



LGBTQIA+ History



Through the 20th & 21st Century

1924 | Henry Gerber, a German immigrant and World War I Army enlistee, established the Society for Human Rights, the first American homosexual rights organization.

1933 | In Nazi Germany, pink triangles were used as concentration camp badges to identify male prisoners who were sent there because of their homosexuality. The pink triangle (often inverted from its Nazi usage) has been reclaimed as an internal symbol of gay pride and the gay rights movement.

1955 | The Daughters of Bilitis, the first lesbian rights organization, was founded in San Francisco by Dorothy Louise Taliaferro "Del" Martin and Phyllis Lyon.

May 1959 | Cooper DO-NUTS was a popular gay meeting place on Main Street, the Los Angeles "gay ghetto" of the 1950s and 1960s. One night in May 1959, police attempted to arrest three people for legally congregating. A large group of transgender women and others fought back until they were forced to retreat and return with larger numbers.

1961 | Illinois was the first state to decriminalize sodomy and behavior by "consenting adults in private."

Aug 15, 1966 | A riot and protest followed a police raid on Gene Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco, a popular gathering spot for the transgender community.

June 28, 1969 | In the early morning hours of Saturday, June 28, 1969, nine policemen entered the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village, and took several patrons into custody in accordance with a New York law authorizing the arrest of anyone not wearing gender-appropriate clothing. The patrons and other community members fought back sparking the historic Stonewall Riots. The ensuing protest lasted 5 days.

June 28, 1970 | A year after the rebellion at Stonewall Inn, LGBT people from across New York City gather to commemorate the first anniversary of the Gay Liberation Movement.

June 25, 1972 | San Francisco held its first Pride Parade, with 2,000 marchers and 15,000 spectators.

1973 | In a compromise move, the American Psychiatric Association revises its Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) to replace homosexuality with "sexual orientation disturbance."

January 9, 1978 | Harvey Milk is elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and becomes the first openly gay city official in California History.

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June 25, 1978 | Gilbert Baker designed the rainbow flag as a symbol for the gay liberation movement, which flies during the San Francisco Pride Parade. Each color of the flag has a meaning: hot pink for sexuality, red for life, orange for healing, yellow for sun, green for nature, turquoise blue for art, indigo for harmony, and violet for spirit.

1982: Nearly 800 people were infected with GRID (Gay-Related Immunodeficiency Disorder). The name was changed to AIDS by the year's end.

1984 | Virginia Uridel began Project 10, a program to support LGBTQ students in a Los Angeles High School. The project was eventually adopted by the entire Los Angeles Unified School District.

1986 | *Bowers vs Hardwick* was decided by a 5-4 vote of the U.S. Supreme Court, upholding the Georgia sodomy laws.

1987 | The disorder known as "sexual orientation disturbance" was removed entirely in the 1987 DSM revision. However, in this edition, the now-controversial classification of "gender identity disorder" appeared as a label for transgender people for the first time.

1987 | ACT UP raised awareness of the AIDS Crisis - ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) sued Northwest Orient Airlines to protest their policy barring people with AIDS from their flights, which resulted in the airline reversing the policy.

1988 | The first gay-straight alliance was formed in November 1988 at Concord Academy in Concord, Massachusetts, when Kevin Jennings, a history teacher at the school who had just come out as gay, was approached by Meredith Sterling, a student at the school who was straight, but was upset by the treatment of gay students and others.

1990 | The World Health Organization removed homosexuality from the International Classification of Diseases.

1991 | ACT UP organized a large demonstration delivering coffins to city, state, and federal offices in New York City to protest AIDS-related discrimination. SILENCE = DEATH.

1996 | Kelli Peterson founded the Gay/Straight Alliance at East High School in Salt Lake City, Utah. The city school board bans all "non-curricular" student clubs in order to keep the group from meeting.

May 28, 1998 | Executive Order 13087 from President Clinton prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation in the workforce. However, this did not extend to the military.

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1998 | Tammy Baldwin became the first openly lesbian candidate ever elected to Congress, winning Wisconsin's second congressional district seat over Josephine Musser.

November 20, 1999 | Gwendolyn Ann Smith, created the first Transgender Day of Remembrance, commemorating all the trans people who were killed by anti-transgender violence and bigotry.

