

D.C. won marriage equality more than five years ago, and efforts to block it in Congress or overturn it by ballot initiative or lawsuit have failed. The entire country is expected to catch up with us this month, via a Supreme Court ruling. D.C. is among the top jurisdictions listed on the State Equality Index created by the Human Rights Campaign and the Equality Federation. So what's left to do?

Leaving No One Behind. We strive in our research and advocacy to reflect our community's full diversity. Our policy work encompasses trans people seeking healthcare and employment opportunities; young activists of color proudly asserting the value of every part of themselves; lesbian and gay couples needing legal surrogacy agreements; asylum seekers fleeing persecution; and youths and elders seeking safe and affirming housing. The world in which we operate is always in flux; we are never done learning from one another. Coalition work (the hard kind, not just the talk) is thus more than a tool; it is essential to our mission. It took a broad spectrum of allies to get us this far. We are not just picking benefits like items from a menu—we are building a society. Appreciating the diversity of that society and our own community is key to our efforts and alliances.

Vigilance. There has been an anti-gay backlash in one form or another ever since the first gay rights advances were won. The radical right shows no sign of giving up any time soon. This summer, for example, we expect congressional conservatives to push anti-gay, anti-choice, and other anti-democratic amendments to the D.C. appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2016. We are part of a broad coalition working to fight those intrusions. D.C.'s status as the nation's capital makes us an inviting target for demagogues seeking to score cheap points with constituents back home. A unified resistance makes us stronger.

Resisting Religious Bullies. The religious supremacists are losing the argument, but this only makes them redouble their reckless efforts to infringe on others' religious freedom in the name of their own. We see this in presidential candidates like Mike Huckabee, who says Supreme Court rulings are not the last word because the Supreme Court is not the Supreme Being. We see it in employers who seek to capitalize on the *Hobby Lobby* ruling to meddle in their employees' private lives. We see it in right-wing advocates who use "Natural Law" to dress up religious doctrine in pseudo-scientific drag. We are on to these frauds, and we are maintaining our

strong alliances with civil liberties groups including ACLU and Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Legislation. This year GLAA and allies are asking the D.C. Council to pass bills to legalize and regulate surrogacy agreements; set LGBTQ cultural competency requirements for healthcare providers; allow people more freedom and dignity in their end-of-life decisions; and clarify D.C. family law regarding prior legal relationships from other states. There is also more to be done to ensure the quality and availability of transgender healthcare.

Candidate Ratings. We rate candidates for Mayor and the D.C. Council in every election cycle, including special elections. We use their questionnaire answers to keep track of the winners' promises to our community as we chart our legislative efforts going forward.

Talking to Student Groups. We meet with student groups, both local and out-of-town visitors, to share our insights on LGBT issues and organizing. The greatly improved expectations of today's youth will drive change, and we are eager to encourage it.

Compliance Monitoring. We work with the District’s policymakers and administrators and their staffs to ensure that D.C.’s LGBT-affirming laws, among the strongest in the country, are properly carried out.

Policy Updates. We maintain an up-to-date policy brief on LGBT concerns and proposed actions. We consult a variety of local advocates to ensure that our materials reflect the best in LGBT-related advocacy in D.C.

Educational Tools. Our extensive online materials and our engagement of new and traditional media enable us to share our expertise and insights more widely and provide resources for smart, informed advocacy.

Readiness. We never know what might happen at the local, regional, or national level affecting LGBT interests. GLAA’s continued active political presence makes us better able to deal with new developments than is possible with a dormant, crisis-driven approach.

Please join us and lend your talent, energy, and passion to this work!

References

1. Scorecard for District of Columbia, 2014 State Equality Index, Human Rights Campaign, <http://tinyurl.com/ovwgkbo>
2. Press Conference Statement, Launch of CALM, Rick Rosendall, May 12, 2015, <http://tinyurl.com/npexyfg>
3. Joint letter opposing private school vouchers, May 13, 2015, <http://tinyurl.com/pb4ugog>
4. “LGBT Organizing in Washington, D.C.,” Rick Rosendall, GLAA, May 13, 2015, <http://tinyurl.com/pf4gj96>
5. Oral history on D.C. marriage equality effort, Rick Rosendall, GLAA, March 2, 2013, <https://youtu.be/q11QzP3Bc9w>
6. “Surrogacy Agreements,” *Building on Victory*, GLAA, January 23, 2015, <http://tinyurl.com/n9ohh4x>
7. LGBTQ Cultural Competency Continuing Education Amendment Act of 2015, April 14, 2015, <http://tinyurl.com/ocbdn38>
8. “Death With Dignity,” *Building on Victory*, <http://tinyurl.com/oxyg4xg>
9. Domestic Partnership Termination Recognition Amendment Act of 2015, May 5, 2015, <http://tinyurl.com/qfjq9s3>
10. GLAA Election Project 2015, <http://tinyurl.com/pu64jph>

Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance
P.O. Box 75265
Washington, D.C. 20013
equal@glaa.org ▪ www.glaa.org
Richard J. Rosendall, President
@glaadc ▪ (202) 328-6278



The To-Do List

Pride Update 2015

“I will not take ‘but’ for an answer.”

- Langston Hughes