



VICTORY
INSTITUTE

 **OUT**

FOR AMERICA

— 2019 —

**A Census of Out LGBTQ
Elected Officials Nationwide**





LGBTQ elected officials at the 2018 International LGBTQ Leaders Conference in Washington, DC.

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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U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (right) and former Houston mayor and LGBTQ Victory Institute President & CEO Annise Parker at the 2018 International LGBTQ Leaders Conference.

PRIDE FACTS

2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots—one of the most important moments in our movement for equality. To celebrate the anniversary, throughout this report we will share some of the historic milestones in LGBTQ representation that the activists at Stonewall made possible.



Make Historic Firsts History

This Pride Month marks the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York City—the spark that ignited the modern LGBTQ rights movement. It was primarily people of color and trans-identified people who led the uprising across five crucial days. So it is quite fitting that exactly fifty years later it is LGBTQ people of color and trans people who are making the biggest strides in LGBTQ electoral politics.

Over the past year, LGBTQ candidates of color and trans candidates have won in unprecedented numbers, increasing the diversity of LGBTQ elected officials across the nation. This comes as the number of LGBTQ elected officials overall continues to grow—with more LGBTQ people elected in 2018 than at any other time in history. We are achieving higher level offices, building representation in state legislatures, and winning in pockets of the country where we never have before.

There is much to celebrate in this report, but it is impossible to overstate the enormity of the task ahead. There are just 698 openly LGBTQ elected officials nationwide and we need to elect 22,688 more to achieve equitable representation. That demands we identify and support emerging leaders to build a pipeline of LGBTQ people who can run for office, and to champion those already in office to help advance their careers. And we must do this while ensuring our greatest strength, the diversity of our community, is appropriately represented along the way.

It is time for our first trans member of Congress, our first LGBTQ governor of color, and our first LGBTQ American president. But it is also time we have LGBTQ people elected to every schoolboard, to every city council and to every state legislature. Each historic first we achieve reverberates around the nation, inspiring more LGBTQ people to run for office in places we never thought possible. To achieve equitable representation will require us to Make Historic Firsts History—winning in tough places and proving to our community, political parties and the country that we can win and serve anywhere.

That is our path to equality. And that is why the mission of LGBTQ Victory Institute is so critical.

Onward,



Mayor Annise Parker

President & CEO, LGBTQ Victory Institute

June 2019

Executive Summary

Three decades ago, LGBTQ rights activists estimated less than 50 openly LGBTQ elected officials served at any level of government anywhere in the world. Together they formed a loose network—a “support group,” some have called it—that allowed them to both effectively serve constituents while managing the challenges and opportunities of being an out official at a time when they could be legally fired in all but a handful of states.

Fast forward to 2018 and our community—and the nation—experienced the “Rainbow Wave,” an unprecedented number of LGBTQ candidates who won elected office and in states both blue and red. More than 700 LGBTQ people ran for office and more than 300 were victorious on Election Night, contributing to the historic number of LGBTQ elected officials currently serving in the United States.

The 2019 Out for America report—the third annual analysis of LGBTQ elected representation released by LGBTQ Victory Institute—documents this new political landscape.

The overall number of **known LGBTQ elected officials serving rose by 24.9 percent** since our last report in June 2018, from 559 to **698 elected officials** nationwide. Equally notable are increases among the most underrepresented in the LGBTQ community over the past year – including people of color, bisexual, transgender and queer people, and cisgender women.

Among those findings:

-
- LGBTQ elected officials who identify as **Black, African American, and/or Afro-Caribbean** rose 43.3 percent (from 30 to 43);
 - **Latinx** LGBTQ elected officials increased by 27.5 percent (from 58 to 74);
 - **Bisexual** representation increased by 126 percent (from 15 to 34) and **queer** representation doubled (from 12 to 24);
 - **Transgender** elected officials grew by 53.8 percent (from 13 to 20); and
 - LGBTQ **cisgender women** elected officials increased by 29.5 percent (from 210 to 272).
-

Although great strides were made in the past year, LGBTQ people of color, bisexual, transgender and queer people, and LGBTQ cisgender women are still severely underrepresented among LGBTQ elected officials. Diversifying the pipeline of upcoming LGBTQ leaders must remain a priority in the effort to elect the 22,688 LGBTQ people necessary to achieve equitable representation for the community as a whole.

The following analysis of LGBTQ representation is based on LGBTQ Victory Institute’s Out for America database. LGBTQ elected officials are identified through extensive media monitoring, an annual census project, proactive research, and its national network of LGBTQ elected officials and supporters. With nearly 520,000¹ elected positions in America, undoubtedly an unknown number of out LGBTQ down-ballot elected officials are missing from this database. Yet the Out for America database remains the largest and most comprehensive in the United States. For the most up-to-date data, visit outforamerica.org.

