

QUEER VOICES

Here Are 15 Of The Year's Most Compelling Online LGBTQ Campaigns

The queer community needs strong support now more than ever.

12/22/2016 10:16 am ET

Curtis M. Wong Queer Voices Senior Editor, The Huffington Post

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/go-fund-me-lgbt-efforts_us_58599f57e4b0d9a594564887



GOFUNDME

GoFundMe is a “a natural place to build community and find support in times of need,” according to CEO Rob Solomon.

After years of amazing strides toward equality, the LGBTQ community's future was thrust into uncertainty over the course of 2016 in the wake of the June 12 mass shooting at Orlando's Pulse nightclub and Donald Trump's surprise election victory in November.

While Trump's stance on the LGBTQ community is spotty at best, Vice President-elect Mike Pence has been an outspoken opponent of marriage equality, and has defended discrimination against queer people under the guise of religious liberty. Meanwhile, Trump's cabinet nominees and senior staff members include some of the most anti-LGBTQ politicians in the country.

That news does little to comfort those rattled by the Pulse shooting, which claimed the lives of 49 victims, most of whom were queer people of color. On

the flip side, the year has re-energized many minority groups to build and strengthen their communities in new ways, including online fundraising efforts.

Frequently ranked among the most effective online fundraising platforms has been [GoFundMe](#). The California-based company is “a natural place to build community and find support in times of need,” according to its CEO, Rob Solomon. “Two of our top 10 largest campaigns this year were for the victims and families of the tragic Pulse shooting in Orlando,” he said, “but there have been thousands of campaigns to help LGBTQ folks with medical care, adoptions, legal aid and more.”

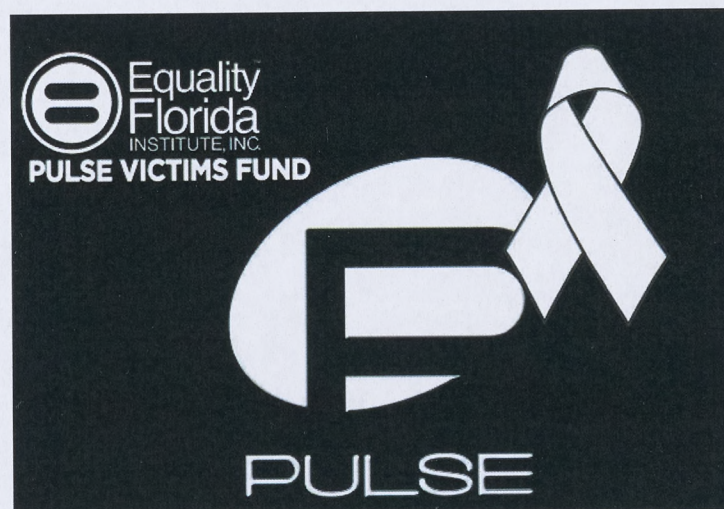
Some of the most impactful, according to GoFundMe reps, included “[Save Broken Rainbow](#),” a campaign launched in hopes of saving an LGBTQ domestic violence hotline from closure, an effort to produce “[Hate Has No Home Here](#)” yard signs, as well as those aimed to support [alleged hate crime victims](#) with their medical expenses.

As 2016 comes to a close, here’s a look back at 15 impactful GoFundMe efforts that benefited, or will benefit, LGBTQ people. While this is by no means a comprehensive list, the selection represents the community’s diverse interests, causes and cares as it looks ahead at a new era.

- **Support Victims of Pulse Shooting**

GoFundMe

In the aftermath of the June 12 massacre at Orlando’s Pulse nightclub, [Equality Florida created a campaign](#) to help the families of those killed and the survivors dealing with the physical and emotional pain of being targeted in the worst anti-LGBTQ hate crime in U.S. history. Nearly 120,000 online donors flooded to the page to help raise over \$7.8 million.



