

 HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

# EQUALITY

LATE WINTER/EARLY SPRING 2015

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MARRIED ON SUNDAY, **FIRED ON MONDAY?**

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ALLY **SHONDA RHIMES** & "GAY SCENES" ON TV

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**CRUZ, CARSON** OR **HUCKABEE** IN THE WHITE HOUSE? YIKES.

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## THE PEOPLE'S BRIEF & THE SUPREME COURT

LONGTIME HRC MEMBER **JIM OBERGEFELL**, THE NAMED PLAINTIFF IN THE MARRIAGE EQUALITY CASE CURRENTLY BEFORE THE HIGH COURT



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WE'VE GOT A LOT OF WORK LEFT TO DO, AND OUR OPPONENTS CERTAINLY AREN'T SLOWING DOWN."

DEAR FRIEND,

If the first few months are any indication, 2015 is going to be an unprecedented year for equality. From the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to hear four cases that could take marriage nationwide to recent court rulings in Alabama, we're getting closer and closer toward making it possible for all loving and committed couples to legally marry.

But that's nowhere near all we've done. When Saks argued in court that transgender employees were not protected from discrimination, we suspended its score in the Corporate Equality Index and filed a brief in court — and Saks backed down. When Gambian President Yahya Jammeh supported a draconian bill that calls for life imprisonment for people suspected of being LGBT, saying that “we will fight these vermins called homosexuals or gays,” our members helped to get The Gambia's eligibility for trade benefits suspended. And we're still sounding the alarm about LGBT Gambians who are at risk of imprisonment, torture and possibly even death because of his brutality.

We couldn't do this work without our more than 1.5 million members and supporters. Supporters like you, and supporters like

writer/director/producer Shonda Rhimes and HBO Programming President Michael Lombardo, who are using their star influence to change hearts and minds and make a difference.

We've got a lot of work left to do, and our opponents certainly aren't slowing down. When they're not denigrating our families and loved ones, they're using the guise of “religious freedom” to seek the right to discriminate against us legally — denying us access to good jobs and the education we need to thrive, and even evicting us from our homes.

There's a long road ahead of us, but we're not slowing down. We've come too far and worked too hard, won too many battles and broken too many barriers to stop now. In 2015, we're more committed and dedicated to securing full equality and justice for all LGBT Americans than ever before. And with supporters and friends like you, it's a fight I know we'll win.

Yours,

Chad Griffin  
President

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## WHY I'M AN HRC MEMBER

**"As a Japanese American who faced fear and hatred after Pearl Harbor, I have seen what it takes to make change happen. In leading the way in fighting discrimination, HRC helps to create an America where all LGBT people can live and love freely. That's why I'm an HRC member."**

— Actor/author/director **George Takei**, perhaps best known for his role as Hikaru Sulu in the TV series *Star Trek*. The openly gay Takei has been a longtime advocate for equality.



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**#TURNITUPFORCHANGE**



HUMAN  
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“THERE ARE NO ‘GAY SCENES.’ THERE ARE SCENES WITH PEOPLE IN THEM. IF YOU ARE SUDDENLY DISCOVERING THAT SHONDALAND SHOWS HAVE SCENES INVOLVING PEOPLE WHO ARE GAY, YOU ARE LATE TO THE PARTY.”



— Writer/director/producer **Shonda Rhimes** tweeting in response to a fan who complained about her TV shows’ “gay scenes.”

Rhimes — creator of *Scandal*, *Grey’s Anatomy*, *Private Practice* and her latest hit show *How to Get Away With Murder* — is the force that brought to TV some of the most groundbreaking portrayals of LGBT people ever seen on TV. Rhimes is a Golden Globe winner and three-time Emmy nominee who *Time* magazine named as one of the 100 most influential people in the world. HRC honored her with the Ally for Equality Award at the Los Angeles Gala Dinner.



“TO MICHAEL, LGBT EQUALITY ISN’T JUST SOMETHING YOU VOTE FOR OR A PRINCIPLE YOU BRING TO THE WORKPLACE, IT’S A PERSONAL VALUE THAT YOU LIVE OUT EVERY DAY.”

— HRC President Chad Griffin in remarks about HBO President of Programming **Michael Lombardo**.

Honored at HRC’s recent Los Angeles Gala Dinner, Lombardo — a longtime LGBT advocate — oversees all of HBO’s and Cinemax’s original programming, including original films like *The Case Against 8* and *The Normal Heart* and acclaimed series like *Looking*, *Game of Thrones*, *True Blood*, *Veep* and *Girls*. Lombardo, his husband Sonny Ward and their two children, played a role in inspiring Vice President Joe Biden to announce his support for marriage equality in 2012. Lombardo received the HRC Visibility Award.

## MARRIED ON SUNDAY, FIRED ON MONDAY?

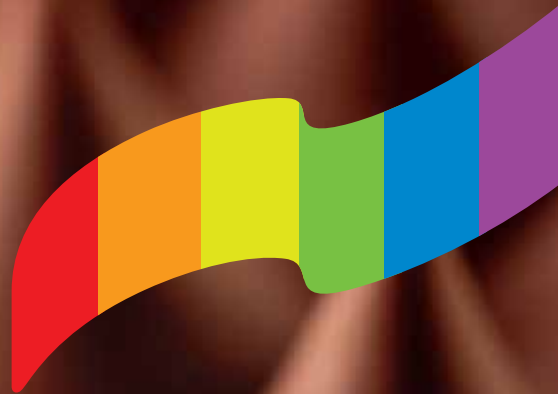
Here’s what you really need to know: Whether or not your state has marriage equality, you may still lack explicit statewide non-discrimination protections for sexual orientation and gender identity.

