

# **LGBT LEGISLATIVE PACKET**

*(prepared by DC staff)*

*Updated January 2012*

# **CONGRESSWOMAN LAURA RICHARDSON**

## **LGBT RECORD AND OVERVIEW**

Congresswoman Laura Richardson and House Democrats fought hard for equal rights for LGBT Americans, and the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is only one example of the progress they've achieved over the last three years. Below is a timeline of steps taken for LGBT equality since 2009.

### **2009**

Urged federal government to extend key benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees

Attended the first White House LGBT Pride Reception in history

Urged President Obama to award the Medal of Freedom to Billie Jean King and Harvey Milk

Praised the creation of a National Resource Center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Elders

Supported the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which was signed into law

### **2010**

Pushed to end discrimination based on gender identity in the federal government

Lifted the ban that prohibited people with HIV/AIDS from entering the United States

Supported the Affordable Care Act, reforming health care in America by lowering costs, expanding choice, and improving healthcare quality

Supported hospital visitation and medical decision-making rights for gay and lesbian patients

Supported an initiative to allow trans-Americans to receive true gender passports without surgery

Supported the Family and Medical Leave Act ensuring family leave for LGBT employees

Supported America's first comprehensive plan to prevent and end homelessness, which includes homeless LGBT youth

Pushed for a grant to the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center to work with LGBT foster youth

Supported a United Nations measure that restored "sexual orientation" to the definition of human rights

Supported and voted for the Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT)"

Supported initiatives to protect bi-national LGBT families threatened by deportation.

Supported legislation to foster safer working environment for transgender federal employees

Praised enforcement of same-sex hospital visitation rights and decision making

Supported an executive memorandum creating first-ever U.S. government strategy dedicated to combating human rights abuses against LGBT persons abroad

Attended the House Enrollment of the Repeal of DADT

## **2011**

Urged for government housing programs to be available to all eligible people, including the LGBT community

Signatory to letter to IRS requesting guidance for married LGBT couples and domestic partners

**Proposed more funding for LGBT priorities such as HIV/AIDS prevention and education, and bullying and teen suicide prevention**

**Signatory to amicus brief declaring the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unconstitutional.**

**Supported the Obama administration's decision not to defend DOMA's constitutionality in court**

**Marched in the Long Beach Pride Parade and held meaningful dialogue with local LGBT leaders**

**Supported an Institute of Medicine study on LGBT health, the first of its kind**

**Signatory to letter praising Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and urging her to maintain American diplomatic awareness of human rights abuses conducted against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation.**

# LGBT HOUSE BILLS

All LGBT organizations advocate for a repeal of the Respect for Marriage Act and the legalization of marriage for same-sex couples. They also support the bills below.

## **H.R.1397, Employment Non-Discrimination Act**

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) would prohibit discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and affords LGBT Americans basic employment protection from discrimination based on irrational prejudice.

**CLR Co-Sponsored H.R.1397, Employment Non-Discrimination Act on April 6, 2011**

## **H.R.2310, Equal Access to COBRA Act**

The Equal Access to COBRA Act would equalize the benefits under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), guaranteeing continuation health coverage to any qualified beneficiary under an employer's health insurance plan, including domestic partners and the children of domestic partners when employers choose to cover them.

**CLR CO-Sponsored H.R.2310, Equal Access to COBRA Act on June 23, 2011**

## **H.R.1681, Every Child Deserves a Family Act**

The Every Child Deserves a Family Act would prohibit an entity that receives federal assistance and is involved in adoption or foster care placements from discriminating against prospective adoptive or foster parents solely on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status, or on the basis of the sexual orientation or gender identity of the child involved.

**CLR Co-Sponsored H.R.1681, Every Child Deserves a Family Act on May 3, 2011**

## **H.R.2364, Family and Medical Leave Inclusion Act**

**CLR Co-Sponsored H.R.2364, Family and Medical Leave Inclusion Act on July 13, 2011**

## **H.R.1085, Repealing Ineffective and Incomplete Abstinence-Only Program Funding Act**

The Repealing Ineffective and Incomplete Abstinence-Only Program Funding Act would amend title V of the Social Security Act to eliminate the abstinence-only education program.