Asian American Community Forum

*the many faces
of community*



This informal drop-in group is designed to talk about topics relevant to Asian Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, Desi American (APIMEDA) students at UCSD in a supportive and problem-solving atmosphere. Issues such as career and academic success, family pressures, cultural identity, and relationships are common topics.

Fall Quarter 2016: 10/28, 11/4, 11/18, 12/2

Time: Fridays 12:00-1:00pm

Location: Cross Cultural Center

Bring your lunch and join us!

For more information, please contact:

Dianna Quach, Ph.D., (858) 534-7710

Leah Heng Tappero, Ph.D., (858) 534-5905

caps.ucsd.edu/groups

This meeting is not professional counseling. If you would like professional counseling or mental health treatment please call the CAPS central office at 858 534 3755 to arrange an appointment.



CAPS
UC SAN DIEGO

CAPS.UCS.D.EDU | (858)534-3755



Black QUEER Collective

[Finding & fostering community.]

Join members of UCSD's Black queer community for snacks and dialogue about the intersections of our identities and our lives. This is a closed space for Black queer folks.

When: Odd week Thursdays
12:30-1:30pm

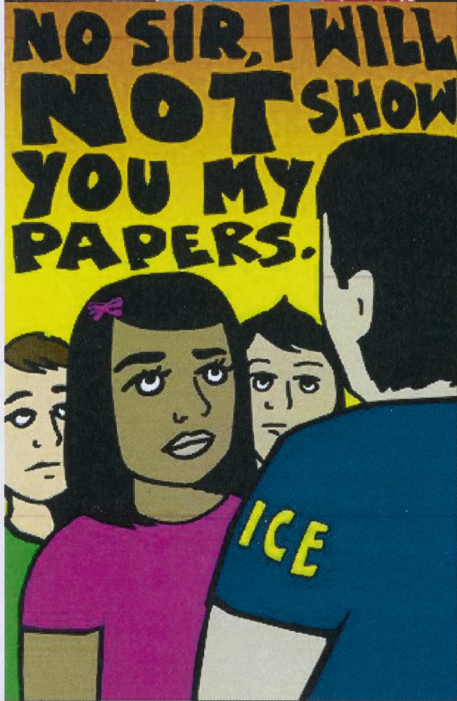
Where: LGBTPC Conf Room





The Power Of Community!

A space that centers the experiences of Queer and Trans students, faculty, staff, & alumni of color! All are welcomed though Food is welcomed. Small refreshments will be provided



Where:
Cross Cultural Center
{CONFERENCE ROOM}
When:
Every Friday!!
@ 1:15pm-3:15pm



LGBT
RESOURCE CENTER
a unit of equity, diversity and inclusion at UC San Diego

Critical Gender Studies

Winter 2016



CGS 101: Gender, Modernity, & Globalization

CGS 102: Topics in CGS—Women of Color Writers

CGS 104: Advanced Topics—Filipina & Latina
Transnational Labor

CGS 107: Gender & Reproductive Rights

CGS 114: Gender, Race, Ethnicity, & Class

CGS 150: Visuality, Sexuality, & Race

Questions? Email us at cgs@ucsd.edu.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

HOW TO FIND SOMEONE WHO WAS ARRESTED

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JAILS

To locate someone who is arrested by the police on a criminal charge

San Diego County Sheriff
1-858-974-2457 or 1-858-974-2110

IMMIGRATION DETENTION FACILITIES

To locate someone who is arrested by police or immigration officers on an immigration charge:

San Diego - CCA	El Centro
1-619-661-9119	1-760-336-4600

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

To speak to the officer in charge of deportation proceedings for someone who is detained.

San Diego - ICE	El Centro - ICE
1-619-710-8300	1-760-336-4600

Online Detainee Locator
<https://locator.ice.gov/odls/homePage.do>

IMMIGRATION COURT

To learn about court hearing dates and other case information, you must know the ten-digit case number that begins with the letter "A":

Case Information	San Diego Court
1-800-898-7180	1-619-557-6052

Imperial Court	El Centro Court
1-760-355-0070	1-760-353-2328

REPORT IMMIGRANT ABUSE!



