have informed dialogue.” 🇺🇸

THE HURDLES AHEAD...

8

U.S. states have laws that restrict the inclusion of LGBTQ topics in schools

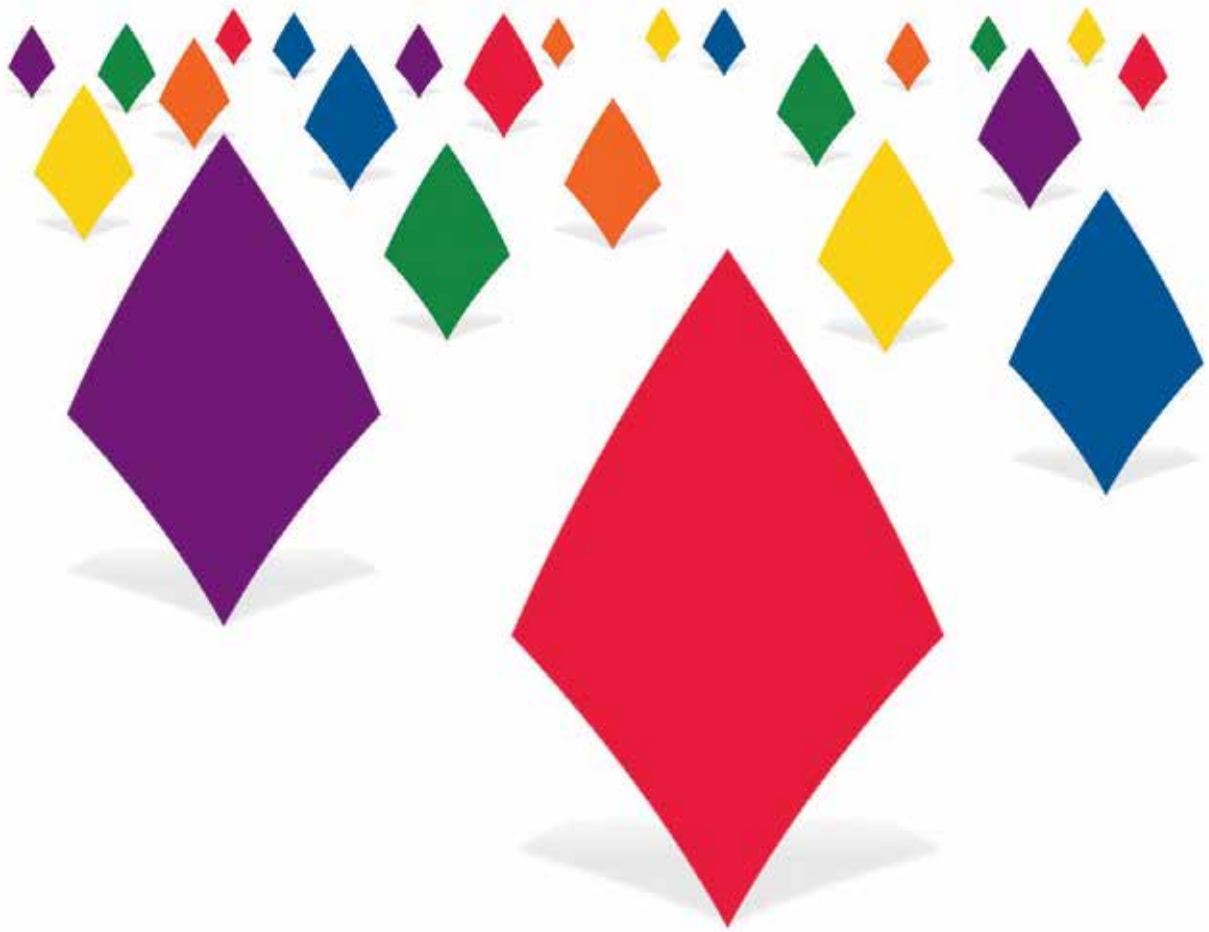
14

states introduced bills prohibiting transgender youth from using bathrooms and other sex-segregated facilities inconsistent with their sex assigned at birth

18

states considered bills related to conversion therapy (See p. 21.)

[From the HRC Foundation's 2016 State Equality Index]



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- Philadelphia Marriott Downtown
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- Jack Cincinnati Casino
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MARCH 18

- Venue: JW Marriott/LA Live
- Co-Chairs: Jessica Bair, Chris Boone & Travis Dina-Pham
- www.hrcladinner.com

NASHVILLE DINNER

MARCH 25

- Renaissance Nashville Hotel
- Blake Brockway, Meredith Bazzell & Eric Patton
- hrc.org/boxoffice

HOUSTON DINNER

APRIL 1

- Marriott Marquis Houston
- April Ayers, Josh Beasley & Gary Wilson
- www.hrchouston.org

ATLANTA DINNER

APRIL 22

- Marriott Marquis Atlanta
- Ivette Lopez & Ryan Roche
- www.hrcatlanta.org

LAS VEGAS DINNER

MAY 6

- Venue: TBD
- Ron Quinn, Laura Sussman & Matthew Howard
- hrc.org/lasvegasdinner

TO BUY TICKETS FOR HRC GALA EVENTS, PLEASE VISIT WWW.HRC.ORG/BOXOFFICE.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

EQUALITY ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

THANK YOU. Many of you were concerned after the election, but you didn't sit quietly — you **ACTED!** Since the election ... 114,000 of you have taken action ... 5,700 of you became monthly supporters to fuel our efforts even more ... 7,000 of you have called, written, reached out.

AND YOU WANT TO DO MORE! The question we've heard most from members is, "What else can I do in these new times?" Well, here are a few ways you can help promote equality wherever you live! Thank you for being leaders in our fight for LGBTQ rights. We couldn't do it without you.



BE VISIBLE and show your support for equality with a free HRC sticker or by wearing HRC gear from our online shop, hrc.org/shop.



SPEAK UP FOR LGBTQ EQUALITY in your community by sending a letter to the editor of your local paper, by attending public forums or by contacting your senators and representatives.



CREATE YOUR OWN FUNDRAISER to support equality in your own personalized way.



BECOME AN HRC PARTNER and help us defend and protect LGBTQ rights with your monthly support. Join at hrc.org/partner!



VOTE IN LOCAL AND STATE ELECTIONS or take equality into your own hands by running for local office!



VOLUNTEER WITH HRC IN YOUR AREA and help change hearts and minds across the U.S. Go to hrc.org/volunteer to sign up!



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BE A RESPONSIBLE SHOPPER by checking out HRC's Buyers Guide at hrc.org/buyersguide — put equality where your wallet is!



TALK TO YOUR KIDS and their teachers about the impact of bullying.

To learn more about these options and other ways you can help, please visit www.hrc.org.

North Carolina *cont'd* from p. 15

rights of legally married same-sex couples, targeting transgender people, especially youth, and limiting the ability of cities and towns to pass inclusive laws, according to the HRC Foundation's State Equality Index. In 2016, anti-equality legislators unveiled 250-plus bills attacking the LGBTQ community.

But lawmakers, beware. As McCrory's defeat showed, singling out a group of people for discrimination "is not a recipe for success," HRC Communications Director Jay Brown told *Time* magazine.

"Voters saw a law passed unfairly targeting a group of people, and they rejected that kind of lawmaking.

"Hate has consequences," Brown said. 🏳️

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