The 29 states below were rated High Priority to Achieve Basic Equality in the Human Rights Campaign’s new State Equality Index because they lack basic protections and many have harmful laws undermining LGBT equality.

Not a single state on this list — even if it has legalized same-sex marriage — has explicit statewide non-discrimination laws in place to protect a person from prejudice based on sexual orientation or gender identity. From criminalization of HIV and sodomy, to religious-based discrimination, it can be risky to be an out and proud LGBT person living in these states. HRC’s new State Equality Index rates the laws and policies of the 50 states and Washington, D.C., grouping them into four categories based on their statewide laws and policies that affect LGBT equality. Find out more at [www.hrc.org/SEI](http://www.hrc.org/SEI).

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- Florida
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Indiana
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Michigan
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- North Carolina
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- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
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- Virginia
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(L-R) Fred Sainz, HRC's vice president of communications and marketing; Jim Obergefell, the named plaintiff of the historic marriage equality challenge; and HRC staff deliver The People's Brief to the high court.

# HRC, THE PEOPLE'S BRIEF AND THE SUPREME COURT

More than 200,000 Americans across the country shared their support of full nationwide marriage equality directly with the U.S. Supreme Court in February — signing on to The People's Brief, an unprecedented effort by the Human Rights Campaign to give every American an opportunity to “be a part of history.”

The landmark brief was drafted by Roberta Kaplan, the prominent civil rights litigator who advocated for marriage equality at the Supreme Court in the historic *United States v. Windsor*, which struck down Section 3 of the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act in 2013. That case's trailblazing plaintiff, Edie Windsor, was the first to sign The People's Brief.

On March 6, longtime HRC member Jim Obergefell (*above*) of Cincinnati, Ohio, and HRC staff delivered The People's Brief to the Supreme Court. Obergefell is the named plaintiff of the historic marriage equality challenge. Ohio and three other states have cases that will be argued in April before the high court. (Obergefell's attorney, Al Gerhardstein, and his firm are HRC supporters.)

In 2013, Obergefell and his partner, John Arthur, faced the grim reality that amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) would claim Arthur's life before marriage equality would ever reach their home state. The couple chartered a medical transport plane to Maryland, which had already

legalized marriage, to fulfill their dream of being legally married. They returned promptly to Ohio where Arthur passed away a few months later. Despite their legal marriage, Ohio refused to recognize the union. Obergefell is helping to lead the case for marriage, he says, to garner legal recognition for his own marriage as well as for others. (*See p. 13.*)

“It's time to leave the blindness of the past behind and guarantee the equal protection our constitution promises to every American,” according to a summary outline of The People's Brief. HRC launched a social media campaign to drive supporters to a special webpage where they could read and sign the brief.

The brief consisted of a total of 19 boxes with 207,551 signatures. Meanwhile, oral arguments are expected in the case in April, and the Supreme Court will likely issue a decision in June, observers say. It could bring marriage equality to all 50 states in the country — some 50 years after Stonewall — but it still is not certain. Yet the court does

continued on p. 11

**#BETRUE**





Edie Windsor at the Supreme Court in 2013

*The People's Brief* con't from p. 9

appear to be leaning in favor of nationwide marriage equality, as shown by its series of decisions allowing thousands of same-sex couples to marry.

The People's Brief specifically argues that state laws excluding same-sex couples from marriage violate the Equal Protection Clause because they "reflect unconstitutional animus."

Americans signed the *amicus* brief in droves for four weeks in February. Dozens of celebrities — including Ellen DeGeneres, Ricky Martin and Suze Orman — encouraged others to join them in asking the high court to stand up for marriage equality. (See p. 13.)

By signing the brief, supporters were able to have their names affixed to a document that would be delivered to the high

court and entered into the historic record.

Business leaders, elected officials, faith leaders and even President Obama have voiced their support for a Supreme Court decision in favor of marriage equality. "But, until now, the court has never heard from the fair-minded American majority who simply want to see their LGBT friends and neighbors treated fairly and equally under the law," says HRC President Chad Griffin. "This brief shows beyond a shadow of a doubt that the country is ready for marriage and that love can't wait even a single day longer." Griffin was one of the key architects behind *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, which found California's Prop 8 unconstitutional.

Indeed, there is record support for marriage equality across the United States. Now, 60 percent of American voters support marriage equality, ac-

ording to a new national poll conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and commissioned by the Human Rights Campaign. That's a 5 percent increase from a year ago.

Further, nearly half of Americans know an LGBT couple that has gotten married, the poll found.

Attitudes are changing even among traditional marriage opponents, according to the poll. There is now a significant hike among Republican voters who support marriage equality. Now, 35 percent of Republicans are supportive. In 2011, just 19 percent were. And now, 42 percent of Republicans under the age of 50 are in favor.

There has also been a huge change among seniors: Now 48 percent favor it; in 2011, only 30 percent did. And among

continued on p. 13

THE PEOPLE'S BRIEF SPECIFICALLY ARGUES THAT STATE LAWS EXCLUDING SAME-SEX COUPLES FROM MARRIAGE VIOLATE THE EQUAL PROTECTION CLAUSE BECAUSE THEY "REFLECT UNCONSTITUTIONAL ANIMUS."

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The power to do more

*The People's Brief* con't from p. 11

Catholics, there has been an increase to 66 percent favoring it, a hike from 50 percent in 2011. Among non-college voters, 55 percent favor marriage equality — a jump from 34 percent in 2011.

The HRC-commissioned poll also found that there is less support for the extreme rhetoric of Family Research Council President Tony Perkins and others who oppose marriage equality.

Whatever the Supreme Court may decide, discrimination against LGBT people remains. Until these disparities are eliminated in a comprehensive way, LGBT people will still be second-class citizens. That's why HRC is spearheading efforts to pass a broad LGBT non-discrimination bill that touches on core civil rights in federal law. (See p. 15.)

