

OUT

FOR AMERICA

— 2018 —

A Census of Out LGBTQ
Elected Officials Nationwide



VICTORY
INSTITUTE





About Victory Institute

Victory Institute works to increase the number of LGBTQ people in public office by providing leadership development, trainings and a professional network for LGBTQ leaders who pursue careers in the public sector.

About Out for America

The Out for America report is an annual analysis of LGBTQ elected representation in government based on Victory Institute's LGBTQ elected officials database—the largest and most comprehensive listing available. The Out for America map at outforamerica.org provides continuously updated information about every known LGBTQ elected official in the United States.

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Brian Sims



Robert Garcia



Kate Brown



BECAUSE AMERICA NEEDS US

More LGBTQ Americans are running for office than at any time in history, leading to an unprecedented increase in the number of out officials serving in elected office. It seems like almost every month an LGBTQ candidate shatters another lavender ceiling or becomes a historic first—slowly chipping away at long-held conventions about what is possible for LGBTQ leaders seeking elected office. And while the progress is undeniable and victories significant, LGBTQ people continue to be severely underrepresented in every state and at every level of government.

There are nearly 520,000 elected positions in the United States—from members of Congress to state legislators to local school board members. Yet openly LGBTQ elected officials hold just 559 of those positions, or just 0.1 percent of elected positions nationwide. America needs to elect 22,827 more LGBTQ people to public office to achieve equitable representation, an essential element of a democracy intending to serve all its people.

LGBTQ elected officials in positions of power are fundamental to moving forward equality legislation and policies, but their unique experiences also bring an authenticity and values framework that makes them better public servants. At a time when many Americans are questioning both the motivation and seriousness of the nation's politicians, LGBTQ elected officials bring a refreshing sense of openness, empathy and drive to get results. While small in number, LGBTQ elected officials are making an outsized impact on many of the most pressing issues affecting the nation—leading on affordable housing, universal healthcare and immigration reform.

LGBTQ elected leaders are the solution to many of the ills threatening our politics and our democracy, and this report documents the enormous disparity in representation and the urgent need to lessen it. Increasing representation of LGBTQ people is critical right now not just because the LGBTQ community needs us, but because America needs us.

My hope is this becomes a rallying cry for our entire community and beyond.



Mayor Annise Parker
President & CEO, LGBTQ Victory Institute

June 2018

Growing LGBTQ Political Power

LGBTQ people have won historic races and moved up the political ladder since the first *Out for America* report was released in November 2017. These victories inspired many more to run for office and win, a virtuous cycle that continues to help grow LGBTQ political power nationwide.



Danica Roem

Trans Political Power Emerges

The number of transgender elected officials more than doubled—with 13 trans elected officials currently serving nationwide. **Danica Roem** became the first openly trans person to win and serve in a state legislature, **Phillipe Cunningham** and **Andrea Jenkins** the first out trans people to serve on a major city's council, and **Tyler Titus** the first out trans person elected in Pennsylvania.

Leaders of the Legislatures

LGBTQ elected officials assumed leadership positions in state legislatures and city councils. California State Senator **Toni Atkins** was chosen Senate President Pro Tem—the first openly LGBTQ person and first woman to hold the post. **Corey Johnson** was chosen to serve as Speaker of the New York City Council and **Tamaya Dennard** as President Pro Tem of the Cincinnati City Council. Oklahoma State Senator **Kay Floyd** became the first woman and first LGBTQ person to serve as minority leader.



Tamaya Dennard



Jenny Durkan

Return of the Big City Mayor

Jenny Durkan became the second openly lesbian mayor of a major American city after winning her election in Seattle in November 2017. She is also just the second woman to serve as Seattle mayor—the last one serving in the 1920s.

Dominance in Palm Springs

The Palm Springs City Council became the first all-LGBTQ city council in U.S. history after out trans woman **Lisa Middleton** and out bisexual **Christy Holstege** won on Election Day 2017. They joined out LGBTQ council members **Geoff Kors** and **J.R. Roberts**. Mayor **Robert Moon** is also openly gay.



