

ENGAGING NEW VOICES

april is
SEXUAL
ASSAULT
AWARENESS
MONTH

Take a stand against sexual violence. Join the Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) Coalition for special events throughout the month. For information on survivor services, contact CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center at (858)534-5793. Follow us on social media and visit the website for a complete calendar of events.

saam.ucsd.edu

    #UCSDSAAM

Muir Musical Begins Annual Performances

Ming-Ray Liao April 12, 2017



Image by Muir Musical

The annual Muir Musical Spring Awakening opened on Saturday night and will continue to perform throughout the week, concluding with a special matinee performance on April 15. The annual student-directed and produced musical theater event is the largest on campus.

This year's performance is based on the 1891 play of the same name, which Director Nicole McEntee describes as a coming-of-age story.

"It centers around adolescents exploring their sexuality and identity," McEntee told the UCSD Guardian. "They face taboo topics as they try to understand what it means to be in this world while being suppressed by adults or the system of adults."

McEntee believes that these issues are still prevalent today, despite how readily available information is.

“Although we are exposed to a lot of knowledge through social media and the internet, there are still so many people who don’t know what sex is, or feel like they can’t talk about their sexual preferences,” McEntee said. “This show focuses on the those trying to understand what they’re feeling but can’t because they don’t have people answering questions for them, or they don’t feel like they can ask questions in a safe space.”

Spring Awakening debuted on Broadway in 2006 as a rock musical set in 19th century Germany and has lyrics derived from scriptures from the Bible and other literature. McEntee explained that the difference between setting and accompaniment furthers viewers’ understanding of the performance.

“The scenes take place in the 19th century even though the songs are very contemporary and modern,” McEntee said. “This contrast between being in the present versus being in the past isn’t used to further the plot like in most musicals, but is used to get an inside look into the characters’ minds.” Research affiliate at UC San Diego Biological Sciences Constance Lin appreciated the contemporary issues that were presented in Spring Awakening.

“I thought the musical was thought provoking, and the dance was a curious but interesting addition,” Lin said. “Even though the setting was 19th century Germany, the issues brought up are still relevant today.” McEntee mentioned that the interpretive dancers were an addition that she hoped would further the connection to the character’s’ subconscious.

“I felt that adding a lyrical dance ensemble to visualize the emotions the characters are experiencing would be a beautiful combination, essentially letting the characters have a mirror image of themselves,” McEntee added. “As you sit and watch a song being sung, you see dancers communicate what is going on with their body ... and I hope it’s something that will really add to the show.” McEntee also said that in order to adequately represent and address the tumult of adolescent sexuality, the cast and team utilized resources on campus like CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center, LGBT Resource Center, and Counseling and Psychological Services.

“We’ve been meeting with SARC, LGBT, and CAPS to do workshops with our cast,” McEntee explained. “We wanted to get a deeper knowledge of the themes of the show so we can better communicate that to our audiences.” The show has mature content that McEntee maintains is crucial to the experience.

“There’s going to be a lot of people that come in and feel uncomfortable, maybe love the show or hate it,” McEntee said. “But I think that’s the beautiful thing about theatre — you’re supposed to just come and feel something, and maybe spark knowledge and discussion.”

Performances took place at 8 p.m. on April 8 and April 9 and will continue from April 13 to April 15 in the Mandeville Auditorium. Tickets can be purchased in person or online at the Box Office. Talkbacks with the actors and creative team will take place on April 13 and April 14 to encourage audience members to engage with the show’s material and presentation.

An LGBT “Underground Railroad” Is Working To Evacuate Gay Men From Chechnya

And you can help.

by [Dan Avery](#) 4/20/2017

With increasing reports of atrocities being committed against suspected homosexuals in Chechnya, a Canadian human-rights organization is mobilizing emergency efforts to help get those at risk out of the region.

Toronto-based Rainbow Railroad works to provide legal assistance, visas, transportation and other necessities to LGBT people in jeopardy, and is making Chechnya priority number one: “Since we first received initial reports of gay concentration camps being established in Chechnya, Rainbow Railroad immediately re-classified Eastern Europe as a priority region,” says executive director Kimahli Powell. “This means we’re expanding our on-the-ground contacts as well as increasing our capacity to identify and assess new or alternative safe routes out of Chechnya.”



Dmitry Korotayev/Kommersant via Getty Images

Rainbow Railroad is working closely with the Russian LGBT Network, an NGO that’s been working to raise awareness about the crisis. The network will help identify those who need to be evacuated, and Rainbow Railroad will provide direct travel assistance. It’s also calling on the Canadian government to provide emergency visas.

“The situation in Chechnya is part of a global pattern of ongoing state-enabled or state-sanctioned violence against LGBTQ people,” Powell says, citing Indonesia, Bangladesh and The Gambia as three other perpetrators. “This is why the number of people who reach out to us each year is growing.”

Since its founding in 2006, Rainbow Railroad has helped more than 300 LGBT people reach safety, but the need always outweighs their resources—in 2016 alone the group received 600 requests for assistance. The cost of a single case can run into the thousands, as legal fees, travel expenses, visas and more pile up.

You can make a donation to their efforts [on the Rainbow Railroad website](#).

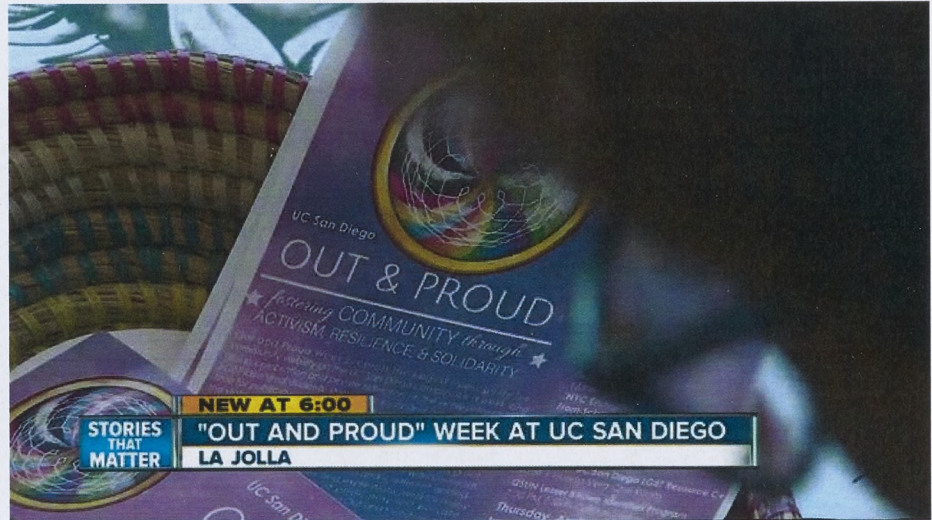
'Out and Proud Week' at UCSD celebrates campus LGBT community

Events focus on education and understanding

[Jared Aarons](#)

7:50 AM, Apr 24, 2017

8:19 AM, Apr 24, 2017



LA JOLLA, Calif. (KGTV) - The LGBT Resource Center at UC San Diego will hold "Out and Proud Week" on campus, starting Monday. The weeklong series of events is designed to highlight the impact the LGBT Community has at UCSD, while also teaching people about the issues the community faces.