Americans signed *The People's Brief* in droves. Dozens of celebrities — including Ellen DeGeneres, Ricky Martin and Suze Orman — also encouraged others to join them in asking the high court to stand up for marriage equality.



In 2013, John was in hospice care, confined to a hospital bed at home, and I had the privilege of being his caregiver ...

On that day in June, when the *Windsor* decision came out, I just leaned across his bed and kissed him and said, 'Let's get married.' The question was, 'How do we do it, because Ohio won't allow us?' ... instead of being able to put him in his wheelchair and go five blocks to our county courthouse. ...

**So we made it happen.** We flew to Maryland, landed in Baltimore, parked on the tarmac in this cramped medical jet. John's Aunt Paulette [an ordained minister] was with us for a 7-1/2 minute ceremony. And we got to say the most *incredible* thing, 'I do.' Five minutes later, we were in the air, flying back to Cincinnati. We just wanted to get married and to have the government recognize that.

**We got married on a Thursday;** our story was in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* that weekend. Then, civil rights attorney Al Gerhardtstein reached out to us. We met him on a Monday, filed the case on Friday and had our first ruling on Monday. It was a week and a half after we married — completely unexpected, completely unplanned and incredible.

**That was the start of our fight.** It was when we first met Al, he said, 'Jim, do you realize that when John dies, his death certificate will not list him as married; it will say he is unmarried? And your name will not be there, as his surviving spouse?' And I got pissed off — it's the simplest way to put it. I got angry. John and I decided it wasn't right, it wasn't fair. ... John was completely immobilized at that time with ALS. He could barely move his right hand a little bit. A lot of people said, 'Jim, are you nuts? Why would you choose to do this when you know John is dying, in the last few days of his life?'

**'Why not?' I asked myself.** I couldn't think of a better thing to do than to live up to my vow of 'I do.'

Remarks by HRC member **Jim Obergefell**, about **John Arthur**, his partner of 20 years, at a recent HRC board meeting.

# 2 GOOGLERS' COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY LED TO PROJECT ACCELERATE.



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We are proud that Google's spirit of inclusion has been recognized with a 100% HRC Corporate Equality Index rating for seven years in a row. We congratulate HRC for all of its work furthering equal rights for the LGBT community and look forward to our continued partnership.

[www.google.com/diversity](http://www.google.com/diversity)



## BEYOND MARRIAGE EQUALITY

# A HARSH REALITY

## THE BATTLE AHEAD FOR FULL FEDERAL EQUALITY

In many states, protections available for LGBT Americans are a patchwork at best.


Currently, while marriage equality exists in 37 states and the District of Columbia, in 14 of those very same states there are no express federal protections for LGBT Americans in employment, housing and several other key areas.

If the Supreme Court strikes down every marriage ban in the United States, and couples from Louisiana to Michigan to North Dakota rush out to get a marriage license, many of those very same couples who got married can still face retaliation such as being fired or evicted from their homes for doing something as simple as posting their wedding photos on Facebook. And many states don't have laws to protect LGBT Americans from discrimination.

And that's why the Human Rights Campaign is leading the fight for a comprehensive federal non-discrimination bill to provide explicit, consistent protections in such areas. Since January, HRC has begun to build bipartisan support for the bill on Capitol Hill and across a wide coalition of groups in the areas of civil rights, business, faith, labor and

the LGBT community itself. The bill is intended to address discrimination in credit, education, employment, federal funding, housing, jury service and public accommodations.

Such protections are desperately needed. Two-thirds of LGBT Americans have experienced discrimination, according to a survey conducted for HRC by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research. Of those who report experiencing discrimination, the workplace led the way: 47 percent reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace; 19 percent reported experiencing discrimination while trying to access public spaces; 14 percent reported discrimination in housing; and 8 percent reported discrimination while in the education system.

Late last year, HRC released a report, *Beyond Marriage Equality*, highlighting the need to pass a broad bill that provides protections in these areas. View it at [www.hrc.org/beyondmarriage](http://www.hrc.org/beyondmarriage). 

### SHARE YOUR STORY

Do you or someone you know have a personal experience with discrimination? Share it! See [hrc.org/shareyourstory](http://hrc.org/shareyourstory).