Christy Holstege

State of LGBTQ Representation in 2018

The number of openly LGBTQ elected officials grew from 448 to 559 from November 2017 to June 2018. The 24.8 percent increase is mostly attributable to the Out for America Elected Officials Census Project efforts to identify existing out officials. Yet some of the increase, including nearly all of the 10.1 percent increase in LGBTQ state legislators, is due to wins in the 2017 elections and officials coming out while in office.

559

Openly LGBTQ elected officials nationwide*

4.5%

U.S. adults who identify as LGBTQ**
(11 million LGBTQ adults¹)

0.1%

U.S. elected officials who identify as LGBTQ
(559 of 519,682²)



1 OF 100
(1%)

U.S. SENATORS

6 OF 435
(1.4%)

U.S. REPRESENTATIVES



1 OF 50
(2%)

GOVERNORS



120 OF 7383³
(1.6%)

STATE LEGISLATORS



2 OF 296⁴
(0.7%)

STATEWIDE EXECUTIVES



1 OF 100
(1%)

MAYORS OF 100 LARGEST CITIES



33

MAYORS



2

STATE OFFICIALS***



300

LOCAL OFFICIALS (EXCLUDING MAYORS)



94

JUDICIAL OFFICIALS

¹ In U.S., Estimate of LGBT Population Rises to 4.5%, Gallup News: <http://news.gallup.com/poll/234863/estimate-lgbt-population-rises.aspx>.

² *Becoming a Candidate*, Jennifer L. Lawless. Sources include information from: National League of Cities, National Association of School Boards, National Conference of State Legislatures, and the Bureau of the Census.

³ National Conference of State Legislatures: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/number-of-legislators-and-length-of-terms.aspx>

⁴ *Building Black Political Power*, The Collective PAC. Does not include governors.



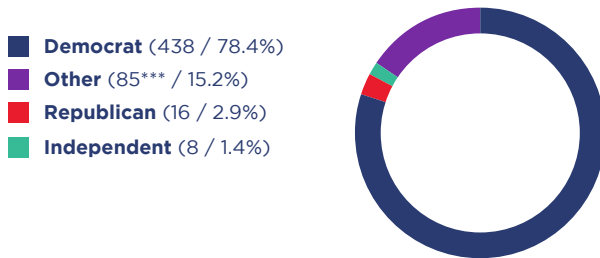
Demographics at a Glance

Women, people of color, and bisexual and transgender people continue to be underrepresented among LGBTQ elected officials.

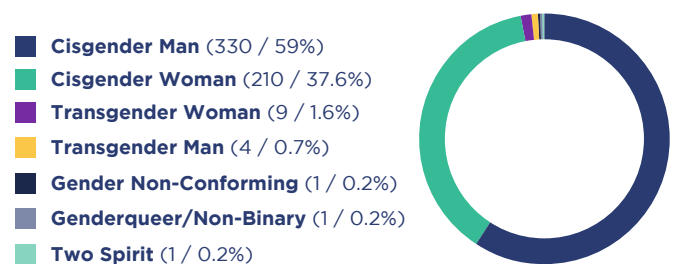
Among the noteworthy demographic changes since the last *Out for America* report in November 2017:

- **Fewer LGBTQ Republicans are in elected office** (16) than in November 2017 (19), despite overall LGBTQ elected officials identified rising by 24.8%;
- **Transgender representation more than doubled** (from 6 to 13 elected officials), and gender non-conforming, genderqueer/non-binary, and Two Spirit elected officials were identified for the first time;
- **Queer-identified elected officials rose dramatically** (from 2 to 12); and
- **Bisexual representation nearly doubled** (from 8 to 15 elected officials).