"It's a moment in time for us to be visible," said Dr. Shawn Travers, director of the LGBT Resource Center. "Not that we're ever closeted, but to intentionally be very visible and to engage in conversations around the politics and practices of the community."

Events include lectures, communal meals, movie screenings and even a karaoke party. The highlight is a screening of the movie "Major!" on Thursday night at the Sungod Lawn on campus.

That film chronicles the life of Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, a 75-year-old transgender activist. It follows her struggle from the Stonewall riots to present day. The film won 19 awards for Best Documentary at film festivals around the world.

For a complete list of activities, go to lgbt.ucsd.edu.

7 Myths Russian People Are Told About The LGBT Community

Nearly 75% of Russians believe homosexuality is "morally unacceptable." Why?

by [Kristina Marusic](#) 4/23/2017

Russia's legacy of homophobia continues to put the LGBT community in grave danger, from the country's "gay propaganda" ban to the current homosexual purge in Chechnya under president Kadyrov.

ALEXANDER NEMENOV/AFP/Getty Images

But it isn't just the government working to demonize LGBT Russians: A Pew Research survey found that 72% of Russians believe homosexuality is morally unacceptable—more so than adultery or gambling.

One of the reasons is that Russians are regularly fed damaging propaganda about the LGBT community. Here are 7 examples:



1. Rainbows can turn kids gay.



Russia's anti-gay law has led to frequent attempts to ban rainbows from appearing on kids' toys and books, with claims that they subliminally market the "homosexual lifestyle." A milk company was once sued for featuring a rainbow over a cow field on its logo.

"We have hanging all over St. Petersburg the face of Peter the First and a bright rainbow," declared lawmaker Elena Babich in a 2011 op-ed. "Why the rainbow, when it's the global symbol of the gays? But here, all around the city—from the kindergarten 'Rainbow' to the pharmacy 'Rainbow.' All rejoice. Soon we will be rejoicing to the point of extinction."

2. Homosexuality is a threat to Russia's population growth.

As Babich's comment alludes, Russian homophobes also blame gays for the country's dwindling population. (Actually, you can thank high mortality rate, large waves of emigration and a low birth rate.) Ahead of the 2014 Sochi Olympics, Vladimir Putin said that, to deal with its population crisis, Russia should "cleanse" itself of gays. "Europeans are dying out... and gay marriages don't produce children," he espoused the following year.

3. Homosexuality is the same as pedophilia.

ANDREY SMIRNOV/AFP/Getty Images

Although we sometimes hear this canard from the American right, Vladimir Putin has raised it to the level of state-sponsored propaganda. In 2014, he sparked international outcry by saying that LGBT people at the Sochi Olympics would be safe as they “leave children alone.”



In a 2013 speech, Putin also claimed that pedophiles were rising to political power throughout Europe. His belief was apparently based on a 1982 case in which three people who wanted to legalize sex between adults and children tried to register as legal party in the Netherlands. They were rejected—and then banned by the Dutch Supreme Court—but Putin press secretary Dmitry Peskov insisted proof of this so-called pedophile party “had been verified in the most thorough method, including by our Foreign Ministry.”

The fake news circulated in Russian media for years, and was even spread internationally by traveling Russian Orthodox priests.

4. Gay sex is the same as rape.

DMITRY SEREBRYAKOV/AFP/Getty Images

Homosexuality was illegal for much of Russia’s history, but systematic raping of male prisoners wasn’t uncommon. The idea that a man would consent to having sex with another man is alien to many Russians. “For a long period of time Russian men and Russian women who were kept in prisons were subjugated and sexually assaulted to keep them complacent,” Tatiana Mikhailova, a Russian Studies professor at the University of Colorado told [Live Science](#).



Men who were raped were called “roosters,” Mikhailova she says is still one of the “most painful words” you can call a man in Russia.

5. LGBT people are dishonest and dangerous.

After Stalin took power, the secret police regularly portrayed homosexuals as spies and traitors, not unlike the American “lavender scare” of the 1950s in America. But instead of just the loss of a job, in the Soviet Union, homosexuality was frequently punished with hard labor in the gulag.

Stalin’s anti-sodomy law wasn’t repealed until 1993, so the link in people’s minds between criminality and homosexuality persists.

6. Transgender people are mentally ill.

Getty Images

In 2015, the Russian government passed a law that banned transgender and gender-nonconforming people from driving cars. The regulations referred to trans people (along with pedophiles, sadomasochists, exhibitionists, and “fetishists.”) as having a “sexual disorder” that rendered them to operate a vehicle.

That same law listed physical and mental impairments considered impediments to driving, including partial blindness and paralysis.



7. It's your fault if you have HIV.

Russia's HIV rate is the highest in Europe, and one of the highest in the world. Heterosexual sex will soon beat intravenous drug use as the main means of infection. Putin has taken a firm stance against all things deemed Western, including programs dedicated to HIV/AIDS prevention and reduction, and the Russian Orthodox Church opposes comprehensive sex education and contraception. Russian law also bars HIV-positive adults from becoming the legal guardian of a child.

Health activist Elena Plotnikova of told the *New York Times*, “The basic attitude of the government is: You made a bad decision and we are not going to help you.”

Anna Sarang, the head of the the only nongovernmental organization distributing clean needles to drug addicts in Moscow, told Aljazeera that Putin's administration “is directly sabotaging HIV prevention by not allocating its own funds and blocking the work of international donors and Russian NGOs.”

Safer-sex kits with condoms have to be labeled “foreign agents” or else distributors risk arrest. On January 1 of this year, Russia launched a national registry of people with HIV, which some fear will be used to discriminate against, or even isolate, those who test positive.