**CLR Did Not Co-Sponsor H.R.1085, Repealing Ineffective and Incomplete**

**Abstinence-Only Program Funding Act**

**H.R.1116, Respect for Marriage Act**

The Respect for Marriage Act (RMA) would repeal the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and restores the rights of all lawfully married couples—including same-sex couples—to receive the benefits of marriage under federal law.

The RMA would also provide same-sex couples with certainty that federal benefits and protections would flow from a valid marriage celebrated in a state where such marriages are legal, even if a couple moves or travels to another state.

**CLR Did Not Co-Sponsor H.R.1116, Respect for Marriage Act**

**H.R.1648, Safe Schools Improvement Act**

The Safe Schools Improvement Act (SSIA) would address the pervasive problem of bullying of LGBT students by amending the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (Title IV of the No Child Left Behind Act) to require schools and districts to enact codes of conduct specifically prohibiting bullying and harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

**CLR Co-Sponsored H.R. 1648, Safe Schools Improvement Act on April 15, 2011**

**H.R.998, Student Non-Discrimination Act**

The Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA) would prohibit any school program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from discriminating against any public school student on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

**CLR Co-Sponsored H.R. 998, Student Non-Discrimination Act on March 10, 2011**

**H.R.2088, Tax Parity for Health Plan Beneficiaries Act**

The Tax Parity for Health Plan Beneficiaries Act would equalize tax treatment for employer-provided health coverage for domestic partners and other non-spouse, non-dependent beneficiaries.

**CLR Co-Sponsored H.R. 2088, Tax Parity for Health Plan Beneficiaries Act on June 15, 2011**

**H.R.1537, Uniting American Families Act**

U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents may sponsor their spouses (and other immediate family members) for immigration purposes. But same-sex partners of U.S. citizens and permanent residents are not considered “spouses,” and their partners cannot sponsor them for family-based immigration. The Uniting American Families Act (UFAA) would remedy this injustice and allow U.S. citizens and permanent residents to sponsor their same-sex partners for family-based immigration.

**CLR Co-Sponsored H.R. 1537, Uniting American Families Act on April 14, 2011**

# CLR LGBT VOTE RECORD

110<sup>TH</sup> – 112<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

2008-PRESENT

UPDATED: JANUARY 2012

<u>Date</u>	<u>Bill Title</u>	<u>Vote</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
05/04/2011	<u>Repealing Funding for School-Based Health Center Construction</u> HR 1214	N	Bill Passed - House (235 - 191)
03/30/2011	<u>School Vouchers for Washington, D.C.</u> HR 471	N	Bill Passed - House (225 - 195)
02/18/2011	<u>Prohibits Funds for the Gainful Employment Rule</u> H Amdt 94	N	Amendment Adopted - House (289 - 136)
12/08/2010	<u>DREAM Act</u> HR 5281	Y	Concurrence Vote Passed - House (216 - 198)
08/10/2010	<u>Aid To States for Medicaid, Teacher Employment, and Other Purposes</u> HR 1586	Y	Concurrence Vote Passed - House (247 - 161)
07/01/2010	<u>Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Supplemental Appropriations</u> HR 4899	Y	Concurrence Vote Passed - House (239 - 182)
03/25/2010	<u>Health Care Reconciliation Act</u> HR 4872	Y	Concurrence Vote Passed - House (220 - 207)
03/21/2010	<u>Health Care Reconciliation Act</u> HR 4872 (makes the single largest investment in federal	Y	Bill Passed - House (220 - 211)

student aid in U.S. history)