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

**IF IMMIGRATION, POLICE OR FBI OFFICERS
TRY TO ENTER YOUR HOME**

DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR

Ask the officers to identify themselves and show a "warrant" from under the door. Verify that the warrant authorizes them to enter your specific address and property.

OFFICERS MUST HAVE A WARRANT TO ENTER

The warrant should include the word "WARRANT" and your address. If it does not, the officers are not authorized to enter and you should not give them permission.

IF OFFICERS ENTER ANYWAY

Do not try to stop them. Tell them they do not have your permission to enter. Try to get their names or badge numbers to file a complaint later.

IF OFFICERS HAVE A WARRANT

They may enter your home but can ONLY search for people or items listed in the warrant. Verify this information before they enter your home.

IF DETAINED EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT

You do not have to speak to an officer. You can remain silent or tell the officer you want to speak to an attorney or your consulate first. You do not have to answer questions or present documents with your name, age, national origin, birthplace, or immigration status. Do not sign anything you do not understand.

DO NOT LIE TO OFFICERS

Do not present false documents or lie. This will only make the situation worse.

IF YOU ARE ARRESTED REMEMBER

1. You have the right to remain silent and not answer questions. 2. Ask to speak with your attorney or consulate. 3. Do not sign documents that you do not understand.



S D I R C

SAN DIEGO IMMIGRANT RIGHTS CONSORTIUM

Attention

Do you identify as

**Gender queer/ Gender nonconforming
and
Chicanx/ Latinx**


Would you like to share about your experience?

Please contact Karen Villalbazo, Audre Lorde Intern for
Liberation and Healing at LGBT Resource Center @

kvillalb@ucsd.edu



QUEER CONSENT



It is no surprise there is a national epidemic of sexual assault, but did you know that studies have found folx in the LGBTQIA+ community to be especially affected by this issue?

How to we help resolve this problem? One way is by learning about and practicing consent.

Consent is an extremely vital part of any healthy, physical/sexual relationship. It is something that must be universally practiced no matter how someone identifies. Please take some time to learn about consent though this interactive display.

Each food item represents a metaphor for consent. Feel free to grab and play with the food!

Enjoy!

By:

Karen Villalbazzo

Audre Lorde Intern for Liberation and
Healing '16-'17

Date:
Every Thursday

Time:
12:00pm-1:30pm

Location:
**Raza Resource
Centro**

What?
**A supportive
talk/check-in
time with
manualidades/
crafts!**

**Feel free to
bring your
lunch or
snacks to
self care!**



Please direct any questions to
Hercilia Corona, PhD (CABS)





ACADEMIC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Meet AIP
Team to
discuss and
explore about
internship
opportunities
related to
your major!

<http://aip.ucsd.edu/>
(858) 534-4355
aipinfo@ucsd.edu

OFFICE HOURS

• AT THE •

LGBT

RESOURCE

CENTER

THURSDAYS

11:30-12:30

WEEKS 1, 3, 5, 7, & 9

EXPLORE.

EXPERIENCE.

ENRICH.



822.3493 | rainbow@ucsd.edu | lgbt.ucsd.edu

Week 1

QCAMP Tues Jan 11 4-6:30pm CCC	Intern Hiring Info Session Thurs Jan 12 4-5pm LGBTRC
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Week 2

Know Your Rights The Latest In Immigration News Tues Jan 17 5-7pm CCC	LGBTRC Peer Educator Application Due Weds Jan 18 lgbt.ucsd.edu
Politics & the Queer community Weds Jan 18 12-1:30pm LGBTRC	Affiliate Program Application Due Fri Jan 20 lgbt.ucsd.edu
Pan Dulce: LGBTQIA+ Chicanx Latinx Platica Thurs Jan 19 12-1:30pm LGBTRC	

Week 3

Intergenerational Dialogue Mon Jan 23 12pm LGBTRC	LGBT Resource Center Internship Program Applications Due Online Tues Jan 24 4pm
Intergenerational Dialogue Tues Jan 24 12pm LGBTRC	LGBT HEALTH DAY Weds Jan 25 10:30am-1:30pm LGBTRC
QueerAbroad Tues Jan 24 5pm LGBTRC	Volunteer Training and Orientation Fri Jan 27 11-1 pm LGBTRC
Soup for the STEM Details TBA	LGBTRC Peer Educator Training Sat Jan 28 10-1pm LGBTRC

Week 4

Crafting Consent with CARE Weds Feb 1 10am-12pm LGBTRC Family Room	Queering Your Career Thurs Feb 2 5-6:30pm Black Resource Center
LGBTQIA+ Disability Justice Awareness Program Details TBA	

Week 5

Financial Aid Scholarship Application Deadline Mon Feb 6 Due by 11:59 pm website	QLEAGUE Affiliates Leadership Meeting Tues Feb 7 5-7pm LGBTRC
LGBTQIA+ People of Color Empowerment Program Details TBA	

Week 6

LGBTQIA+ Community Activism Program Details TBA	LGBTRC Advisory Board Meeting Weds Feb 15 3pm LGBTRC Family Room
Pan Dulce: LGBTQIA+ Chicanx Latinx Platica Tues Feb 14 12-1:30pm LGBTRC	

Week 7

Gender Identity Awareness Program Details TBA	
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Week 8

LGBTQIA+ People of Color Wellness Details TBA	
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Week 10**Art Jam**

Details TBA

Finals**24 Hour Study Jam**

Sun-Mon | 6pm on Sunday-9pm on Monday | LGBT RC

Discussion Groups

Coming Out Group Tuesdays, 4:00-5:30pm Small Meeting Room | Women's Center

The group is open to new members the first 3 meetings of each quarter and then closes to maintain safe space. For more info, please contact Cat Thompson at cathompson@ucsd.edu or Agustin Orozco at agorzco@ucsd.edu

QTPOC Discussion Group- Friday 1-3pm Cross-Cultural Center Weeks 3-10

LGBT Veterans Group- Friday 1-2pm at Cross-Cultural Center Week 3-10

Men's Relationship Forum- Mondays, 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm Small Meeting Room | Women's Center

For more information please contact: Greg Koch at gkoch@ucsd.edu

LGBTQIA+ Student Orgs:

Black Queer Collective For more info, kmzh@ucsd.edu

The Aces Group For more info, email Spencer Jones at csjones@ucsd.edu

Queer & Trans People of Color For more info, email ucsdqpoc@gmail.com

Men's Group. For more info, email, ketran@ucsd.edu

Queer Sixers United (QSUN) For more info, please contact crclark@ucsd.edu

Delta Lambda Phi For more info, please contact csolis@ucsd.edu

QuERC For more info, please contact ucsdquerc@gmail.com

Fluid Attraction Group Join in community and discussion on what life is like having fluid attractions. For more info, please contact krlyons@ucsd.edu

Femmes of Colour For more info, please contact perseylune@gmail.com

International QLGBT Student Union For more info, please contact iquatucsd@gmail.com

Program dates subject to change. For up to date calendar check out our website: lgbt.ucsd.edu or subscribe to our newsletter.

WINTER QCAMP

TUES. JAN 10 // 5-6:30PM

COMUNIDAD ROOM

CROSS-CULTURAL CENTER

QCAMP REUNION!

LEARN ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS
& RESOURCES FOR THE LGBTQIA+
COMMUNITY ON CAMPUS.

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED



If you require accommodations to fully access the event,
please contact us at (858) 822-3493 or rainbow@ucsd.edu.

Special Event / U.S.A.

Lea DeLaria

Sat. Jan 14, 2017 at 8 pm
Mandeville Auditorium, UC San Diego



UCSD Student: \$10

Lea DeLaria seems to have achieved overnight stardom with her SAG Award-winning stand-out role as Carrie "Big Boo" Black in the Netflix hit series *Orange is the New Black*. However, her multifaceted career as a comedian, actress, and jazz musician has in fact spanned decades. For her ArtPower debut, DeLaria will treat the audience to her beautiful vocal jazz styling and witty commentary. Expect vocal and comedic fireworks.



ArtPower
University of California San Diego

artpower.ucsd.edu • 858.534.8497



YOU ARE NOT ALONE,
WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Know Your Rights The Latest In Immigration News



**Tuesday, January 17, 2017
5:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

Comunidad Room, Cross-Cultural Center
University of California San Diego,
9500 Gilman Dr. La Jolla, CA 92093

- ◆ Do you or someone you know have questions about possible upcoming changes in immigration law?
- ◆ Do you or someone you know want to know if you might qualify for additional immigration benefits?
- ◆ Are you or someone you know a DACA recipient?

If you said YES to any of the above come to this informational session to get answers to your questions!

*****ALL ARE WELCOME*****
~Light Refreshments Provided~

Find us on:
www.ReadyNowSanDiego.org

For more information:

Call 619-363-3423 or E-mail info@readynowsandiego.org



If you require specific accommodations to fully access this event:
Please contact Jamez Ahmad at jahmad@ucsd.edu or 858-534-9689

MUSLIM WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE

THE MUSLIM WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE OFFERS A SPACE FOR THOSE WHO IDENTIFY AS MUSLIM WOMEN AT UCSD. WE ARE AN INCLUSIVE GROUP THAT WELCOMES MUSLIMS OF ALL IDENTITIES. WE PROVIDE SPACE AND CONVERSATION FOR VISIBLE, NON-VISIBLE, SECULAR, PIOUS, AND/OR LGBTQ MUSLIMS WHO WISH TO TALK AND THINK THROUGH ISSUES PERTINENT TO THEIR EXPERIENCES IN AN INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT CLIMATE.

WINTER QUARTER 2017

EVEN WEEK TUESDAYS (W2, 4, 6, 8, 10)

STARTING JANUARY 17, 2017

2-3PM IN THE UCSD WOMEN'S CENTER

Become a LGBTRC PEER EDUCATOR

Winter & Spring 2017

LGBTRC Peer Educators are trained volunteer facilitators that educate the campus community on social justice issues pertaining to the LGBTQIA+ community.

Through the Peer Education Program you will gain:

- **Leadership Experience**
- **Facilitation Skills and Training**
- **Social Justice Education Training**

Requirements + Time Commitment

- **Attend Mandatory Training (3 hours)**
Week 3, Winter Quarter, Jan. 28th
- **Participate in monthly Peer Educator meetings (1 hour each)**
- **Facilitate 2 Peer Education Programs per quarter (1 hour each)**

TO APPLY: lgbt.ucsd.edu

DEADLINE TO APPLY: JANUARY 18TH



UC San Diego
LGBT
RESOURCE CENTER

FOR MORE INFO/QUESTIONS CONTACT:
MPGOMEZ@UCSD.EDU



Politics & the Queer community

Weds | Jan 18 | 12-1:30pm | LGBTRC

Join us for a conversation about the impact of the new presidency on our LGBTQIA+ community. We'll focus on community-led movements and community support. Light Refreshments provided.

10th Annual Queer and Asian Conference

Fri. April 28th - Sun. April 30th

University of California, Berkeley

We are now opening registration for the 10th annual Queer and Asian Conference! **We encourage queer Asians and our allies from everywhere to come attend.** This year's theme for QACON17 is **Enough**. As such, we will be exploring, reflecting, and learning about our community and identities to empower, heal, and fight for ourselves, our community, and other marginalized communities.

QACON admission is open to any individual who expresses interest in the issues or the community, and the entire conference - registration, volunteer housing, keynote speakers, workshops, and two included meals - is completely free.



QuEST Spring Networking Mixer

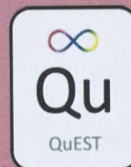
Thurs. March 16th

6-9PM, SIO Surfside*

Please join us for our spring networking event for LGBTQ graduate students, postdocs and professionals at all career levels.

This event is 21+ and IDs will be checked. This event typically has around 50-80 attendees.

*a beachside lounge in Scripps Institution of Oceanography, located at 8622 Kennel Way



QuEST

Sign Up

Email or Phone

Password

Log In

Forgot account?

San Diego Women's March is on Facebook.

To connect with San Diego Women's March, sign up for Facebook today.

Sign Up

Log In

JAN 21 San Diego Women's March

Public · Meetup · Hosted by San Diego Women's March-Community Action Pa...

Interested

Going

Invite

Saturday, January 21 at 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM PST
about 2 weeks ago

San Diego Civic Center Plaza
1200 Third Ave, San Diego, California 92101

Show Map

GUESTS

17K

interested

28K

went

49K

invited

About

Discussion

Details

We, San Diego Women's March, peacefully marched in San Diego in solidarity with the Women's March in DC. We are dedicated to a free and open society. Together we stand united in our respect for all people and we resist the marginalization of anyone. As a diverse, inclusive community of compassionate people, we seek to strengthen and continue our commitment to work for the protection of women's rights. We stand firm in agreement that women's rights are human rights.

WE APPRECIATE YOU!!!! Thank you for your support!

POST MARCH -- We are planning next steps and how we can help keep the momentum going so our voices are never silenced again. Visit our Facebook page and follow us for updates. THANK YOU to the tens of thousands of people who marched with us!

About San Diego Women's March-Community Action Page



San Diego Women's March-Community Action Page Community

We, the San Diego Women's March with 40,000+ women, men, and children in San Diego marched January 21, 2017 in solidarity with the Women's March in DC. Follow us for actions you can continue to take locally, nationally, and globally! March on!

About the Venue



San Diego Civic Center Plaza City Hall

37 Likes

[Go to San Diego Civic Center Plaza's Timeline](#)

LGBT Americans' inauguration gift to Trump: a wave of same-sex marriages

Although the new president is unlikely to try to ban same-sex marriage, many couples have rushed to get hitched before he takes office

Nicole and Melissa Newman-Darbois said they didn't want their marriage to be 'tainted by the ugliness' of a Trump administration. Photograph: Family Photo

Thursday 19 January 2017 11.23 EST Last modified on Saturday 21 January 2017 05.20 EST

Ever since the 2015 US supreme court decision legalized same-sex marriages nationwide, partners Alicia Verdier and Erin Hansen had planned to get hitched.

But the four and a half years of their relationship had been busy. Then Hillary Clinton lost the election.

Verdier went to bed on 8 November heartbroken and awoke hours later, at 3am, in a state of panic. "All I could think was there was a possibility, with new supreme court nominees, we might lose our right to get married," she said.

Alicia Verdier and Erin Hansen were worried they might lose their right to get married.

She wasn't alone. "I have so many friends who've gotten married in the last two months," said Verdier. "Whatever else Trump may think he's done, he's caused a lot of gay people to get married.

"I'm sure that wasn't his plan, but that's what he gets as his inauguration gift: all the gay people are getting married."

National marriage figures aren't yet available for 2016, but anecdotally, since the election, same-sex couples have been galloping down the aisle.

"I've certainly heard stories such as marriages being rushed," said Stephen Peters, national press secretary for the Human Rights Campaign, the largest national LGBT civil rights organization.

Hundreds of people called the helpline of Lambda Legal, a legal group for the civil rights of the LGBT community, worried about same-sex marriage laws.

"After the election, the single biggest question from callers was: is my marriage safe and will I still be able to get married?" said Camilla Taylor, who served as director for the marriage project at Lambda Legal before the supreme court ruling.

Taylor says she is aware of many same-sex couples who pushed wedding dates forward in order to get married before the Trump inauguration.