YouTube restores 'wrongly blocked' LGBT videos

• 24 April 2017

YouTube has modified its content filter after complaints it had blocked political and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) videos.

Restricted mode is an optional filter designed to hide content that may be judged unsuitable for children. But many prominent LGBT video-makers said their videos had been targeted.



YouTube said it had fixed an error and made more than 12 million "unintentionally filtered" videos available again. The platform was criticised in March after several video-makers noticed a drop in advertising revenue and realised their content was being blocked in restricted mode. The wide-reaching filters appeared to block videos referring to sexuality and gender identity, even if the content was not explicit.

"YouTube's restricted mode has blocked a poem I wrote for a gay friend," tweeted musician Bry O'Reilly.

Author Tyler Oakley added: "One of my recent videos 'Eight Black LGBTQ+ Trailblazers Who Inspire Me' is blocked because of this, I'm perplexed."

YouTube said it had identified that its systems "were not working as intended".

"We want to clarify that restricted mode should not filter out content belonging to individuals or groups based on certain attributes like gender, gender identity, political viewpoints, race, religion or sexual orientation," it **said in a blog post.**

The company also said it would let people report videos they believed had been unfairly restricted and said it would offer more transparency about the types of content that would be filtered.

It said it would continue to restrict:

- Discussion of alcohol or drugs, or videos showing alcohol consumption
- Detailed conversations about sex
- Music videos with adult themes including sex and drugs
- Graphic depictions of violence, even in news videos
- "Mature subjects" such as terrorism, war, crime, and political conflicts
- "Mature language"

"Though Restricted Mode will never be perfect, we hope to build on our progress so far to continue making our systems more accurate and the overall Restricted Mode experience better over time," it said.

Trump's Quiet War Against LGBT Americans

The Trump administration wants to seem LGBT-friendly – don't be fooled.

The Associated Press

By [Lanae Erickson Hatalsky](#) and [Nathan Kasai](#)

April 24, 2017, at 11:30 a.m.

During his campaign, candidate Donald Trump proclaimed that he had more support in the gay community than previous Republican candidates. He trumpeted, "LGBT is starting to like Donald Trump very much lately, I will tell you, starting to like Donald Trump very, very much lately." And it's clear the administration wants to keep up that facade: They touted in the press the fact that the president said marriage for gay couples is a settled issue and allowed an Obama-era nondiscrimination executive order to remain in place as proof of his support for the LGBT community.

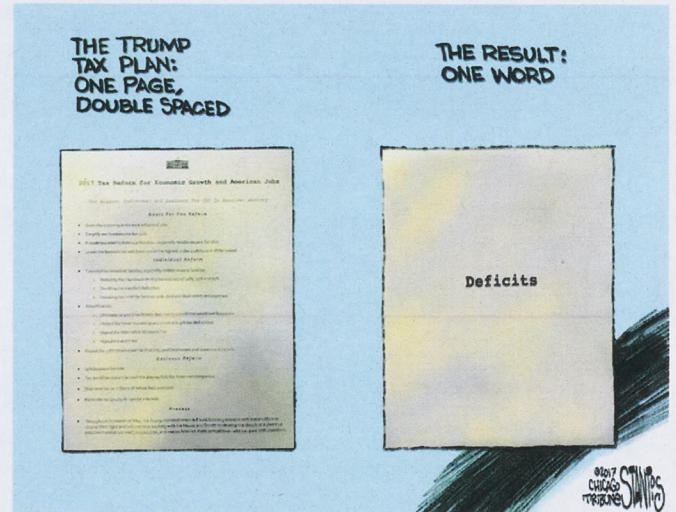
But make no mistake, Trump is no ally. Scratching just under the surface reveals that his administration has already begun to quietly but persistently erode the progress that's been made for gay and transgender Americans over the past decade.

The administration's most high-profile affront to the LGBT community so far was [rescinding](#) the Department of Education and Department of Justice's Title IX guidance in February. This guidance had reiterated a growing legal consensus on Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which protects students against discrimination and harassment in our nation's schools on the basis of sex. The guidance had simply helped to ensure that schools understood their obligation under existing law to allow transgender students to attend school safely in a manner that does not conflict with their gender identity. But the Trump administration did away with it shortly after Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos were confirmed. Rescinding this guidance played into disingenuous scare tactics –



the idea that protecting transgender students comes at the expense of other students' safety – and sent the wrong message to our schools and students. Transgender Americans were already one of the most vulnerable populations in the nation and this action only put them further at risk.

But that was just the act that made the biggest news – the attacks didn't end there. Trump earned plaudits early on by [refusing to rescind](#) President Barack Obama's order that protected employees of federal contractors from being fired because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. That order was a huge expansion of LGBT nondiscrimination protections, covering roughly one-fifth of the American workforce. After leaks surfaced that he would undo the order, the administration decided to keep it, and many credited Trump for fulfilling his promise at the Republican Convention to "protect our LGBTQ citizens from the violence and oppression." Some even posited this was proof that Ivanka Trump's and Jared Kushner's "New York values" would prevail in the White House. Yet just a few months after promising to keep the order in place, Trump quietly [gutted key provisions](#) that required contractors to prove they are in compliance with these nondiscrimination obligations. Without any requirement to report whether contractors are following the order, can you really claim credit for having kept it on the books?



The third strike was the administration erasing LGBT people from federal surveys. Trump's Department of Health and Human Services just [removed questions](#) identifying LGBT people from two important data collection programs: the National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants and the Annual Program Performance Report for Centers for Independent Living. The former collects information on a variety of senior-related services including transportation, homemaker and meal assistance and the latter tracks the efficacy of programs that assist Americans with disabilities. Inclusion in both of these surveys is critical to getting resources to LGBT Americans who are seniors or are living with disabilities. Federal programs base funding by counting people in the community, so if LGBT people aren't tallied, the organizations and programs that assist them won't get the resources they need. Yet the Trump administration just pushed older LGBT Americans back into the closet.

Trump is only a few months into his presidency, and we've already seen a quiet but steady chipping away of protections for LGBT Americans. This president may have said he would be great for the LGBT community, but actions speak louder than words. And it's clear his veneer of inclusion can't hide the intent of his administration to make the lives of LGBT people, young and old, more difficult.