# 63%

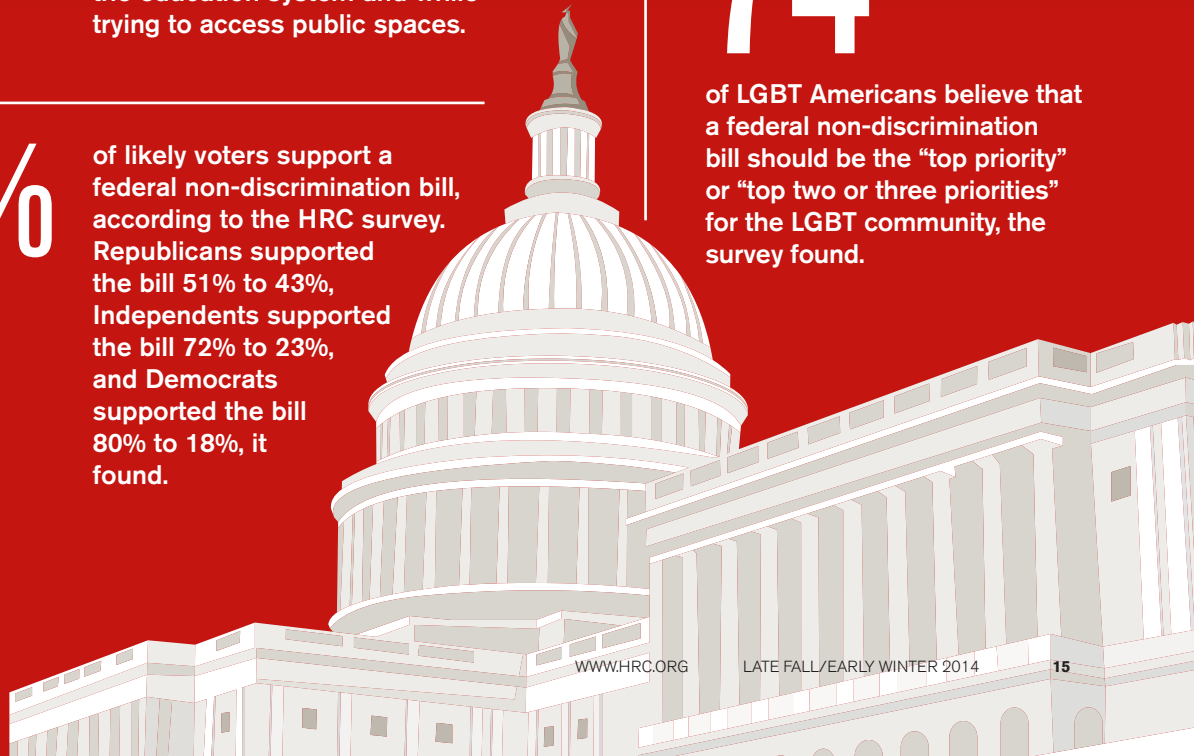
of LGBT Americans have experienced discrimination in their personal lives, including in the workplace, housing, the education system and while trying to access public spaces.

# 69%

of likely voters support a federal non-discrimination bill, according to the HRC survey. Republicans supported the bill 51% to 43%, Independents supported the bill 72% to 23%, and Democrats supported the bill 80% to 18%, it found.

# 74%

of LGBT Americans believe that a federal non-discrimination bill should be the "top priority" or "top two or three priorities" for the LGBT community, the survey found.





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FOR THE PAST 13 YEARS, THE HRC FOUNDATION'S CORPORATE EQUALITY INDEX HAS PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN GUIDING CORPORATE AMERICA ON WORKPLACE EQUALITY. A RECENT CASE WITH SAKS INC. UNDERLINED THE NEED FOR THIS KEY ROLE.

# KEEPING VIGILANCE

## A BIG WIN FOR TRANSGENDER PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE

In 2012, Leyth Jamal filed a charge of discrimination against Saks Inc. with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

While employed at one of the high-end retailer's stores in Texas, Jamal claimed she was verbally harassed, forced to use the men's toilet, told to appear more masculine at work and eventually fired because she was transgender. In 2014, the EEOC determined Saks had indeed discriminated against Jamal for being transgender, and she had a right to sue under federal civil rights law, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Human Rights Campaign stepped into action when Saks then asserted, in a move to dismiss Jamal's case, that transgender people were not covered under Title VII. HRC unleashed a series of press statements condemning the company — which has nearly 14,000 employees — for those assertions. The case drew coverage from *Time*, *Fortune*, *The New York Times*, *Slate* and *Vogue*.

HRC warned that Saks' assertions could undermine crucial legal precedents already established for transgender workers. It contacted Saks, asking

the company to clarify the issue and correct its legal filings.

HRC also suspended Saks' Corporate Equality Index score. The company had argued in its filing that it was not bound by its own non-discrimination policies that protected employees based on gender identity because "employee handbooks are not contracts as a matter of law." Saks' argument was undercutting the applicability of its own policies reported in the CEI, said Deena Fidas, director of HRC's Workplace Equality Program. "The policies our CEI advances are not window dressings for any company to prop up or disregard in the face of individual allegations of misconduct."

HRC and the National Center for Lesbian Rights also filed a joint *amicus* brief against Saks' motion, asserting that the country's leading law firms that represent employers widely recognize that Title VII prohibits discrimination against transgender employees; implementing protections for transgender workers is neither burdensome nor difficult; and industry leaders and small businesses recognize that protecting transgender employees is good for business.

HRC Legal Director Sarah Warbelow emphasized that the

EEOC had already considered discrimination based on gender identity actionable. And Saks' arguments were "undermining its credibility and standing with the LGBT community and any consumer committed to equality," she said.

In 2012, the EEOC determined in *Macy v. Holder* that discrimination based on an individual's gender identity is sex discrimination and thus is a violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 2014, the EEOC filed complaints in federal courts in Florida and Michigan against two companies accused of discriminating against transgender employees. Meanwhile, in December, the U.S. Department of Justice made clear that Title VII bars any type of discrimination against transgender people, not just discrimination based on gender stereotypes.

In January, Saks withdrew its motion to dismiss the case — a major victory for transgender rights. The company recently announced it had settled the suit with Jamal.

Fidas, however, remains cautious. "The fact that such cases still happen makes it all too clear that much more work needs to be done." ■

# WE BELIEVE IN COMFORT FOR ALL



Mitchell Gold  
+ Bob Williams

COUNTRY MUSIC'S

# TY HERNDON

## OUT, PROUD & CHRISTIAN

Traveling evangelists and tent revivals were just part of everyday life in Butler, Ala., a few miles from the Mississippi border, where Ty Herndon grew up. Sometimes



the revivals in the small papermill town would last for two to three weeks. As a young child, Herndon joined in, singing from the stage and giving his testimony. He thought he would grow up to be a preacher.

Then things changed. "I was about ten years old — and I knew that I was 'different' — and a visiting evangelist started preaching on the sins of homosexuality, and how I was going to burn in an eternal flame," Herndon told *Equality* in an interview.

"I remember going to sleep, many days and years after that, believing that. And that one moment scarred me deeply, and in an instant I knew that I could never be that preacher."