2001 | The Netherlands became the first country to legalize same-sex marriage.

2002 | NYC expanded the definition of "gender" to include protections for transgender and gender non-conforming people in employment, housing, and public accommodations in the NYC Human Rights Law.

2003 | The U.S. Supreme Court overturned sodomy laws in *Lawrence v Texas*, proclaiming rights to privacy and decriminalizing "homosexual" behavior.

February 12, 2004 | Dorothy Louise Taliaferro "Del" Martin and Phyllis Ann Lyon, both long-time activists in the gay rights movement, were married after Mayor Gavin Newsom orders the city clerk to provide marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

2004 | Massachusetts became the first U.S. state to legally recognize same-sex marriage.

2004 | The first Pride Month march specifically for transgender people was organized in San Francisco.

2006 | Attorney and transgender activist Kim Coco Iwamoto was elected to the state-level Board of Education in Hawaii. She was the first openly transgender person to be elected to a state level office in the U.S.

2009 | President Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes and Prevention Act into law.

2011 | U.S Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan issued a statement clarifying that students have the right to form gay-straight alliances (GSA) under the Equal Access Act of 1984 in any public school that allows non-curricular student groups to form. Schools must also provide GSAs with the same opportunities as other groups to convene and access resources.

September 20, 2011 | The full implementation of the military's don't ask don't tell policy was repealed. The policy banning gay, lesbian, and bisexual service members from disclosing their sexual identity was in effect for 17 years.

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July 16, 2012 | The FDA approved Truvada as HIV PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis). The CDC estimates new HIV infections fell 8% from 2015-19.

2013 | The American Psychiatric Association updated its DSM of Mental Disorders to replace the heavily stigmatized term “gender identity disorder” with “gender dysphoria” to classify transgender people.

2014 | Austin City Council approved ordinance for single-stall bathrooms to be recognized as gender-neutral.

June 26, 2015 | The U.S. Supreme Court struck down all state bans on same-sex marriage in Obergefell v. Hodges, legalizing same-sex marriage in all 50 states.

2015 | Cincinnati voted to ban reparative/conversion therapy of LGBTQ youth.

2015 | Inspired by Black Lives Matters, students at the University of Missouri began the #ConcernedStudent1950 movement in response to racism, sexism, and other issues in the administration. The movement was led by queer-identified black students, such as student body president Payton Head.

June 12, 2016 | 49 people were killed and 53 more were wounded in a mass shooting at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, during the club’s “Latin Night”.

2017 | Five years after the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ruled to include transgender people as a protected minority group under the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the decision was reversed by the Department of Justice under the Trump Administration, leaving transgender people vulnerable to employment discrimination.

November 7, 2017 | Danica Roem ran for a seat in the Virginia General Assembly and won, becoming the first transgender person to be elected and openly serve in any US state legislature.

June 15, 2020 | In a historic decision, the US Supreme Court ruled that the 1964 Civil Rights Act protects gay, lesbian, and transgender employees from discrimination based on sex.

February 2, 2021 | Pete Buttigieg became the first openly gay non-acting member of the Cabinet of the United States, and the first openly gay person confirmed by the Senate to a Cabinet position.

March 28, 2022 | In an attack of LGBTQ rights, legislation in Florida was signed which forbids instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade.

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December 13, 2022 | President Biden signed the Respect for Marriage Act. This is the biggest legislative win in the fight for LGBTQ+ equality in over a decade, guaranteeing federal rights, benefits and obligations of marriages in the federal code for same-sex couples. The legislation also repealed the Defense of Marriage Act and affirmed public acts, records and proceedings should be recognized by all states.

2023 | There were 604 Anti-trans bills introduced in local and state legislatures across the United States.

February 7, 2023 | President Biden's State Of The Union address defended transgender and non-binary youth from the wave of attacks they're facing. Biden also encouraged Congress to pass the Equality Act "to ensure LGBTQ Americans, especially transgender young people, can live with safety and dignity."

April 19, 2024 | U.S. Department of Education announced it has finalized a Title IX rule that clarifies the scope of nondiscrimination protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity throughout educational activities and programs.

Sources

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