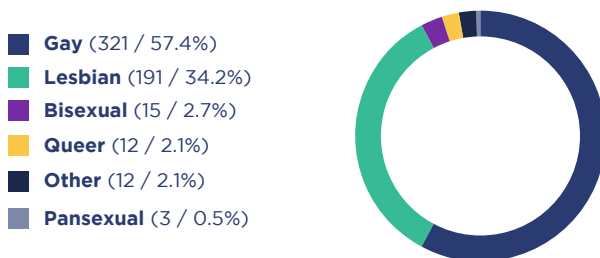
Party Affiliation



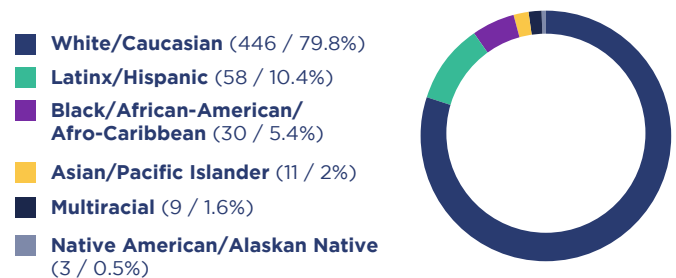
Gender/Gender Identity



Sexual Orientation



Race/Ethnicity



* Elected officials count as of June 1, 2018.

** Newest estimates from Gallup find the U.S. LGBTQ population to be 4.5 percent of the general population—up from 4.1 percent just one year ago.

*** LGBTQ elected officials who are nonpartisan or not identified with the Democratic, Republican or Independent parties. Most judicial positions are nonpartisan.

NOTE: Not all demographic categories include all 559 elected officials due to missing demographic information.

“While our numbers continue to grow, there is a dire need to increase the diversity of LGBTQ people we are electing. LGBTQ women and people of color—as well as bisexual and transgender people—represent too small a portion of our LGBTQ elected officials. Progress is being made—but we must work to accelerate it.”

**Wisconsin State Representative
JoCasta Zamarripa**

“LGBTQ people of color bring a unique and important perspective to issues and legislation—and we need these diverse voices in power to achieve full equality. We are one community, but we all have unique challenges and obstacles that must be addressed.”