MONDAY, APR 24, 2017 12:45 PM PDT

LGBT families under attack: Alabama law would make it legal to stop same-sex couples from adopting

This "religious freedom" bill protects discrimination against couples applying to adopt or foster kids

NICO LANG



The Alabama State House Capitol in Montgomery, Alabama (Credit: Getty/eyecrave)

A bill that would allow foster care and adoption agencies to discriminate against same-sex couples could reach the Alabama governor's desk this week after passing the state's Senate last Wednesday.

By a tally of 23 to 9, Senators voted along party lines in favor of House Bill 24, also known as the Alabama Child Placing Agency Inclusion Act. Sponsored by two Republicans, Rep. Rich Wingo and Sen. Bill Hightower, the legislation would "prohibit the state from discriminating against child placing agencies on the basis that the provider declines to provide a child placement that conflicts with the religious beliefs of the provider." Thus, the government would be blocked from revoking the license of an adoption and foster care center if it were to turn down a same-sex couple's application to become parents.

Wingo, a former linebacker for the Green Bay Packers, has claimed that HB 24 is intended to uphold "religious freedom" in Alabama and is not intended to target the LGBT community.

"This bill is not about prohibiting gay and lesbian couples from adopting or fostering a child," Wingo told the [Alabama Media Group](#) in February. "It's about protecting and not discriminating against faith-based agencies that, due to their religious beliefs, could have their right to choose where to place a child taken away from them."

The Republican lawmaker believes that the bill is necessary to prevent faith-based adoption agencies from closing in order to avoid having to place children in same-sex homes. After the Obergefell v. Hodges decision legalized same-sex marriage in 2015, a handful of such centers in Massachusetts, Illinois, California and Washington D.C. shuttered their doors. Wingo's worried that the estimated 30 percent of adoption and foster care centers that are religiously affiliated will be forced to do the same in Alabama.

Eva Kendrick, the Alabama state director for the Human Rights Campaign, said that has not been the case in the two years same-sex marriage has been legal in the state. “That has not happened in Alabama,” Kendrick said, “and it will not happen in Alabama.”

The LGBT community isn’t the only group that would be harmed by HB 24. The HRC, a national advocacy organization for queer and transgender rights, has claimed that numerous groups stand to be targeted by this legislation — including atheists, single parents, interfaith families, divorcees and unmarried couples.

“It’s hard to see this as anything but animus toward LGBT families, but the bill could have a greater effect than that,” said Randall Marshall, the Legal Director for ACLU Alabama. “Agencies could turn away qualified families for countless other reasons that have no relevance to their ability to provide a safe loving home. A Catholic or Jewish agency could turn away Evangelical or Protestant families. A family could be turned away because they don’t attend church regularly.”

HB 24 is merely the latest iteration of a bill that has been introduced numerous times to the General Assembly, and Kendrick said that Alabama LGBT rights groups have been fighting it for years. Last week, these organizations were joined by more than 70 faith leaders who wrote a letter to the Senate urging them not to pass the legislation.

“We know in Alabama that these kinds of possibilities are disastrous for our state,” Kendrick said. “We can’t afford to be the next North Carolina.”

The Alabama Child Placing Agency Inclusion Act, as Kendrick explained, has been condemned by local businesses who have warned that the state could face similar backlash that met HB 2, the anti-LGBT law passed by North Carolina last year. That bill, enacted in March 2016, led to a widespread boycott that cost the state an estimated \$87.7 million in a six-month period. That law was overturned following a controversial repeal, but had it remained in place, the Associated Press projected that it would lead to \$3.76 billion in economic losses over the next 12 years.

North Carolina has a strong, versatile economy that could withstand backlash, and the state will recover. Alabama might not, if this bill becomes law. The Yellowhammer State is one of the poorest in the nation, with the sixth-lowest GDP per capita. More than 900,000 people in Alabama live in poverty, amounting to 19.2 percent of the state population.

“Alabama has a massive need to boost our economy,” Kendrick said. “We will not be able to recruit new companies who want to bring in top talent from other places if they cannot promise those future employees that they will be treated equitably.”

There are major differences, however, between the North Carolina law and HB 24, which has been sent back to the House for review before it is considered by Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey. HB 2 was a bathroom bill which prevented transgender people from using the restroom appropriate to their gender identity in schools and government buildings, while Marshall compared the faith-based adoption bill to “religious exemption” laws introduced in other state legislatures. Currently, 45 bills are under consideration

across the country that would allow people of faith to discriminate against LGBT people on the basis of religion.

South Dakota passed a law in March allowing adoption and foster care agencies to deny placement to LGBT families, while a similar bill stalled in the Texas General Assembly earlier this year. The American Civil Liberties Union has estimated that this year, state legislatures will debate over 200 laws aimed at curtailing the rights of the LGBT community.

Marshall called the onslaught of discriminatory litigation a “kneejerk backlash” to the “sea change” in LGBT rights in recent years.

While passing HB 24 would be bad for everyone, advocates say it’s children who would be hit the hardest. Kendrick, who is currently applying to be a foster parent with her partner, said there aren’t nearly enough families in Alabama to meet the high demand. The couple lives in Jefferson County, the largest in the state, and Kendrick said that there are just 250 homes registered in the foster care system. There are 1,200 children who need placement in Jefferson County, and many, many more across the state.

“HB 24 would do the most harm to the more than 5,500 children in Alabama’s child welfare system who are waiting for loving and stable families and they’re calling this a solution and an inclusive act,” Kendrick said. “It’s a solution to a nonexistent problem.”

Gov. Ivey, sworn in following the resignation of former Gov. Robert Bentley, has claimed that she wants to steady “the ship of state” following a sex scandal which forced her predecessor to step down. LGBT advocates believe that Ivey, whose spokesperson claimed that the new governor “still needs time to review the bill,” has a golden opportunity to do so — by standing up for Alabama’s children.

“It’s turning the whole standard of what’s in a child’s best interests on its head in order to vindicate somebody’s perceived religious belief,” Marshall said. “We can’t afford to lose any loving, qualified families who want to adopt.”

Army secretary nominee pushes back on 'radical left' criticism of LGBT record

BY REBECCA KHEEL - 04/25/17 02:55 PM EDT [50](#)

Army secretary nominee Mark Green is pushing back on critics who he says are “blatantly falsifying” his past statements.



“The liberal left has cut and spliced my words about terrorism and ISIS blatantly falsifying what I've said,” Green said in a Facebook post Tuesday. “I believe that every American has a right to defend their country regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and religion. It's the radical left that won't allow the latter.”

The post linked to an article defending Green on a website that says it's geared toward Christians in the military.

LGBT groups have criticized Green's nomination because of comments he has made in the past, as well as based on his record as a Tennessee state senator.

Green had a 20-year Army career that included being the emergency physician during the operation that captured former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in 2003. He was the first person to interrogate Hussein following the capture.

Earlier this month, Human Rights Campaign (HRC) circulated video of a speech Green gave last year to the Chattanooga Tea Party, where he said “transgender is a disease” and railed against former President Obama's efforts to require public schools to let transgender children use the bathroom of their choice.

Transgender service members have been able to serve openly since an Obama administration policy shift in 2016.

HRC and the American Military Partner Association then held a conference call to denounce Green's nomination.

And last week, GLAAD circulated a clip of an online radio show where Green cited a Bible verse that he says calls on the government to "crush evil" to explain his opposition to transgender rights and Syrian refugees.

"My responsibility very clearly in Romans 13 is to create an environment where people who do right are rewarded and the people who do wrong are crushed. Evil is crushed," Green said. "And so I'm going to protect women in their bathrooms, and I'm going to protect our state against potential infiltration of the Syrian ISIS people from the refugee program. And whoever wants to stand up and take me on that, I'm ready to fight."

His state Senate record also includes supporting a bill that allows therapists to deny treatment to LGBT individuals on religious grounds. And he's the sponsor of a bill that would prohibit action against a business for its internal personnel and benefits policies so long as those policies are already compliant with state law.

Tennessee law does not specifically bar discrimination based on sexuality and gender identity, and LGBT people say Green's bill is meant to allow companies to discriminate against them.

In his Tuesday post, Green denied that he called anyone evil but terrorists.

"The only people I have ever called evil are murderous terrorists trying to kill Americans," he said. "The only people I have ever suggested be crushed are the terrorist enemies of our nation."

He also promised never to force his religion on anyone.

"I have never considered myself a judge of anyone, but I have been a protector of everyone in this nation," he wrote.

He concluded by commending the writer of the article he linked to. "It would seem that this gentleman has figured out why certain people are cutting and splicing my words to paint me as a hater," he said. "It will not stand."

Goldman Sachs Wants to Know if You Are Gay

[Lucinda Shen](#)

Apr 25, 2017

Wall Street isn't necessarily known for [being gay-friendly](#). Yet Goldman Sachs is now asking prospective employees to come out as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender right when they apply for the job. After the typical questions about a job applicant's gender and race, [Goldman Sachs \(GS, +0.53%\)](#) asks candidates to indicate their sexual orientation via a drop-down menu including the choices bisexual, gay man, gay woman, heterosexual, lesbian, other, and "prefer not to say." Following that, the application also queries: "Please indicate if you identify as Transgender."

Goldman's questions—neither of which typically pop up in polite conversation—may seem shocking at first. But it has a reason for asking.

"We ask for this data because we want to keep ourselves accountable," says Anilu Vazquez-Ubarri, Goldman's chief diversity officer and global head of talent. In other words, she says, the bank wants to make sure it is not unfairly discriminating against LGBT applicants.

Under Equal Employment Opportunity Commission rules first implemented in 1978, major employers are required to track their job applicants and employees' nationality, race, and gender (though applicants are free to withhold the information). While the data is not part of hiring decisions, it can be used in employment discrimination cases that arise. The EEOC, however, does not mandate tracking of LGBT status, though it says federal discrimination protections [extend to that community](#)—even if the law does not explicitly say so.

But Goldman, whose benefits package covers sex reassignment surgery, decided to start measuring its own LGBT inclusivity roughly a year ago. Its method is similar to that of the commission: First, it asks candidates to self-identify. Then, it removes the data from the resume and interview process. Finally, after the hires have been made, Goldman checks if the proportion of LGBT applicants is reflected in the eventual group hired.

While the bank isn't seeking to hit a specific target at the moment, it is hoping to increase its percentage of LGBT employees, which it plans to track on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis.

"It is a competitive market. If we don't do that outreach, it is possible that we have left the best candidate on the table," says Vazquez-Ubarri. The bank also actively reaches out to LGBT groups on university campuses in a bid to bolster its diversity. "Hopefully, this will become a part of what everyone does."

Employers now have an imperative to demonstrate that their values match those of the younger generations just starting their careers and entering the workforce. The [majority of Millennials and Gen-Zs now](#)

[support LGBT rights](#), which means that big companies such as Goldman have to step in line if they want to stay [an attractive workplace](#), said Deena Fidas, director of the workplace equality program at the Human Rights Campaign.

Indeed, 89% of Fortune 500 companies have policies prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, while 66% ban discrimination based on gender identity, according to the Human Rights Campaign.

So far, Goldman Sachs is the only bank queried by *Fortune* to have included such questions on its job application.

Its fellow banks including [J.P. Morgan Chase \(JPM, +0.58%\)](#), [Morgan Stanley \(MS, +0.30%\)](#), [Citigroup \(C, +0.89%\)](#), HSBC ([HSBC, +0.51%](#)), [Wells Fargo \(WFC, +1.27%\)](#), and [Bank of America \(BAC, +1.02%\)](#), have all stuck with the traditional script. None ask about sexuality, and most gave users the choices of "male," "female," or some variation of "do not wish to disclose" for gender. Wells Fargo only allows its applicants to choose either male or female, or leave the section blank.

By law, job applicants may of course choose to not answer the questions. Still, all those banks, regardless of whether they ask about it on their application forms, keep track of their employees' sexual orientation through internal questionnaires later on.

One bank, HSBC, has begun allowing its customers to pick from a variety of [gender neutral prefixes such as 'Mx,'](#) in its account application. But the bank has not done the same for its job applicants. For now, HSBC plans to keep its questions "strictly" about the demographic groups that require reporting under equal employment opportunity and affirmative action rules—though it would be open to making a change, says Terri Pearce, the bank's head of learning and recruiting for the U.S.

To be sure, just tracking LGBT status within a company's applicant pool isn't necessarily enough to bolster the representation of that group in-house. Plus, some job hunters' resumes contain hidden signs that can reveal their gender, race or even sexual identity even if they never explicitly disclosed them. That could put some applicants at a disadvantage in the hiring process, as studies have [shown that resumes with a white, male-sounding name tend to do better than](#) the same resume headed by a black, hispanic, female, or Asian-sounding name. "There is this unconscious bias happening," says Clair Farley, director of economic development at San Francisco's LGBT Center. Farley advises LGBT job seekers not to come out until after a job offer has been made. Then, if the offer is rescinded, the litigation process is much simpler, she says.

"Where women and LGBT are first to be hired, they are also first to be fired," Farley says.

“Lipstick on a pig”: Texas anti-LGBT bill would also target veterans, women and the elderly

New bathroom bill might sound more neutral, but it still would override local laws protecting many types of people **VIDEO** 4/26/17
NICO LANG

Don't believe the hype: Texas' latest anti-LGBT legislation is just as bad as the old bill.

That's what LGBT advocates argue after Republican lawmakers in the state's General Assembly put forward House Bill 2899, a proposed replacement for Texas' soon-to-be-defeated bathroom bill. Senate Bill 6, which would prevent transgender people from using restrooms that correspond with their gender identity, gained little traction in the House of Representatives after Speaker Joe Straus opposed the measure, calling it “unnecessary.” Straus warned that — similar to the effect of North Carolina's identical House Bill 2 — it would lead to a pricey backlash in the Lone Star State.

The Texas Association of Business has claimed the proposed legislation could **cost the state \$8.5 billion**, although that exact figure **has been called into question**.

The author of HB 2899, Rep. Ron Simmons, claims that the bill is intended to “strike a balance” between business interests and conservative groups that say that further action is necessary to protect the privacy of women and children in public restrooms. Byron Cook, the House State Affairs Committee's chairman, came out against the previous bathroom proposal but has endorsed HB 2899. Gov. Greg Abbott even called Simmons' bill “thoughtful.”

But Chuck Smith, the CEO of Equality Texas, argued that HB 2899 is “even worse” than the previous legislation.

The new proposal is what's known as a “statewide pre-emption bill,” Smith explained. Similar to laws passed in Tennessee and Arkansas, HB 2899 would prevent local legislatures from passing trans-inclusive nondiscrimination protections. Those laws offer equal access for transgender people to all accommodations, which include restaurants, city parks, museums and public restrooms. The new law, if passed, would also strike down existing protections in cities like Dallas, Plano, Fort Worth, Austin and San Antonio — nullifying the right of trans people to use the bathroom that corresponds with their gender identity.

“The other bill, as bad as it is, is limited to government facilities and schools,” Smith said. “HB 2899 would apply to all restroom facilities statewide.”

What's notable about HB 2899 is that it never specifically names the LGBT community. The legislation, which is similar to the “compromise” bill recently put forward to strike down North Carolina's law, is more about what's not in the measure than what's in it. The proposal states that “a political subdivision, including a public school district, may not enforce an order, ordinance, or other measure to protect a class of persons from discrimination to the extent that

the order, ordinance, or other measure regulates access to multiple-occupancy restrooms, showers, or changing facilities.”

This prevents local legislatures and municipalities from offering additional protections to any class of people not specifically named in federal laws. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 spells out that people should not be discriminated against on the basis of race, sex and national origin.

In addition to offering benefits to the LGBT community, Texas cities have extended nondiscrimination protections to a number of groups not covered by the federal definition of discrimination. The city councils of Fort Worth and Austin have both cited age as a protected category in their civil rights ordinances, meaning that elderly people are shielded from bias in nursing homes and other facilities. San Antonio offers similar protections for military veterans, which helps strengthen their ability to obtain care from medical providers.

This is a persistent problem in Republican efforts to roll back LGBT rights in Texas. When voters struck down the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance in 2015 following a successful right-wing propaganda campaign that painted trans bathroom access as a danger to women and children, that repeal didn't just affect queer and trans people. It also hurt single mothers and people with disabilities, groups that had been protected under that law.

These are the same types of people that could be harmed again, by HB 2899. Jenny Pizer, the policy director for Lambda Legal, said although the bill appears to be “neutral,” the new legislation amounts to “putting lipstick on a pig.”

Pizer argued, “On the face of this new bill, it's not discriminatory.” She added, “But make no mistake: This is an anti-LGBT bill. The purpose of this proposed bill is to block local protections, permit the exclusion of transgender people from public facilities, and ensure the state is less subject to legal challenges and boycotts. It's the same toxic wine in another bottle.”

Although HB 2899 would be bad for all Texans, it would especially target trans people already singled out by previous anti-LGBT efforts across the country. A recent survey showed that when state legislatures pass laws that open up trans citizens to scrutiny, it can have painful real-world effects. After interviewing more than 1,000 transgender people in its state in 2015, Equality Texas found that 9 percent **had been blocked from using a public restroom** in the past year. Sixty-one percent of those surveyed claimed that they completely avoided going to the bathroom in public places for fear that they will be beaten, harassed or even killed.

Lou Weaver, the transgender programs coordinator for Equality Texas, said that nothing about SB 2899 will address the real problem facing LGBT Texans in public restrooms: the violence and discrimination that trans people experience every day.


“My state is saying I'm not worthy,” said Weaver, a transgender man. “I'm different, and I don't deserve the same equality as my peers do, my neighbors do, and the other people around me do. It takes an emotional toll on people — on myself, on others, and on the parents of trans youth — when we're seen as the ‘other.’ We have seen the way that people talk about us and the look of disgust that some people look at us with. It's really harmful.”

Weaver said that as a transgender person, it's already difficult to navigate public spaces. Although he said he isn't "visibly trans," he often wears a T-shirt that says "This Is What Trans Looks Like" when traveling to the airport or to speak in other cities. Since the state legislature first introduced SB 2899, Weaver has asked himself whether it's safe to out himself in public in this way — or even whether it's OK to go to the bathroom in certain places. He used to be able to navigate the world with a certain privilege, but the past year changed everything.


"I had jury duty recently, and if something like HB 2899 were on the books, what would I have to do in this government building as I do my civic duty?" Weaver asked. "How could I sit there for any length of time? It makes accessing public spaces impossible." HB 2899 is one of 21 anti-LGBT bills currently under consideration in the Texas General Assembly, which is meeting for the first time since the Supreme Court's 2015 decision on marriage equality. (The legislature meets every other year.) Although the NFL warned Republican lawmakers about the consequences of passing the previous bill, no sporting leagues have spoken out against the new legislation. A lobbyist for the Dallas Cowboys, Bill Miller, told [The Dallas Morning News](#) that he intends to support HB 2899. The repeal of North Carolina's HB 2, which was universally condemned by LGBT groups, has given conservatives further hope that they can work with businesses and sporting associations to avoid backlash.