Now, years later, Herndon is more than ready to help Christian youth understand that they are okay just as they are, despite being unwelcome at church.

The country music artist — who has had 17 hits, including three number one hits — is charting new territory, that's for sure. He is one of the first male artists in the industry to come out openly as gay. Last fall, after doing so, he appeared at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville — the first openly gay male singer to perform there. Herndon, who is now recording new material, is slated to appear at HRC's Houston Gala in April.

He says his partner of nearly six years, Matt Collum, helped him come out. "He's as calm as a summer pond in the country. He's like that — he goes with the flow." The two, both committed Christians, have lots in common, says Herndon. "We're a farm boy from Iowa and a farm boy from Alabama, and God did a good thing." Both believe their message is an important one — particularly to start con-

versations in the South about being LGBT.

Herndon, 52, has several high-profile friends in the industry who are supportive, including LeAnn Rimes — whom he has known for years. Rimes tweeted her support immediately after he came out. Other prominent artists in Nashville have told him privately of their support but are unwilling to say so publicly because of their fear of losing their followers. His family, he notes, has always been supportive.

In the few months since he has come out, Herndon says many fans have been "coming out of the woodwork" in support, especially those with LGBT family members. Herndon is expecting the country music scene to become more accepting, especially as its audience expands. "Nashville is growing up. It's on a world stage now." ■



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Photo: Dave Anderson

# LOVING LUCAS

By Janice Hughes

HOT SPRINGS, ARK.

It's a little bit of mayhem and a lot of fun, sitting down and talking one sunny afternoon with Connie Dean, her son Lucas and their family in their home tucked among the trees, down a winding road, an hour outside of Little Rock.

Lucas' young sister races in and out of the den, talking about a new batch of cupcakes and a Katy Perry concert. A dog barks out back. Connie's husband drops in, smiling broadly. It's a conversation about school, Facebook, the cousins down the way, the pastor and what life has been like for Lucas, 15, and the entire family since he came

out as transgender a few months ago in a "conservative town and a conservative part of the world," as Connie says.

*How have the last few months been for you — at home, at school?*

**Lucas:** I am a lot more comfortable. It has been nice being able to be who I wanted to be all this time. My mom has been really, really supportive of me; she and my stepdad Ryan have just both been there for me and helping me. At school, it has definitely been a lot different. Some people ignore me, don't talk to me, and some people just think I'm quite strange and they don't really understand. And that's OK because I don't expect everybody to understand. But I do have three friends — we all hang out and they all support me. It is getting better slowly, progressively.

*Your pastor has been there for you, too.*

**Lucas:** My pastor is very, very supportive and he has been great. He tells me all

the time, "Do you know how amazing you are?" He hugs me and tells me that God loves me no matter what.

**Connie:** Our pastor has been amazing. He and his wife have been extremely supportive of everything that we've been through with Lucas. ... I know in the beginning it was really hard for Lucas because he struggled with his faith — "If God made me this way, maybe this is who I'm supposed to be," you know? The therapist who we see is also an ordained Presbyterian minister, and she has been fabulous in reassuring Lucas, telling him that "God loves you," that "You are loved" and "You are meant to live the life that you feel. ..."

*Some people would say you're really courageous.*

**Lucas:** Some people respect me for doing what I'm doing to make myself happy and not caring what other people think.

continued on p. 23

# 100%

## IT'S A START

Bank of America thanks the Human Rights Campaign for recognizing us with a 100% score on the Corporate Equality Index. We'll keep doing our best to share the benefits of diversity at work and in the communities we serve. And we invite everyone to join us on a journey that is by no means finished.

We are 100% grateful.

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Lucas con't from p. 21

*Does the idea of being a role model to others appeal to you?*

**Lucas:** Yes, I like to help others and be the role model, for even my cousins and others. I'm trying to set an example for them that you should be allowed to be who you are. Being transgender is not something that's easy for us to do. And it's not easy to tell people about it because you're scared, and you don't know what they'll think.

*Tell me about your mom. Pretend like she's not here.* [Laughter.]

**Lucas:** Although we all don't always get along, she has been my best friend throughout this. She has really been there for me and helped me. I'm just very, very lucky to have a mom like her.

**Connie:** When Lucas was four and five years old, he would come to me and cry, you know, "I want to be a boy." Or "I wish I was a boy." At that point in time, I really didn't know how to respond to that. I would ask, "Why?" and "What is it that you feel like a boy could do that a girl can't?" And he never really had an explanation, and I really didn't. As we approached the teenage years, we had several conversations. When Lucas was 13 or 14, I started to, every now and then, poke around and just say, "You know, if you're gay or if you want to be a boy, we will still love you, and we're going to be there with you, no matter what."

At the beginning of the school year last year, the Macklemore song, "Same Love," was one of his favorites, and he did his own rendition of that and posted it on Facebook. I was impressed that he would be so brave because we do live in a conservative town and a conservative part of the world where not everyone is very open-minded and accepting. Then, he decided he wanted to cut his hair short. And he said, "I think this'll help me decide if I want to be a boy." He never wanted to wear dresses, even as a very young child. Everybody always called him a tomboy, but I knew it wasn't a phase. He was always Lucas, from the time he was born — always Lucas.

*It sounds like you really wanted to help Lucas be who he is.*

**Connie:** Yes, well, I didn't always feel very good about myself in my teens and 20s. Being a teenager is really hard. And from the time he was little, my hope and prayer was that he would leave my home feeling very proud of who he is and confident and secure because to me, if you can live your teen years and your 20s that way, you're going to be successful no matter what. Whoever he was meant to be, I just wanted him to feel good about that and proud of who he was.

*Was there anyone to whom you could turn?*

**Connie:** My family has been extremely supportive — my sisters and brothers over the years, and some of my closest friends, and my pastor and his wife. I've met some wonderful families in Little Rock, too, who have been really helpful. It's been nice to have other parents to talk to who have been through this whole process.

Honestly, since Lucas has come out, we've had some of the greatest alone time and conversations. We've really grown close. Although I wasn't surprised when he came out to me, it surprised me how much he has felt trapped for so many years. That's been hard to hear and made me very sad to know that he has struggled for so long. But it has also been really enjoyable to see Lucas feel so much more comfortable, and to know that we're taking steps to get to a place where he fully can be who he feels he's always been. It's been an educational experience, and it has forced me to become more outspoken — and to gain some confidence and some courage.

See [www.hrc.org/trans-youth](http://www.hrc.org/trans-youth). 🏳️‍🌈

## "ARKANSAS IS A 'TALE OF TWO STATES'...

when it comes to transgender resources," according to Andrea Zekis. "There are the safer, resource-rich communities of Little Rock and Fayetteville, and then there's everywhere else."

And that's just not right, says Zekis, the founder and executive director of the Arkansas Trans Equality Coalition. "People shouldn't have to move to Fayetteville and Little Rock to be who they are."

**Arkansas law prevents municipalities** from passing explicit legal protections in employment, housing and public accommodations, she says. If they do have medical insurance, it excludes transition-related care. Most don't have easy access to a health care provider. Most have not changed their legal documents to reflect their identity. And most worry constantly about their personal safety.

"Everything comes down to access, whether it's access to education or access to resources," says Zekis. She is leading the charge to

bring that access to transgender people across the state, in smaller cities and rural areas alike.

**Since its launch a year ago**, ArTEC has held town hall discussions in four cities and taken part in every pride event in the state and the state's first-ever LGBT Summit in Arkansas. The group has developed a clearinghouse for transgender medical, legal and support services, significantly increasing the number of transgender-friendly providers.

The new group works with families, allies, providers and other groups, including the Human Rights Campaign and its Project One America Arkansas office in Little Rock. Zekis, who works on contract with HRC, is mobilizing transgender people and allies in the state and developing a plan for ongoing work. She also tells her story about transitioning in a state without explicit protections under the law. Zekis, a cartographer, works for the state highway and transportation department, which supported her transitioning on the job.

It was at one of ArTEC's monthly community potlucks that Zekis first met Connie Dean (see *article, at left*), whose family lives an hour outside of Little Rock. Zekis shared her experiences and words of support. The two talk nearly every week. 🏳️‍🌈



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# PUTTING THE PRESSURE ON THE GAMBIA

Since seizing power in a military coup two decades ago, Gambian President Yahya Jammeh has ruthlessly ruled his small West African nation, systematically violating the human rights of Gambians with impunity.

The violations escalated in 2014, when Jammeh began to specifically target the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Though same-sex activity was already criminalized in the country, he signed into law a new, harsher piece of legislation that allows for the lifetime imprisonment of LGBT individ-

uals. Almost immediately, Jammeh's security forces began detaining individuals suspected of being LGBT, torturing some of them and forcing them to name others. The authorities are now believed to have a list of about 200 Gambians who have done nothing wrong but are accused of being LGBT.

After meeting with Gambian activists in exile in the United States last fall, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's international program, HRC Global, launched a campaign on behalf of LGBT Gambians, mobilizing HRC members to put pressure

on the U.S. government to act. "Since the gays and lesbians are being used as pawns in [Jammeh's] scheme to distract and stay in power, he will be sure to arrest more in the future to keep the conversation going," a Gambian activist said in the meeting. In December, HRC delivered more than 18,000 signatures to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, urging action.

Thus far, the U.S. government has announced that the country has been dropped from the African Growth and Opportunity Act, a preferential trade agreement, because of human rights concerns.

**Feb. 18, 2014**

Gambian President Yahya Jammeh reportedly says, "We will fight these vermins, called homosexuals or gays, the same way we are fighting malaria-causing mosquitoes, if not more aggressively."



**Aug. 9-10, 2014**

Days later, police in The Gambia conduct raids and arrest 12 men on suspicion of being LGBT.



**Aug. 2014** The Gambia's National Assembly passes a bill that allows lifetime imprisonment for "aggravated homosexuality."

**Oct. 9, 2014** Jammeh signs the legislation into law.

**Nov. 24, 2014** HRC condemns passage of the draconian anti-LGBT law.

**Dec. 5, 2014** HRC Global meets with three human rights activists from The Gambia.

**Dec. 11, 2014** HRC calls on its members to sign a petition urging stronger action by President Obama to help ensure the safety of LGBT people and other Gambians targeted by the regime. The letter calls for a visa ban on Jammeh and his associates, and a freeze on his U.S. assets.


**Dec. 12, 2014** Jammeh addresses a huge rally against homosexuality in the capital, Banjul.



**Dec. 17, 2014** HRC delivers more than 18,000 signatures to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, calling on the United States to take action against Jammeh.

**Dec. 23, 2014** The White House announces that The Gambia has been dropped from the African Growth and Opportunity Act — a preferential trade agreement — because of human rights concerns.

**Jan. 23, 2015** HRC leads an effort with 13 other human rights groups urging the Obama administration to keep the pressure on the Jammeh regime, by obtaining information about the condition and whereabouts of imprisoned LGBT people and by following up with visa bans and asset freezes against the regime.

**Feb. 11, 2015** HRC publishes a full-page ad in *The Gazette*, a Potomac, Md., newspaper, highlighting Jammeh's horrific anti-LGBT human rights abuses. Jammeh's home in the Washington, D.C., suburb is reported to be worth \$3.5 million. 