**Colorado State Representative
Leslie Herod**

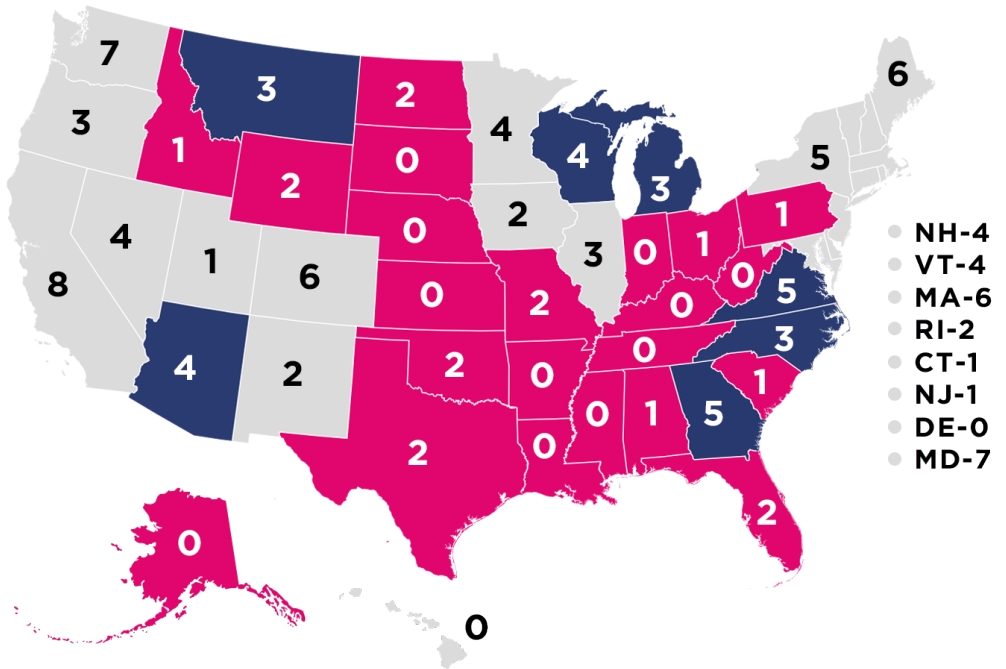
Representation in State Legislatures

Hundreds of anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced in state legislatures over the past couple years—restricting adoption rights, legalizing discrimination and banning trans people from bathrooms. State legislatures have become the laboratories for regressive efforts to rollback equality—their tactics being exported to both federal and local governments—making it crucial LGBTQ representation grows in these legislative bodies.

By the Numbers

Figures represent number of out LGBTQ lawmakers in state legislatures.

- Low-equality states with ≤2 LGBTQ state lawmakers
- Low-equality states with 3+ LGBTQ state lawmakers
- High- or medium-equality states



Twenty-two out of the 29 states with two or less openly LGBTQ state legislators are considered low-equality states for LGBTQ people by the Movement Advance Project. **Thirteen states** have no LGBTQ state legislators.

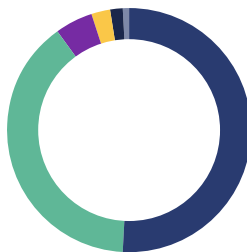
State Legislator Demographics at a Glance

Gender/Gender Identity



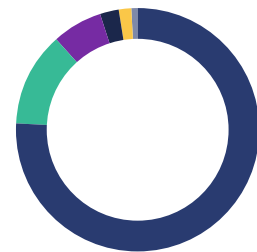
- Cisgender Man (65 / 54.2%)
- Cisgender Woman (54 / 45%)
- Transgender Woman (1 / 0.8%)

Sexual Orientation



- Gay (61 / 50.8%)
- Lesbian (47 / 39.2%)
- Bisexual (6 / 5%)
- Queer (3 / 2.5%)
- Other (2 / 1.6%)
- Pansexual (1 / 0.8%)

Race/Ethnicity



- White/Caucasian (91 / 76%)
- Latinx/Hispanic (15 / 12.5%)
- Black/African-American/Afro-Caribbean (8 / 6.7%)
- Multiracial (3 / 2.5%)
- Asian/Pacific Islander (2 / 1.6%)
- Native American/Alaskan Native (1 / 0.8%)





Achieving Equitable Representation

Although LGBTQ Americans make up 4.5 percent of the population of the United States, out officials hold only 0.1 percent of elected positions nationwide. Equitable representation is essential to a democracy that functions on behalf of all its people, and the anti-LGBTQ laws introduced at every level of government is a symptom of that underrepresentation. Electing more LGBTQ people to government is critical to securing equality for LGBTQ Americans—but there is a long way to go.

Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus

AMERICA NEEDS TO ELECT

22,827

MORE LGBTQ ELECTED OFFICIALS BEFORE EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION IN GOVERNMENT IS ACHIEVED.

TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION IN KEY POSITIONS, AMERICA WOULD NEED TO ELECT:



1

MORE GOVERNOR
(TOTAL OF 2)



3

MORE U.S. SENATORS
(TOTAL OF 4)



14

MORE U.S. REPRESENTATIVES
(TOTAL OF 20)



212

MORE STATE LEGISLATORS
(TOTAL OF 332)



11

MORE STATEWIDE EXECUTIVES
(TOTAL OF 13)



3

**MORE MAYORS OF
100 LARGEST CITIES**
(TOTAL OF 4)

Out Officials Moving the Nation Forward

LGBTQ elected officials are leading in pushing forward policies critical to all Americans' lives—from issues of equality to affordable housing and gun control.