Sean and Lee Winterhalter announced last February they would wed on 14 January 2017, the date of their 12th anniversary, in a small ceremony with friends and family. But getting hitched days away from a Trump administration scared them.

“You don’t know if 2017 comes, and we’re married, and they decide they’re going to retract all those marriages in 2017 and make them null and void,” said Sean, a 32-year-old hairdresser.

So instead, on Christmas Eve 2016, they got married at their home in Connellsville, Pennsylvania, a small town about 50 miles from Pittsburgh. Just the couple and a long-term friend serving as officiant were in attendance.

Sean and Lee Winterhalter married on Christmas Eve 2016 instead of 14 January 2017, the date of their 12th anniversary. Photograph: Family Photo

“We really wanted to emphasize the fact that the wedding was just about the union of two people coming together and making a commitment for a lifetime,” said Sean.

Overturning the same-sex marriage decision would be very unlikely – and would face a strong legal and public challenge.

“Even really conservative justices don’t like to go back and revisit very recent decisions,” noted Taylor.

Trump has said before he is “fine” with the legalization of same-sex marriage, declaring the supreme court decision “done” in an interview with CBS News days after the election.

But there are still good reasons why the LGBT community should be concerned about the legal ramifications of a Trump presidency, she says.

“While the marriage decision is unlikely to be overturned in the near future, President-elect Trump has shown every indication to appoint to the supreme court and lower courts judges who will oppose the rights of LGBT people,” said Taylor.

She notes that current legislation before Congress would allow businesses to discriminate against same-sex couples based on religious justification, a law already found unconstitutional by courts in Mississippi. With a Republican-controlled Congress and a Republican president, anti-LGBT laws could pass much more easily.

For Verdier and other couples it wasn’t just the fear that motivated their decision to get married.

Couples wanted to pay tribute to the president who made it legal for them to marry.

“We’re so in awe of President Obama and everything he’s done for our community, being married in 2016, while he’d still be president, really meant something special to us,” said Lee Winterhalter, a 34-year-old retail manager.

In tears at 3.30am the morning after the election, Verdier told her partner Erin that she wanted to get married during the Obama presidency.

“It’s an empty gesture of sorts, to try and align your wedding date with a particular date, but it feels important,” explained Verdier.

And suddenly the couple who had no time for wedding planning was busy organizing a ceremony in their old home town of Ann Arbor, Michigan. A marriage license was acquired, a mayor from neighboring Ypsilanti found to officiate. Flights were booked and friends and family alerted. On 22 December 2016, standing in front of a small group of loved ones in Nickels Arcade, near where they had their first date, Hansen and Verdier got married.

After a celebratory meal at a restaurant that night, Verdier’s pre-teen daughter allayed those Trump fears, telling her mother: “He can’t stop you any more.”

“We didn’t plan for it to be rushed or winter or freezing and wanted more family and friends, but we can still have all of that at a later date,” said Verdier.

Arizona couple Ingri and Val Lopez still plan to go ahead with their July 2017 ceremony under a Trump administration.

“He will not take away my plans for the perfect wedding,” said Val, a nursing technician. But officially, they wed on 7 January just to protect themselves legally.

“I didn’t want to wait to see what would happen,” said Val, 31. “I do want to remember that our marriage license was under a president whom I respect with all my heart.”

From defending Obamacare to protecting undocumented immigrants and Muslims, politicians are plotting ways to blunt the new administration’s policies
Read more

Newlyweds Melissa and Nicole Newman-Darbois got engaged on 21 March 2015, just six months after they started dating – “a lesbian cliché”, they quip.

The pair work at rival high schools. Melissa, 40, is a social worker and Nicole, 32, a teacher. They had planned a city hall wedding in their hometown of St Petersburg, Florida, on Memorial Day, 29 May 2017, even arranging for the mayor to marry them. Melissa had already found her dress, on clearance sale for just \$34 in a local boutique, and hid it in the back of their closet so Nicole didn’t see it before the ceremony.

But after the election, Nicole “had moments of just utter extremism” she said, fearing the new administration would come and repeal gay marriage before their May wedding, even though she knew realistically that would be difficult legally.

“I still didn’t want our wedding to be tainted and I felt it would be somewhat tainted by the ugliness of his administration, his policies, his rhetoric,” said Nicole.

Melissa said she “felt strongly about getting married under this administration which has been inclusive and LGBT friendly”.

And so, mid-December, a new plan was hatched. Last weekend, the pair flew to New Orleans and got married, just the two of them, at the French Quarter Wedding Chapel. One of their first dates had been to an MLK Day parade, so the date seemed perfect.

After the vows, they walked around New Orleans, with well-wishers cheering them on the street, congratulating them and taking photos.

“As a gay woman, in the back of your head there is always ‘who is going to judge me or not like me because of my sexual orientation’. But as soon as we walked out there, those feelings dissipated,” said Nicole.

“It was a great reminder that there is more good and love and light in this world than the opposite.”

Gay Rights Activists Face New Hurdles

Trump administration breathes new life into anti-LGBT bills

By [Susan Milligan](#) | Senior Writer Jan. 23, 2017, at 3:46 p.m.

A protester wears an LGBT flag on the National Mall on Saturday. At least 40 anti-LGBT bills have been introduced in 16 states this year, according to the Human Rights Campaign. Dominick Reuter/AFP/Getty Images

Facing a daunting political landscape both in Washington and in statehouses, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights activists are gearing up for what they say will be a fierce battle to hang onto gains the movement made during the Obama administration era.

After the 2015 Obergefell v Hodges Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage, LGBT advocates were hit with an onslaught of state bills to allow workers, public and private, to deny certain services if doing so violates their religious beliefs. Other bills have sought to deny transgender people the use of the public bathroom of their choice. Just five of the 200-plus measures were enacted into law.

But this year, according to a [report](#) by the Human Rights Campaign, those favoring "religious freedom" and associated bills have been emboldened. Already, at least 40 anti-LGBT bills have been introduced in 16 states, according to the HRC. And President Donald Trump has [pledged](#) to sign a federal "First Amendment Defense Act," which prohibits the federal government from taking "discriminatory action," such as denying a federal grant or contract, against anyone whose behavior is dictated by a religious opposition to same-sex relationships or extramarital and premarital sex.

"It's happening because they are making a political statement, not because it's good policy," says Cathryn Oakley, senior legislative counsel at the HRC. Most of the anti-LGBT legislation in 2016 was offered in southern states, and 2017 battlegrounds are shaping up the same way, with bills being introduced in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia. Conversely, states in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic and West coast last year approved 48 laws expanding rights and services for LGBT people. In California alone, HRC reports, lawmakers approved 16 such bills, including one requiring school districts/boards to adopt suicide prevention policies addressing the needs of high-risk groups, including LGBTQ youth, and allowing organ transfers between patients who are both HIV-reactive.

The FADA laws go further than the Religious Freedom Restoration Acts, which were aimed at, for example, allowing a pastry maker to decline to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex couple. The FADA bills, foes warn, could conceivably allow landlords to deny apartments to single mothers, or allow a hospital to refuse to treat an LGBT person or sexually active, unmarried person, if the service providers believe such behavior violates their religious beliefs about marriage.

Social conservatives defend the FADA bills as essential to protecting the work of small businesses as well as groups like the Salvation Army.

"No person or nonprofit should lose tax-exempt status, face disqualification, lose a professional license or be punished by the federal government simply for believing what President Obama believed just three years ago, that marriage is the union of a man and a woman," Family Research Council president Tony Perkins said in a policy statement on the legislation.

A Mississippi FADA law, approved last year, has been declared unconstitutional by a federal district court and remains in litigation. Rep. Raul Labrador, R-Idaho, introduced a federal FADA in the last Congress, and supporters are hopeful they will have more success this year, with Trump in the White House.