**TAKE ACTION** Let the Obama administration know that HRC will not stand by as Gambian President Jammeh continues to violate the fundamental human rights of his country's LGBT community. To sign our petition or to learn more, visit [www.hrc.org/global](http://www.hrc.org/global).

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*Pictured are PepsiCo EQUAL Employee Resource Group members and allies at the 2013 Out & Equal Workplace Summit.*



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(L-R) Wayne Reeves,  
Dan Guio at home.

# STANDING UP FOR OTHERS

## JOB DISCRIMINATION PROMPTS ONE MAN'S LEGACY

The next time that someone tells you the fight for equality is over, tell them the story of Dan Guio. They'll learn that good people are still being hurt — profoundly hurt — by a lack of full equality, and that important fights are yet to be won.

Guio grew up and lives in Indiana, long considered a conservative stronghold. "It's the only state in the country that still prohibits retail liquor sales on Sunday," he says, by way of explaining the prevailing mindset. After graduating from Ball State University, and a stint teaching, Guio decided to use his people skills to pursue a career in human resources.

Guio was lucky enough to gain an entry level position at an insurance company in Indianapolis. His hard work over the years paid off when he was rewarded with more responsibility and began to rise through the ranks of the company.

The first time he was passed over to replace his boss — the vice president of human resources — Guio thought he just needed to work harder to improve his skills and spend even more time on the job.

So Guio redoubled his effort, continuing to focus on self-improvement. When it came time to take the Human Resources Certification Institute accreditation exam at the senior level, he received the highest score ever recorded in the state of Indiana — so high that he was granted "life" standing, which is rarely done. He remained active in the state

IF YOU WANT THE JOB THE NEXT TIME IT COMES AROUND, YOU NEED TO FIND YOURSELF A WOMAN AND MARRY HER."

professional society, ultimately becoming president of the Indiana State Council of the Society for Human Resource Management.

During Guio's career, the vice president of human resources position opened up two more times, a few years apart. Unbelievably, he was passed over both times, although his position had

grown to include conducting onsite audits of the company's HR practices in its 12 U.S. regional offices.

In 25 years with the company, Guio had never discussed his sexual orientation at the office. He didn't even feel comfortable having a photo of his partner of 16 years, Wayne Reeves, on his desk. But he began to suspect he was being discriminated against because of his sexual orientation — a view confirmed by an organizational psychologist who often did consulting work for the company.

"He told me, 'What I'm about to say is totally off the record,'" says Guio. "But if you want the job the next time it comes around, you need to find yourself a woman and marry her. They cannot have someone like you as a senior officer of the corporation. If you get married, people will be able to say any rumors that you're gay aren't true."

By then, Guio was set to receive a generous pension that would ensure a comfortable retirement. So he reluctantly decided to ignore the discrimination. Unfortunately, he could not have known then that the damage would be compounded in a few years, when his company was acquired by a larger firm and eventually laid off the majority of employees. His severance was a fraction of what it would have been if he'd received the promotions he'd earned. Even worse, to receive the payout, he had to sign a

release saying that he wouldn't sue.

Not that it mattered, given the long odds that Guio would have faced winning a lawsuit: Indiana is one of 29 states that still permit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. (Thirty-two states permit discrimination based on gender identity.)

continued on p. 35

# The LGBT community is part of ours.

Citi is proud to support the Human Rights Campaign. We commend their efforts and thank them for making the world a better place.





## Brilliance isn't born out of conformity.

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Standing Up can't from p. 32

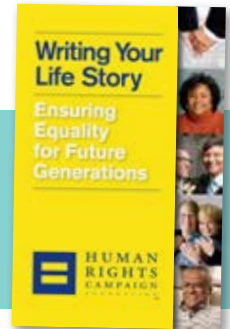
Although Guio suffered both personally and financially, he remains positive about life. His experience has shaped how he wants to be remembered and what he hopes his life will stand for. Long familiar with the Human Rights Campaign's work, he has decided to name HRC as a beneficiary in his will.

HRC has its work cut out for it to address the discrimination and disrespect faced by Guio and so many other LGBT people — concerns not addressed by

marriage equality victories. HRC is now spearheading a fight for a comprehensive federal LGBT non-discrimination bill, addressing all core civil rights categories, including employment.

"I hope HRC's constant work for LGBT equality will eventually lead to a day when the employment discrimination I experienced will never happen again. HRC can continue to bring about dramatic changes," says Guio, "if people like me step up to the plate to help with a gift in their will." 🇺🇸

To join Dan in leaving a gift for HRC in your will, trust or by beneficiary designation, download HRC's planning resources at [hrc.org/legacy](http://hrc.org/legacy) or contact Adam Swaim, director of estate planning, at [adam.swaim@hrc.org](mailto:adam.swaim@hrc.org) or 866-772-9499.



## HRC'S GALA EVENTS

**NASHVILLE GALA**

MARCH 28, 2015  

- Renaissance Nashville Hotel
- Blake Brockway, Lon Hurst & Linzie Treadway
- [hrc.org/nashvilledinner](http://hrc.org/nashvilledinner)

**HOUSTON GALA**

APRIL 11, 2015  

- Westin Galleria
- Britt Kornmann, Rodney Morris & Elisa Sosa
- [gala.hrchoouston.org](http://gala.hrchoouston.org)

**MILE HIGH GALA**

APRIL 18, 2015  

- Denver Marriott City Center
- Alex Lindquist, Amy Speers & Gabe Fischer
- [www.milehighgala.org](http://www.milehighgala.org)

**ATLANTA GALA**

MAY 2, 2015  

- Hyatt Regency Atlanta
- Brigid Scarbrough & Michael Caston
- [hrcatlanta.org](http://hrcatlanta.org)

**LAS VEGAS GALA**

MAY 9, 2015  

- Venue: Announcing Soon!
- Steve Amend, Matt Howard & Kelly Smith
- [hrc.org/lasvegasdinner](http://hrc.org/lasvegasdinner)

