



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

House of Representatives

REMARKS OF HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 2012

Ms. Norton. Mr. Speaker,

I rise today to recognize a Washington, D.C. institution, which I have the distinct honor and pleasure representing in this body, that has been a local leader in the struggle for equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people: the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, D.C. (GLAA).

- GLAA has, since its founding in April 1971, remained a respected and tireless advocate for political freedom for the District of Columbia and for equal rights for its residents.
- GLAA continues in the vanguard of efforts to strengthen enforcement of D.C.'s landmark Human Rights Act of 1977.
- GLAA, by working with coalition partners, D.C. officials and the wider public, implemented a well-crafted plan of grass-roots action and education that helped achieve marriage equality in the District.
- GLAA fights to ensure that LGBT residents are treated fairly and respectfully by D.C. agencies, from the police and fire departments to the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs to the D.C. public schools.
- GLAA pushes for effective public health strategies and accountability in the fight against HIV/AIDS.
- GLAA has rated all D.C. Mayoral and Council candidates in every election since the establishment of home rule, and uses a system noted for its fairness and nonpartisanship.
- GLAA provides leadership in coalition efforts on a wide range of civil rights issues, from family rights to condom availability in prisons and public schools to police accountability.
- GLAA activity opposes federal restrictions on the District's budget that adversely affect LGBT people.
- GLAA enhances its outreach by maintaining a comprehensive website of LGBT advocacy materials, the GLAA Forum blog, and the DCGayEtc.com news aggregator.
- On April 26, GLAA will hold its 41st Anniversary Reception honoring this year's recipients of its Distinguished Service Awards: **Burgundy Crescent Volunteers, The Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League, Ruby Corado, Jeri Hughes, Will O'Bryan, and Jeffrey D. Richardson.**

- Burgundy Crescent Volunteers was founded in 2001 as a source of LGBT volunteers for gay and gay-friendly non-profit organizations in the District, Maryland, and Virginia, and brings LGBT singles and couples together for volunteer activities that are social in nature. The group, a non-profit, has over 5,000 members, who have provided over 100,000 volunteer hours to the community. Their good efforts have ranged from doing yard work for GLAA's founder, Frank Kameny, to pruning the cherry trees at the Tidal Basin.
- The Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League (SMYAL) was founded in 1984 to promote and support self-confident, healthy, and productive lives for LGBT and questioning youth ages 13-21, as they transition from adolescence into adulthood. SMYAL is the only Washington metro area service organization dedicated solely to supporting LGBTQ and questioning youth. The staff and volunteers concentrate on five activities: Life Skills and Leadership Development; Counseling and Support; Health and Wellness Education; Safe Social Activities; and Community Outreach and Education.
- Ruby Corado has been a transgender rights activist in D.C. for over 15 years, focusing on the Latino community in the areas of health care, HIV, human rights, and immigration. She has been tireless and outspoken in defending and assisting transgender people, demanding justice for brutalized and murdered sex workers. She has been at victims' hospital bedsides, at meetings with police officials, and at crime scenes, and has organized vigils, bringing her own experience as a Latina transwoman to bear in promoting the interests of this at-risk community in our city. Ruby has worked as a program manager for Whitman Walker Health, Transgender Health Empowerment, and *Latinas En Acción*, a group she has led for many years.
- Jeri Hughes has persistently and doggedly pressed the District government to increase its employment of transgender people. Her efforts led Mayor Vincent Gray to direct the Department of Employment Services to conduct Project Empowerment job training for transgender citizens. Her efforts to highlight violations of the D.C. Human Rights Act by the Department of Corrections have led to ongoing efforts by the city and activists to improve the treatment of the city's transgender inmates and detainees. Jeri Hughes helps transgender people every day in her job at Transgender Health Empowerment.
- Will O'Bryan is Managing Editor of *Metro Weekly*, which he joined in 2005 as a community reporter. He previously served as a news reporter and arts editor for the *Washington Blade*, and as a media liaison for a nonprofit health organization. Prior to that, he was arts and entertainment editor for *Just Out*, the Pacific Northwest's premier LGBT publication. Will is an unwavering advocate for coverage of the entire breadth of the LGBT community, especially those who are often neglected. In his biweekly column, "Stonewall Baby," he personally engages issues affecting our entire community. He exemplifies the quiet, unheralded commitment of the many people who do the vital work of building community.
- Jeffrey D. Richardson is Director of the Mayor's Office of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs, where he has taken the initiative to connect activists with key agency staff and get results. His tireless efforts have ranged from advocacy within the government to supervising young LGBT interns. He brings to his job the empathy and service-oriented approach that he developed in his career as a social worker. In his prior post as president of the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, he was a steady leader who worked amicably and productively with GLAA and other advocacy groups and this year's recipients of its Distinguished Service Award.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance.