

LGBTQ+
VICTORY
INSTITUTE



LEADING OUT LOUD



Growing LGBTQ+ Political Representation

PUBLISHED APRIL 2023

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LGBTQ+ Victory Institute works to achieve and sustain global equality through leadership development, training, and convening to increase the number, expand the diversity, and ensure the success of out LGBTQ+ elected and appointed officials at all levels of government.

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INTRODUCTION

Though she was not the first to run, Kathy Kozachenko's April 2nd election to the Ann Arbor City Council in Michigan in 1974 earned a historic moniker of its own: it was the first time an out LGBTQ+ candidate was elected to public office in U.S. history. Every wave starts with a few critical drops. Over the decades that followed Kathy's historic election, these drops turned into a steady trickle. But it wasn't until the 2018 midterms that this trickle of candidates became an enduring wave.

In 2018, LGBTQ+ people hit the campaign trail in record-breaking numbers – and with their victories, ensured 2019 saw the highest levels of LGBTQ+ representation in U.S. government at that time. The numbers have only risen since this inaugural Rainbow Wave. More out candidates have hit the campaign trail since. And they've kept winning, shattering rainbow ceilings across the country.

In 2022, over 1,000 LGBTQ+ people ran for public office at a time of historic importance for the LGBTQ+ community – and hundreds won. Their hard work and desire for change is why there are now more out LGBTQ+ people serving at all levels of government than ever before in U.S. history. Not only are more LGBTQ+ people serving in office than ever before, they are more unified, determined and diverse than ever.

The momentum of the LGBTQ+ community's political power has not gone untested. Bigoted legislators, who detest growing LGBTQ+ acceptance and representation, are unleashing an agenda of hate that would push our community backwards. These attacks, however, have lit a fire under the LGBTQ+ community, inspiring more LGBTQ+ people to run.

These record-breaking numbers signify progress is still very much possible, and LGBTQ+ Victory Institute remains committed to supporting LGBTQ+ leaders called to public service. Because we will not – cannot – stop until we achieve equitable representation. Our rights depend on it.

If you or someone you know is interested in running for office, let us know! LGBTQ+ Victory Institute is building a pipeline of LGBTQ+ leaders through candidate trainings, leadership development and mentorship opportunities, campaign resources and more.

[Click here to get connected!](#)