**COLUMBUS GALA**

JUNE 6, 2015  

- Ohio Union at The Ohio State University
- Anjali Chavan & Craig Scheidler
- [hrcolumbusdinner.com](http://hrcolumbusdinner.com)

**LOUISIANA GALA**

JUNE 13, 2015  

- Hyatt Regency New Orleans
- Colette Melancon & Conan Cleveland
- [hrc.org/louisianadinner](http://hrc.org/louisianadinner)

**UTAH GALA**

JUNE 27, 2015  

- Grand America Hotel
- Dustin Schrecengost
- [hrc.org/utahdinner](http://hrc.org/utahdinner)

**PORTLAND GALA**

JULY 25, 2015  

- The Estate Garden at Lewis & Clark College
- Stef-Anie Wells Koty & Karen Petersen
- [hrcportlandgala.org](http://hrcportlandgala.org)

**ORANGE COUNTY GARDEN PARTY**

AUGUST 2, 2015  

- The residence of May & Charles Deischter
- Jeff Brumett
- [hrc.org/ocgardenparty](http://hrc.org/ocgardenparty)

**CLEVELAND GALA**

AUGUST 22, 2015  

- Cleveland Convention Center
- Melanie Falls, Luz Pellet & Justin Weseloh
- [hrc.org/clevelanddinner](http://hrc.org/clevelanddinner)

**SAN DIEGO GALA**

AUGUST 22, 2015  

- Grand Hyatt
- Lisa Mata & Dorian Moore
- [hrc.org/sandiegodinner](http://hrc.org/sandiegodinner)

**TWIN CITIES GALA**

SEPTEMBER 12, 2015  

- Minneapolis Convention Center
- Alicia Schwartz & Tal Anderson
- [hrc.org/twincitiesdinner](http://hrc.org/twincitiesdinner)

**SEATTLE GALA**

SEPTEMBER 19, 2015  

- Sheraton Seattle Hotel
- Christie Brezina
- [hrcseattle.org](http://hrcseattle.org)

**NATIONAL DINNER**

OCTOBER 3, 2015  

- Washington Convention Center
- Lynn Fussell & Hudson Young
- [hrcnationaldinner.org](http://hrcnationaldinner.org)

To buy tickets for HRC gala events, please contact Box Office Tickets, 800-494-8497, or [www.hrc.org/boxoffice](http://www.hrc.org/boxoffice).

# AN ANTI-EQUALITY AGENDA IN THE WHITE HOUSE?

As the 2016 presidential campaigns get under way, several potential candidates for the Republican nomination have a disturbing history of hostility to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and marriage equality.

While the rest of the country evolves, these candidates have gone the other way, digging in their heels against any form of progress. And they are pushing the rest of the field to join them.

The question is, given the changing tides of public opinion toward LGBT people, can a political party nominate a candidate who is an outspoken homophobe? And what would the consequences be for the LGBT community?

“We need to ... do everything we can to prevent the federal government from forcing a different definition of marriage that is contrary to the views of the citizens of each state.”



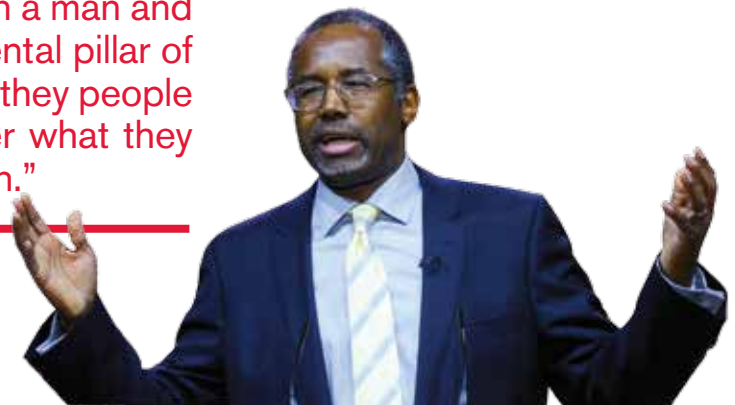
— U.S. Sen. **Ted Cruz** of Texas, speaking on *Washington Watch* last year, is also expected to run for the White House in 2016. Cruz, who openly identifies with the Tea Party movement, has been endorsed by the ultra-conservative Republican Liberty Caucus.

“It’s like asking someone who’s Jewish to start serving bacon-wrapped shrimp in their deli. We don’t want to do that — I mean, we’re not going to do that. Or like asking a Muslim to serve up something that is offensive to him, or to have dogs in his backyard,” he said. “We’re so sensitive to make sure we don’t offend certain religions. ...”



— Former Arkansas Gov. **Mike Huckabee** in a recent CNN interview, when he was asked about same-sex marriage. Huckabee, a former Fox News host and ordained Southern Baptist minister, was a candidate in the 2008 Republican presidential primaries and is actively considering a 2016 run.

“My thoughts are that marriage is between a man and a woman. It’s a well-established, fundamental pillar of society and no group, be they gays, ... be they people who believe in bestiality, it doesn’t matter what they are, they don’t get to change the definition.”



— Author and retired neurosurgeon **Ben Carson**, in an interview with Sean Hannity on Fox Nation in 2013. The Republican, widely popular in some conservative circles, is forming an exploratory committee to consider a bid for the 2016 GOP presidential nomination.

HRC is monitoring the 2016 elections and providing in-depth analysis on where the potential candidates stand on LGBT issues related to adoption, conversion therapy, bullying and more. See HRC’s recent comprehensive research report at [www.hrc.org/2016republicanfacts](http://www.hrc.org/2016republicanfacts). Watch for regular updates! 



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