09/17/2009	<u>Student Aid Program Modifications</u> HR 3221	Y	Bill Passed - House (253 - 171)
03/31/2009	<u>National Volunteer Program Expansion</u> HR 1388	Y	Concurrence Vote Passed - House (275 - 149)
03/18/2009	<u>National Volunteer Program Expansion</u> HR 1388	Y	Bill Passed - House (321 - 105)
02/13/2009	<u>American Recovery and Reinvestment Act ("Stimulus Bill")</u> HR 1	Y	Conference Report Adopted - House (246 - 183)
01/28/2009	<u>American Recovery and Reinvestment Act ("Stimulus Bill")</u> HR 1	Y	Bill Passed - House (244 - 188)
09/26/2008	<u>Renewable Energy Credits and Other Business and Individual Credits</u> HR 7060	Y	Bill Passed - House (257 - 166)
07/31/2008	<u>Higher Education Act Amendments and Extensions</u> HR 4137	Y	Conference Report Adopted - House (380 - 49)
06/19/2008	<u>GI Bill, Funding for Midwest Flood Cleanup, Extension of Unemployment Benefits, and Other Provisions</u> HR 2642	Y	Concurrence Vote Passed - House (416 - 12)
05/15/2008	<u>G.I. Bill Expansion and Other Domestic Provisions</u> HR 2642	Y	Concurrence Vote Passed - House (256 - 166)
05/01/2008	<u>Student Loan Provision Changes</u> HR 5715	Y	Concurrence Vote Passed - House (388 - 21)
04/17/2008	<u>Student Loan Provision Changes</u> HR 5715	Y	Bill Passed - House (383 - 27)
02/07/2008	<u>Higher Education Act Amendments and Extensions</u> HR 4137	Y	Bill Passed - House (354 - 58)

# RELEVANT CAUCUSES

## **Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus**

The mission of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus is to promote lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) equality. The bi-partisan LGBT Equality Caucus will be comprised of Members of Congress who are strongly committed to achieving the full enjoyment of human rights for LGBT people in the U.S. and around the world. By serving as a resource for Members of Congress, their staff, and the public on LGBT issues, the Caucus will work toward the extension of equal rights, the repeal of discriminatory laws, the elimination of hate-motivated violence, and the improved health and well being for all regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

**CLR is a member.**

# TOP NATIONAL LGBT ORGANIZATIONS

**The Equality Federation** ([www.equalityfederation.org](http://www.equalityfederation.org))

The national association of statewide LGBT advocacy groups.

**The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund** ([www.victoryfund.org](http://www.victoryfund.org))

Works to elect openly LGBT candidates.

**Human Rights Campaign (HRC)** ([www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org))

Federal lobbying on LGBT issues.

**Log Cabin Republicans** ([www.logcabin.org](http://www.logcabin.org))

Works within the Republican Party on LGBT issues.

**National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)**

([www.thetaskforce.org](http://www.thetaskforce.org))

Works to support grassroots organizing on LGBT issues.

**Parents, Friends, and Family of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG)**

([www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org))

Support and advocacy organization for allies of LGBT people.

**Lambda Legal** ([www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org))

National legal organization for LGBT civil rights.

# **MISSIONS AND GOALS FROM ORGANIZATIONS' WEBSITES**

## **The Equality Federation**

Equality Federation is an alliance of state-based lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender advocacy organizations working together to build strong, self-sustaining lgbt organizations in every state and territory.

A strong and effective lgbt advocacy organization in every state and territory is critical to the long-term success of our movement. Equality Federation supports a state-based organizing model to win equality and justice for lgbt people throughout the United States and its territories.

## **The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund**

The Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund works to elect LGBT leaders to public office for one simple reason. They change America's politics.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender office holders are our clearest and most convincing champions for true equality. As leaders in government, they become the face and voice of a community. They challenge the lies of extremists and speak authentically about themselves, their families and their community.

Since 1991, the Victory Fund has helped thousands of openly LGBT candidates win election to local, state and federal offices.

## **Human Rights Campaign (HRC)**

As the largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans, the Human Rights Campaign represents a force of more than one million members and supporters nationwide — all committed to making HRC's vision a reality.

Founded in 1980, HRC advocates on behalf of LGBT Americans, mobilizes grassroots actions in diverse communities, invests strategically to elect fair-minded individuals to office and educates the public about LGBT issues.

## **Log Cabin Republicans**

Log Cabin works to build a stronger, more inclusive Republican Party by promoting the core values of limited government, individual liberty, personal responsibility, free markets and a strong national defense while advocating for the freedom and equality of gay and lesbian Americans. We emphasize that these

principles and the moral values on which they stand are consistent with the pursuit of equal treatment under the law for gay and lesbian Americans.

The mission of the Log Cabin Republicans shall be advanced at the local, state, and federal level. Our organization's strength comes from our grassroots chapters all around the nation. Coordinating strategy with the national office, these chapters create a powerful force for transforming the Republican Party.

We are loyal Republicans working for change within the party. Through education and action, we demonstrate that gay and lesbian Republicans can, in a spirit of solidarity and integrity, contribute substantially to building and sustaining a majority Republican Party and a great nation.

This effort will help secure full equality for gays and lesbians. Plus, it will create a stronger, larger, and more unified GOP, leading to the election of more fair-minded Republican candidates to public office at all levels of government.

### **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)**

The mission of the **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force** is to build the political power of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community from the ground up. We do this by training activists, organizing broad-based campaigns to defeat anti-LGBT referenda and advance pro-LGBT legislation, and by building the organizational capacity of our movement. Our Policy Institute, the movement's premier think tank, provides research and policy analysis to support the struggle for complete equality and to counter right-wing lies. As part of a broader social justice movement, we work to create a nation that respects the diversity of human expression and identity and creates opportunity for all.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund, founded in 1973 and incorporated in 1974, works to build the grassroots political power of the LGBT community to win complete equality. We do this through direct and grassroots lobbying to defeat anti-LGBT ballot initiatives and legislation and pass pro-LGBT legislation and other measures. We also analyze and report on the positions of candidates for public office on issues of importance to the LGBT community.

### **Parents, Friends, and Family of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG)**

**Our Vision.** We, the parents, families and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, celebrate diversity and envision a society that embraces everyone, including those of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Only with respect, dignity and equality for all will we reach our full potential as human beings, individually and collectively. PFLAG welcomes the participation and support of all who share in, and hope to realize this vision.

**Our Mission.** PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of lesbian,

gay, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

### **Strategic Goals**

Build the capacity of our organization at every level so that we may have all the resources, in the form of information, people and funding, necessary to move forward in our work with the greatest possible effect.

Create a world in which our young people may grow up and be educated with freedom from fear of violence, bullying and other forms of discrimination, regardless of their real or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation or that of their families.

Make our vision and our message accessible to the broadest range of ethnic and cultural communities, ending the isolation of families with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender family members within those communities.

Work toward full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons within their chosen communities of faith.

Create a society in which all LGBT persons may openly and safely pursue the career path of their choice, and may be valued and encouraged to grow to their full potential in the workplace.

Create a society in which all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons may enjoy, in every aspect of their lives, full civil and legal equality and may participate fully in all the rights, privileges and obligations of full citizenship in this country.

We welcome the participation and support of all who share in our Vision and Mission and who hope to realize our goals.

### **Lambda Legal**

Founded in 1973, Lambda Legal is the oldest and largest national legal organization whose mission is to safeguard and advance the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and policy work.

We pursue impact litigation. Our legal experts select the cases that will change or interpret laws in order to have the greatest impact in protecting and advancing the rights of LGBT people and those with HIV.

We win legal victories for clients who seek equality on the job, protection for their parenting or relationship rights, equal access to health care or protection against discrimination because of HIV status. We fight for the rights of transgender people and LGBT seniors. We battle government misconduct and support of discrimination. We also represent clients in cases involving students and schools and the rights of LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care.

Through our Fair Courts Project, we advocate for a fair and impartial judicial system. Our outreach program to Latino communities, Proyecto Igualdad, provides information, resources and support.

We combine our work in the courts with high-impact public education campaigns to help people exercise the rights they have and to build public support for equality.

LGBT people and people with HIV need advocates in every part of the country, and Lambda Legal's expert staff works for equality in five offices around the country—New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas and Los Angeles. We also maintain a national network of volunteer Cooperating Attorneys. In addition, we operate a Legal Help Desk to respond directly to queries from those who seek legal information and assistance with discrimination related to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.