1 *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.

State of LGBTQ Representation

The 2018 “Rainbow Wave” of LGBTQ candidates, incumbent elected officials coming out, and newly identified LGBTQ elected officials contributed to a **24.9 percent increase** in the number of known openly LGBTQ elected official since the last Out for America report in June 2018.

698

Openly LGBTQ
elected officials
nationwide*

4.5%

U.S. adults who
identify as LGBTQ
(11.3 million LGBTQ adults²)

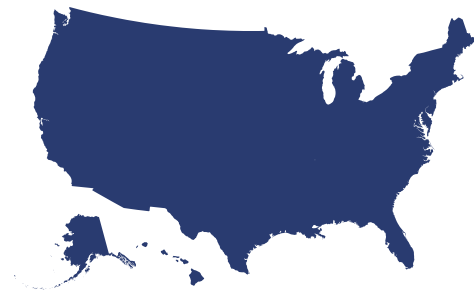
0.13%

U.S. elected officials
who identify as LGBTQ
(698 of 519,682)



U.S. SENATORS
2 of 100 (2%)

U.S. REPRESENTATIVES
8 of 435 (1.8%)



GOVERNORS
2 of 50 (4%)

STATE LEGISLATORS
147 of 7383³ (1.9%)

STATEWIDE EXECUTIVES
4 of 296⁴ (1.4%)

MAYORS
34

TERRITORY-WIDE
EXECUTIVES**
2

LOCAL OFFICIALS
(EXCLUDING MAYORS)
394

JUDICIAL
OFFICIALS
105

* Elected officials count as of June 1, 2019

** Both in Guam.

² In U.S., Estimate of LGBT Population Rises to 4.5%, Gallup News: <http://news.gallup.com/poll/234863/estimate-lgbt-population-rises.aspx>.

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.

1977

Harvey Milk is the first openly LGBTQ person elected in California when he wins a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. It was his fourth attempt at running for office. He serves in office less than a year before his assassination.

Achieving Equitable Representation

A government that represents its diverse communities is critical to a well-functioning democracy. Yet LGBTQ people hold just 0.13 percent of elected positions, despite the most conservative estimates showing LGBTQ people as 4.5 percent of the U.S. population. This absence of LGBTQ voices from legislative bodies, judicial positions and executive offices allows bigoted legislators to push forward anti-LGBTQ laws and policies that further marginalize the community. Achieving equitable representation is crucial to ending these attacks—but there is a long road ahead.

U.S. Representative
Angie Craig



Texas state Representative
Mary E. González



America needs to elect

22,688 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 3)

3

MORE U.S. SENATORS
(TOTAL OF 5)

12

MORE U.S. REPRESENTATIVES
(TOTAL OF 20)

186

MORE STATE LEGISLATORS
(TOTAL OF 333)

9

MORE STATEWIDE EXECUTIVES
(TOTAL OF 16)

1

MORE MAYOR OF 100 LARGEST CITIES
(TOTAL OF 5)



New York City Speaker Corey Johnson

1989

Keith St. John is the first Black openly LGBTQ person elected in the U.S., winning his race for Albany Common Council in New York.

Demographic Data & Trends

LGBTQ elected officials continue to become more diverse—with women, people of color, bisexual and transgender elected officials increasing at a faster pace than white people and cisgender gay men. Among the notable trends:

↑ **43.3%**

INCREASE IN

Black, African American, and/or Afro-Caribbean LGBTQ elected officials (30 to 43).

↑ **27.5%**

INCREASE IN

Latinx LGBTQ elected officials (58 to 74).

↑ **126%**

INCREASE IN

Bisexual elected officials (15 to 34).

↑ **100%**

INCREASE IN

Queer elected officials (12 to 24).

↑ **53.8%**

INCREASE IN

Transgender elected officials (13 to 20).

↑ **29.5%**

INCREASE IN

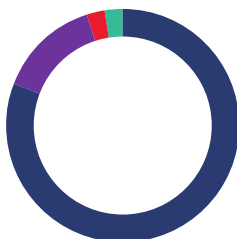
Cisgender women LGBTQ elected officials (210 to 272).