Defending and Advancing Trans Equality

After the Trump administration announced its intention to ban trans military members from serving, Massachusetts Attorney General **Maura Healey** led a group of 15 attorney generals in opposing the administration's plan in federal court. U.S. Senator **Tammy Baldwin** was quick to decry the decision and joined a Senate effort to persuade the Pentagon to stop implementation of the order.

On the same week the Trump administration issued new rules telling the Bureau of Prisons to use "biological sex" when determining where to house prisoners, Colorado State Representative **Leslie Herod** introduced a bill to protect transgender inmates and ensure they are housed in whichever facility they deem appropriate.

In New Hampshire, state Rep. **Ed Butler** successfully introduced a bill adding gender identity to the state's non-discrimination law. The bill also passed the state Senate and the Republican governor plans to sign it as of June 2018. And in Vermont, the governor signed state Rep. **Bill Lippert's** bill requiring single-user restrooms in public buildings or places of public accommodations to be marked as gender-neutral.



Maura Healey

Expanding Affordable Housing

Seattle Mayor **Jenny Durkan** secured passage of two pieces of landmark legislation aimed at addressing the long-neglected homelessness crisis in the city. Her first piece of legislation uses underutilized city property to create housing for those who are experiencing homelessness, and the second raises taxes on large corporations to fund \$100 million in affordable housing. Salt Lake City Mayor **Jackie Biskupski** successfully pushed forward a half-penny per dollar increase in the sales tax to help fund more than \$4 million in affordable housing initiatives.



Jackie Biskupski



Building a National Movement to Ban “Conversion Therapy”

Out state legislators were responsible for a wave of conversion therapy bans introduced and passed in state legislatures across the nation. Both Maryland State Senator **Richard Madaleno** and Washington State Senator **Marko Liias** sponsored bills signed into law. Maine state Rep. **Ryan Fecteau** introduced a bill that passed the state House, and a group of LGBTQ state legislators helped push forward a New Hampshire bill that passed both chambers of the state legislature.



Richard Madaleno

Championing Gun Violence Reduction

On the night of the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, Oregon Governor **Kate Brown** demanded the state legislature pass her bill banning possession of firearms for people convicted of domestic violence or have restraining orders. Just one day later, the state House passed the bill. She signed it into law two weeks later—the first in the nation after the shooting.

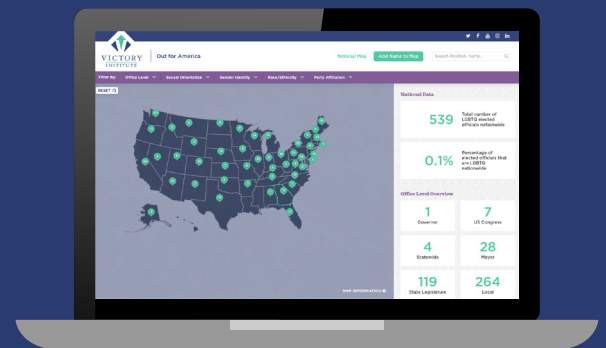
Florida State Rep. **Carlos Guillermo Smith** became a national voice for gun control post-Parkland, pushing forward common-sense reforms and appearing in media outlets across the country. While unsuccessful in passing his bill, it forced legislators to pass a watered-down gun control package, which Rep. Smith ultimately voted against because he did not believe it went far enough.



Carlos Guillermo Smith

Out for America Elected Officials Census Project

Victory Institute launched its Out for America Elected Officials Census Project in December 2017 to grow what is already the most comprehensive database of LGBTQ elected officials in America. The project captures and documents LGBTQ elected officials in down-ballot positions that are often overlooked by media outlets and advocacy organizations, and provides the information to the public. The expanded database will be used to connect and empower a national network of LGBTQ elected officials that can coordinate strategies and provide support with a goal of furthering LGBTQ equality nationwide.



The Out for America elected officials map is available at outforamerica.org.





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