After North Carolina passed its replacement bill, House Bill 142, in March, both the NCAA and NBA announced that the state would again be considered for hosting championship games. Following the passage of HB 2, these sporting associations had announced boycotts of the state until the discriminatory law was struck down. The new legislation does little, however, to remedy the problems posed by the old law: North Carolina's HB 142 prevents local legislatures from enacting ordinances to protect trans people until 2020. Even though transgender community will continue to be at risk, the NCAA claimed the March repeal met the "minimum requirements" for lifting the ban. "These states are trying to see how much discrimination they can get away with," Smith said.

Texas Republicans have until May, when the General Assembly wraps up its sessions until 2019, to pass a bathroom bill that satisfies the minimum bar set by the NBA, NCAA and NFL. It remains to be seen just how much bigotry these groups think is permissible.



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Dems slam Trump while reigniting fight for LGBT rights

BY LYDIA WHEELER - 05/02/17 01:16 PM EDT 94

© Getty Images

Democrats slammed President Trump on Tuesday as they reignited efforts to protect LGBT people from discrimination.



"The Trump administration has quickly proved it will not defend and respect the rights of LGBT Americans," House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said at a press conference to reintroduce the Equality Act.

The bill, led by Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.) and Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), outlaws discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, public accommodations and financial services.

Democrats highlighted the Trump administration's recent decisions to roll back guidance that allowed transgender students to use the bathroom that corresponds with their gender identity, advance an anti-LGBT secretary of the Navy and leave LGBT questions off the 2020 census.

"On top of that, we continue to battle against the constant threat that the president will unravel rights for LGBT Americans through the so-called religious freedom executive actions," said Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.).

"More than ever before we need the Equality Act to finally give all Americans, regardless of who they love or how they love, the equal protections that we deserve."

Polis said Congress needs to pass the bill to ensure rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender Americans don't depend on a particular president or a particular attorney general.

"We're here to make very clear President Trump does not represent who we are as a nation," Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) said.

"I want my children and grandchildren to live in a country where respect is valued, not derided, where bullies lose, not win, where hate is pushed back, not harnessed for political ends, and everyone, no matter where they come from or who they love, or who they are, are protected, respected and supported."

Cicilline said the bill has 194 House co-sponsors, including one Republican. On the Senate side, Merkley said 46 Democrats have co-sponsored the legislation, but no Republicans.

"The bill has the co-sponsorship of 242 members of Congress, which is significant, and this introduction is the largest number of people at least in the House that we've ever had on the Equality Act," Cicilline said. "So we're building support."

But he said it's up to Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) to bring the bill to the floor for a vote.

"I have every confidence that if the bill came to the floor it would pass because I think more members of Congress would recognize that voting to continue practices of discrimination against individuals is un-American and we would, in fact, be successful in passing it," he said. "We have a lot of work to do to get to that point."

LGBT groups condemn Trump's religious liberty executive order

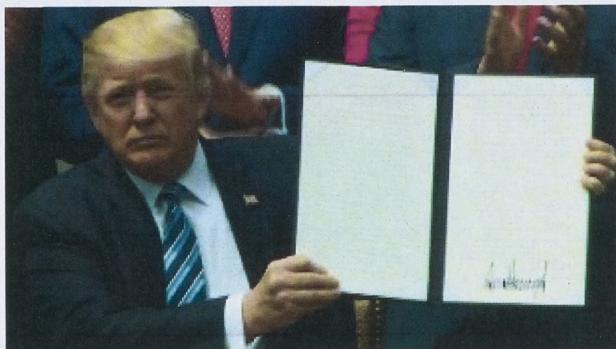
By [Eugene Scott](#), CNN

Updated 6:12 PM ET, Thu May 4, 2017

(CNN)President Donald Trump campaigned on being a "real friend" to the gay community, but several LGBT rights organizations said the religious liberty executive order he signed Thursday could open the doors for more discrimination against gay Americans.

The order, signed during a ceremony in the White House Rose Garden, directs the Internal Revenue Service to exercise "maximum enforcement discretion" over the so-called Johnson amendment, which prevents churches and other tax-exempt religious organizations from endorsing or opposing political candidates. The order also provides "regulatory relief" for organizations that object on religious grounds to a provision in Obamacare that mandates employers provide certain health services, including coverage for contraception.

A message left with the White House asking what assurances the administration could offer LGBT Americans anxious over the order was not immediately returned Thursday.



But the head of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus, a group consisting of gay lawmakers and their allies, worries that the administration will use the order to harm gay Americans.

"The LGBT Equality Caucus will remain vigilant for any attempt to undermine the hard-fought gains our community has made in the past decade," Executive Director Roddy Flynn told CNN Thursday. "We plan on closely monitoring the implementation and interpretation of the executive order."

"This administration has attacked the rights of transgender students and programs assisting LGBT elders," he added. "We cannot trust that this order will be narrowly utilized to not directly harm our community. We will be watching."

Other leaders claimed the order will allow Attorney General Jeff Sessions to use the Justice Department to discriminate against LGBT Americans.

"Donald Trump just let the fox into the henhouse," said Sarah Warbelow, legal director of the Human Rights Campaign, one of the country's most influential LGBT rights groups. "Through this executive order, Trump has directed Attorney General Jeff Sessions -- a man who has denied LGBTQ people equality under the law -- to seek a license to discriminate across all areas of the government."

"We are watching and we will challenge any effort by Jeff Sessions or other agencies of Trump's administration to license discrimination," she added.

The leadership of PFLAG National, an LGBT organization for families, said the lives of gay Americans could be controlled by other people's ideologies under Trump's new order.

"In signing this so-called 'religious liberty' order, the president has essentially granted broad permission to discriminate, and ceded enormous power to unelected officials to interpret regulation and current law," Interim Executive Director Elizabeth Kohm told CNN. "We are deeply concerned that rights and protections for people from marginalized communities will be even further subject to the whims of others' personal ideology controlling their lives, a concept entirely antithetical to the values of freedom and dignity our nation holds dear."

Sarah Kate Ellis, president and CEO of GLAAD, an LGBT media organization, said the President's executive order is a "slippery slope" toward discrimination.

"Today's Executive Order stopped short of rampant discrimination but don't be fooled this begins a slippery slope of a #LicenseToDiscriminate," she tweeted Thursday.

But the head of Log Cabin Republicans, a group that represents gay conservatives, said the idea that the executive order harms gay Americans is "total nonsense."

"Once again, stories about a Trump 'anti-LGBT executive order' were total nonsense," Gregory T. Angelo told CNN. "Not only is the text of the executive order completely agnostic on LGBT-related matters, the Trump administration has now explicitly asserted that there were not plans for a separate order that addressed LGBT issues."

W. Sumatra governor defends university's discrimination against LGBT: 'Students have a right to feel safe from sexual perversion'

By Coconuts Jakarta May. 5, 2017

Last year's moral panic over LGBT rights in Indonesia eventually died down, but institutionalized discrimination against the minority group continues to be perpetuated and defended by senior government officials.

The governor of West Sumatra, Irwan Prayitno took to Twitter to defend [a controversial policy by Padang's Universitas Andalas \(Unand\) to officially discriminate against LGBT individuals](#) by forcing all applicants to sign a form saying they are not a part of the minority group.

Unand's chancellor Tafdil Husni said the state university reserves the right to refuse education to LGBT individuals because of religious teachings. He also said that the influence of LGBT individuals could have a negative effect on campus life and that they could be banned on similar grounds as banning public smoking in Singapore.

While legal rights activists denounced the policy as blatantly discriminatory, Governor Irwan took to Twitter on Tuesday to defend Unand using specious, homophobic arguments.



Irwan Pravitno @irwanpravitno

Hak Unand menolak mahasiswa LGBT, dan ini juga Hak bagi saya dan masyarakat Minang utk menolaknya. Tidak perlu Perda, kita jaga bersama saja
[8:30 PM - 2 May 2017](#)

"Unand has the right to reject LGBT students, and myself and the people of Minang also have the right to reject them. There is no need for a local regulation, we will protect each other."



Irwan Pravitno @irwanpravitno

[8:58 PM - 2 May 2017](#)

"Everybody has the right to an equal education, and Unand's students have the rights to feel secure from sexual perversion."



Irwan Pravitno @irwanpravitno

[9:00 PM - 2 May 2017](#)

“Of course LGBT students could attend Unand, but in accordance with Unand’s directive, they should be prepared to change themselves in order to return to normal. We are ready to facilitate counseling.”



Irwan Pravitno @irwanpravitno

10:56 PM - 2 May 2017

“Educational institutions and jobs also imposed bans on the use of drugs. That doesn’t create any controversy as we are already used to living with drugs.”

Wow, there is just so much wrong in what he said that it’s hard to unpack. First of all, neither the university nor the government has the right to discriminate against LGBT individuals under the constitution, which guarantees equal rights to all citizens. Even [President Joko Widodo said last year that “the police must act” against any moves by bigoted groups or individuals to harm LGBT people or deny them their rights, and that “there should be no discrimination against anyone.”](#)

Irwan then says everybody has the right to the same education, but then contradicts himself immediately by saying that “Unand’s students have the rights to feel secure from sexual perversion”, excluding LGBT students from the equal right to education based on his homophobic belief that all LGBT individuals are sexual predators.

He then says that LGBT students could attend the school if they return to “normal” (in an apparent attempt to epitomize hetero-normative bigotry) by attending gay conversion counseling ([which has been proven, again and again, to not be a real thing](#)).

Finally, he compares members of the LGBT minority group to drugs... We hope we don’t have to explain to you the innumerable reasons why that’s wrong.

The governor’s support helped to make [#JagaSumbarDariLGBT](#) (Protect West Sumatra from LGBT) a trending topic on Twitter briefly earlier this week.

Unand’s chancellor Tafdil continues to defend his school’s policy as well, telling [Jawa Pos News Network](#) yesterday, “[LGBT] bring their disease upon themselves, do not transmit it to others. If you invite others to become LGBT, do not attend Unand.”

If President Joko Widodo wants to show he has any seriousness about protecting the educational rights of all Indonesian citizens, denouncing Unand’s discriminatory policy would be a good place to start.

People march through Tokyo's Shibuya district on Sunday during the Tokyo Rainbow Pride parade. This year's theme was 'Change,' a call to respect everyone as individuals, regardless of sexuality. | YOSHIAKI MIURA

[NATIONAL](#) / [SOCIAL ISSUES](#)

Tokyo Rainbow Pride participants march for 'change' in LGBT recognition

BY [DAISUKE KIKUCHI](#)
STAFF WRITER

MAY 8, 2017



Thousands of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people paraded through Tokyo's Shibuya district on Sunday to express hope that Japan will further embrace gender equality and diversity.

The LGBT parade was the finale to the annual Tokyo Rainbow Pride festival, and this year's theme was "Change."

"I believed that nothing would change. But, little by little, things are starting to change," the event's flyers say, quoting an unnamed individual. "Let's achieve a future where everyone is respected as an individual, despite differences in sexuality."

"My company is very tolerant of LGBT people. A consultation program is available for anyone whose sexuality makes them feel uncomfortable among their coworkers," said a gay man who participated in the festival, which was held in Yoyogi Park.

The man, who only wanted to be identified by his initials, H.U., added that over the past few years his company's grasp of gender issues had improved and that management was more understanding of the situation of LGBT staff.

In the park, where performers took to the stage and booths hosted charity events, H.U. said he was surprised to see that the festival was much larger compared with two years ago, when he first attended.

According to the organizer, an estimated 5,000 people took part in Sunday's parade.

This year, Tokyo Rainbow Pride was sponsored by a record 190 companies and organizations, including big names like NTT Corp., Sony Corp. and Google Inc., as well as fast-growing media company BuzzFeed and music streamer Spotify.

On the event's official website, local government leaders left congratulatory messages, including Shibuya Ward Mayor Ken Hasebe and Sapporo Mayor Katsuhiko Akimoto.

In 2015, the ward's assembly passed an ordinance and agreed to issue legally nonbinding certificates that declared same-sex partnerships "equivalent to marriage."

The document allows gay couples to be treated on a par with married couples in terms of hospital visits and apartment rentals. Other cities, such as Sapporo, Naha in Okinawa Prefecture and Iga in Mie Prefecture have since established similar programs.

"I find it important to create an atmosphere in which all LGBT people, not just couples but also children and adults, can feel comfortable living," Hasebe said in his message.

As of April 1, 17 same-sex couples in Shibuya had been issued the certificates.

Sapporo plans to issue similar certificates starting next month.

"We would like to remove as many obstacles as possible that are making life difficult for sexual minorities," Akimoto wrote. Sapporo also plans to establish a phone consultation service to help LGBT people by next April.

However, H.U. said that "certification is only a half measure." He is hoping for further legal developments that will allow same-sex couples to officially get married.