LGBTQ Elected Official Demographics 2019

698 LGBTQ ELECTED OFFICIALS CURRENTLY SERVING

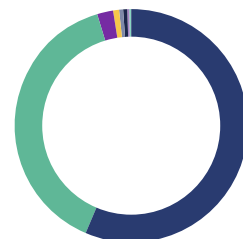
Party Affiliation

- Democrat (568 / 81%)
- Other/Unknown* (94 / 14%)
- Republican (19 / 2.7%)
- Independent (16 / 2.3%)



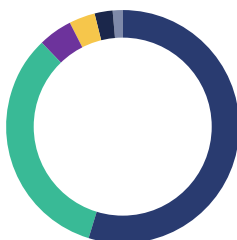
Gender/Gender Identity

- Cisgender Man (393 / 56.3%)
- Cisgender Woman (272 / 39%)
- Transgender Woman (15 / 2%)
- Transgender Man (5 / 0.7%)
- Genderqueer/Non-Binary (5 / 0.7%)
- Gender Non-Conforming (3 / 0.4%)
- Intersex (2 / 0.3%)
- Two Spirit (1 / 0.1%)



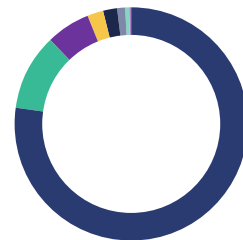
Sexual Orientation

- Gay (382 / 55%)
- Lesbian (231 / 33%)
- Bisexual (34 / 4.9%)
- Queer (24 / 3.4%)
- Other (19 / 2.7%)
- Pansexual (8 / 1%)



Race/Ethnicity

- White/Caucasian (540 / 77.4%)
- Latinx/Hispanic (74 / 10.6%)
- Black/African American/Afro-Caribbean (43 / 6.2%)
- Multiracial (15 / 2.1%)
- Asian/Pacific Islander (14 / 2%)
- Other / Unspecified (7 / 1%)
- Native American / Alaska Native (4 / 0.6%)
- Middle Eastern / Arab American (1 / 0.1%)

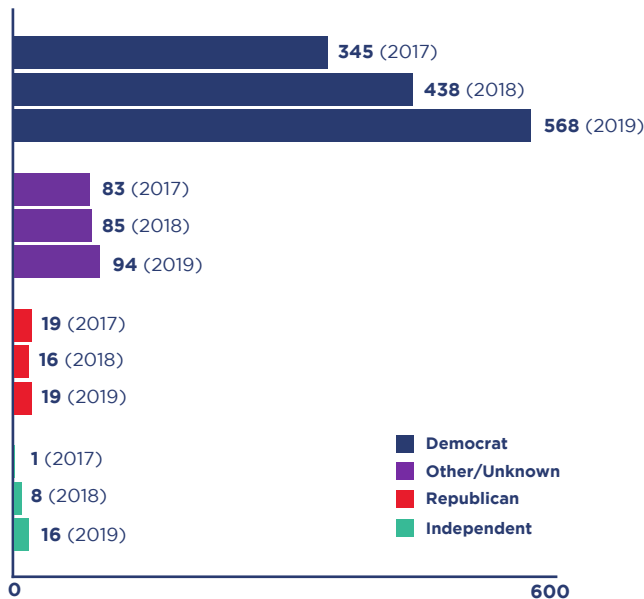


*LGBTQ elected officials who are nonpartisan or not identified with the Democratic, Republican or Independent parties. Most judicial positions are nonpartisan. NOTE: Not all demographic categories include all 698 elected officials due to unknown demographic information.

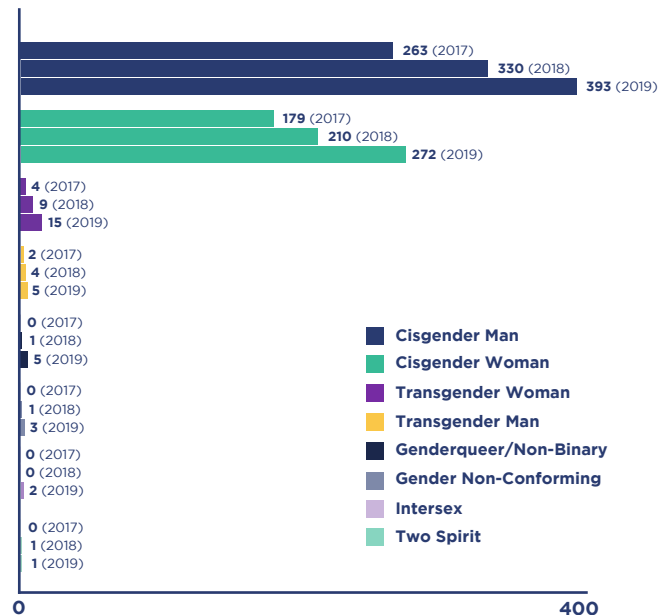
Three Years of Growth

The number of openly LGBTQ elected officials grew by 55.8 percent since October 2017, when the first Out for America report was released. That October, 448 known openly LGBTQ elected officials were serving. When the second Out for America report was released in June 2018, 559 known out officials were serving, an increase of 24.7 percent since the year before.