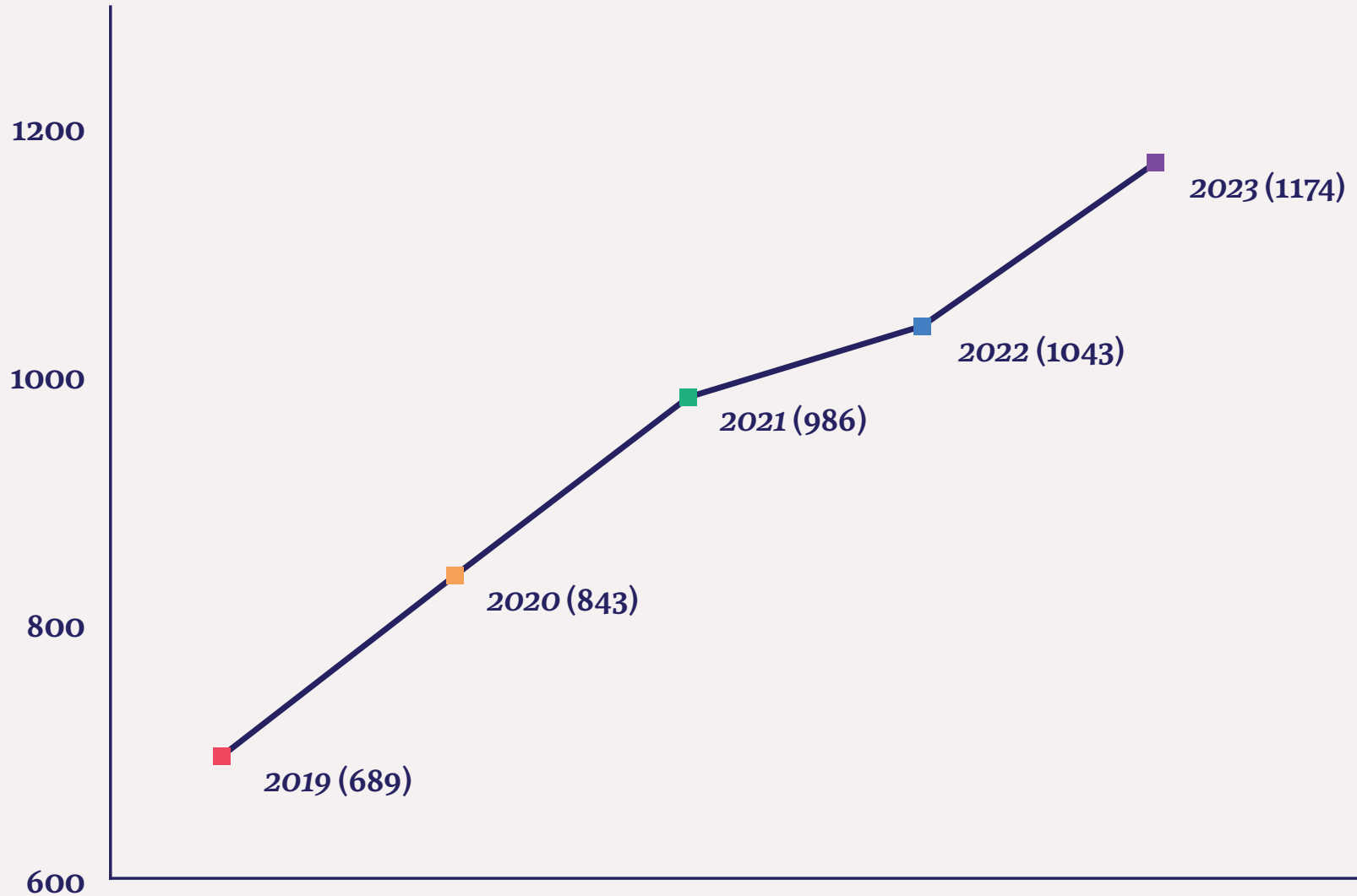
TOPLINES

- **A record number of LGBTQ+ people are now serving in the U.S.** The number of out LGBTQ+ elected officials serving in the U.S. increased by 68% over the past five years, rising from 698 to 1,174.
- **LGBTQ+ elected officials are more racially diverse than ever.** The proportion of LGBTQ+ people of color serving in the U.S. increased from 22% in 2019 to 32% in 2023, a 10% increase. Black/African-American/Afro-Caribbean representation increased by 186% and Latinx/Hispanic representation increased by 116%, far outpacing increases in white elected officials which increased by 42%.
- **LGBTQ+ women continue to see progress.** LGBTQ+ women saw a 60% increase in representation, rising from 287 to 459. The number of trans women increased from 15 to 41.
- **LGBTQ+ elected officials are more gender diverse.** Representation for non-binary and gender non-confirming people increased by 300%. Representation for trans women increased by 173% and for trans men by 80%.
- **LGBTQ+ elected officials are more diverse in terms of sexual orientation.** Queer, bisexual and pansexual representation grew more than 200% since 2019.
- **There are a record number of LGBTQ+ Members of Congress.** There are currently 13 out LGBTQ+ Members of Congress, up from 10 in 2019.
- **State legislatures saw historic increases.** In the wake of unprecedented anti-LGBTQ laws introduced in state legislatures across the country, the number of out LGBTQ+ state lawmakers increased by 55%, from 147 in 2019 to a record 228 in 2023.
- **LGBTQ+ representation in local government saw the greatest increase.** LGBTQ+ representation at the local level increased by 83% since 2019, from 394 to 721.



NUMBERS OVER THE YEARS

Number of out LGBTQ+ candidates over the last five years (2019 - 2023)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Race/Ethnicity

	2019	2023	Change
White/Caucasian	540	765	42%
Black/African American	43	123	186%
Asian/Pacific Islanders	14	32	129%
Latinx/Hispanic	74	160	116%
Middle Eastern/Arab	1	9	800%
Multiracial	15	32	113%
Native American/Alaska Native	4	10	150%

Gender

	2019	2023	Change
Cisgender Man	393	622	58%
Cisgender Woman	272	418	54%
Gender Non-Conforming	3	12	300%
Non-Binary	5	20	300%
Trans Man	5	9	80%
Trans Woman	15	41	173%
Two Spirit	1	3	200%

Sexual Orientation

	2019	2023	Change
Asexual	1	2	100%
Bisexual	34	117	244%
Gay	382	576	51%
Heterosexual	1	4	300%
Lesbian	231	262	13%
Pansexual	8	26	225%
Queer	24	101	321%
Same-Gender Loving	3	4	33%

Office Level

	2019	2023	Change
Governor	2	3	50%
Judicial	105	136	30%
Local	394	721	83%
Mayoral	34	59	74%
State Legislative	147	228	55%
Statewide	4	8	100%
Congress	10	13	30%