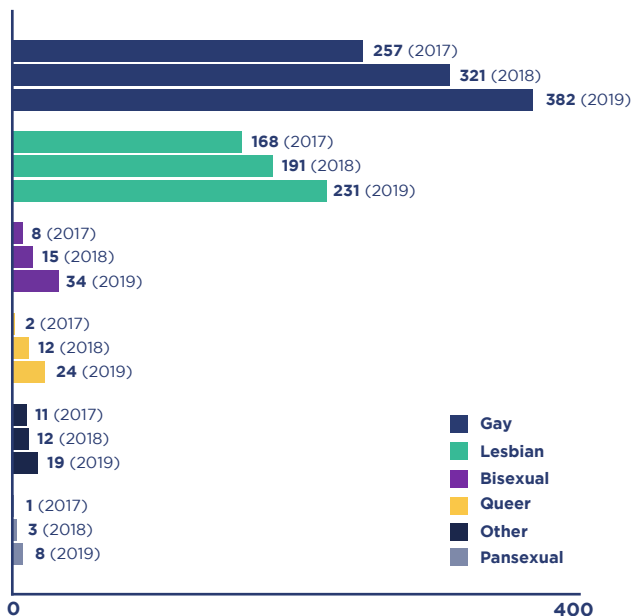
Party Affiliation



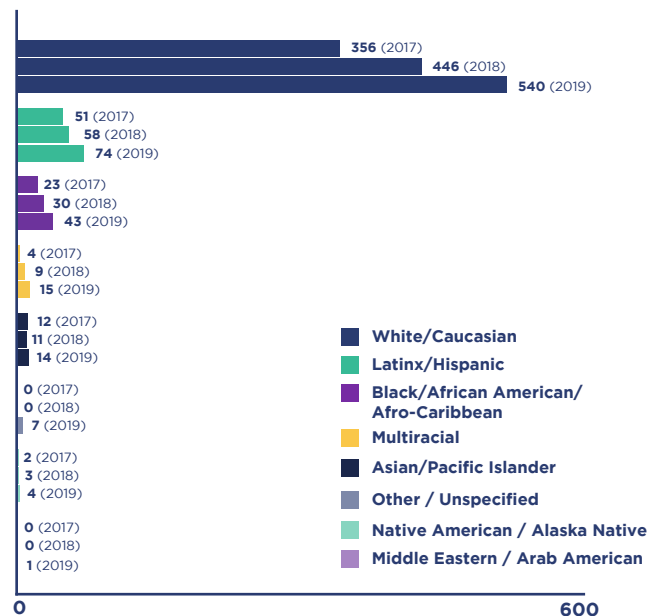
Gender/Gender Identity



Sexual Orientation



Race/Ethnicity



Impact in State Legislatures

LGBTQ state legislators have proven effective and hold a growing number of leadership positions in state legislatures. **Twenty-one** LGBTQ state legislators now hold key leadership posts, with enormous influence over the priorities and policies of their states.

Stories from the Frontlines

Dominick Moreno, Colorado State Senator



After five years of Sen. Moreno's work on a bill to make it easier for trans people to change their birth certificate, it passed the House. Yet it faced a tough vote in the Senate. But with Sen. Moreno's lobbying and outspoken support, four Senate Republicans surprisingly broke from their caucus to vote in favor.

"After the vote, one of the rural Republicans who voted for the bill told me that the reason he voted for it was because he respects me and my work, and he knew how important it was to us as an LGBTQ community."

Jeff Currey, Connecticut State Representative



A conservative colleague of Rep. Currey was publicly chastised at a town hall for opposing a conversion therapy ban. Shortly after, Rep. Currey asked him for a private meeting and explained how harmful conversion therapy is to a young LGBTQ person. He ultimately persuaded his colleague to co-sponsor the ban.

"Without hesitation, he pulled out a pen, signed his name, and was comfortable with his newfound position."

Nickie Antonio, Ohio State Senator



A Republican colleague was sponsoring a "religious freedom" bill, so Sen. Antonio asked for a private conversation and explained its harmful consequences. The next day, the sponsor worked to have the bill suspended indefinitely.

"He promised he would 'make it right' because it was not his intention to discriminate against people in my community, including me."

Lisa Bunker, New Hampshire State Representative



A conservative lawmaker introduced a bill that defined any attempt to help a child with gender transition as abuse. Rep. Bunker spoke to a Republican House member at a reception and learned that he planned to support the bill. After sharing the story of her transition, the member was open to opposing the bill.

"By the end of the conversation, he was saying that maybe he just didn't know much about this yet, and he would do some research."



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Councilmember Lisa
Middleton



Nevada State Senator
Pat Spearman



California Insurance
Commissioner Ricardo Lara



Erie (PA) School Board
Member Tyler Titus



Maryland state Senator
Mary Washington

