

**New Report Documents ‘Decade of Progress’  
on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality in America**

**Study points to dramatic gains between 2000 and 2009**

SAN FRANCISCO – As the decade draws to a close, a new report shows the past 10 years have been a period of dramatic gains in equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in America. Two-thirds of the 36 statistical indicators compiled in *A Decade of Progress on LGBT Rights* showed significant advances, including sharp increases in the number of LGBT Americans protected by nondiscrimination and family recognition legislation at the state level. Just over a quarter of the indicators were negative, and two showed mixed results. The report is a joint project of the LGBT Movement Advancement Project and the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr., Fund. The report is available at [www.lgbtmap.org](http://www.lgbtmap.org).

“The remarkable achievements toward LGBT equality tend to be obscured by day-to-day struggles, and overall progress often goes unnoticed nationally” said Linda Bush, Executive Director of the LGBT Movement Advancement Project (MAP). “By looking broadly at the last decade, this report gives a much fuller perspective on where we are today -- and how far we’ve come in just ten years.”

“From over 50 years of supporting causes that help advance equality, we understand that making meaningful change requires time. But these facts make it clear that equal rights for gay people are advancing at an exceptional rate,” said Ira Hirschfield, President of the Haas, Jr. Fund. “Gay people and their families deserve equal rights and an equal opportunity to participate in their communities and the institutions that bring Americans together. We are committed to supporting work that brings our country closer to that goal.”

Matt Foreman, a longtime advocate for LGBT equality who now directs the Haas Jr. Fund’s gay and immigrant rights programs, said the Fund is excited by the accelerated rate of change. “While enormous and heart-wrenching inequities remain, progress over the last ten years has been extraordinary.”

Among the report’s key measures of progress:

- **Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation:** The number of states outlawing discrimination based on sexual orientation increased 83 percent, from 12 to 22, between 2000 and 2009. The percentage of the U.S. population living in states banning discrimination based on sexual orientation soared from 24.5 percent to 44.1 percent, an 80 percent increase. In other words, today 134 million Americans are now living in states where discrimination based on sexual orientation has been outlawed, an increase of 65 million over the decade. (When local nondiscrimination laws passed by cities without statewide protections are included, the figure is over 50 percent of the U.S. population.) Fortune 500 companies that protect workers based on sexual orientation grew from 51 percent to 88 percent.
- **Discrimination Based on Gender Identity:** There was an even more remarkable increase in states outlawing discrimination based on gender identity and expression, which rose from just 1 state in the year 2000 to 14 states representing nearly 30 percent of the population in 2009. The percentage of Fortune 500 companies that protect workers based on gender identity jumped even more, from just 0.6 percent to 35 percent.
- **Relationship Recognition:** Similarly exceptional gains were made in the area of family recognition. In 2000, no state extended the freedom to marry to same-sex couples; one state gave broad recognition to same-sex relationships and one offered limited recognition. Now in 2009, five states extend marriage to same-sex couples (with New Jersey and the District of Columbia pending at press time), six offer broad recognition, and seven offer more limited recognition. Overall, the number of Americans living in a state that offers some protections to same-sex couples nearly tripled, from 12.7 percent to 37.2 percent.
- **Protection from Violence:** The 2009 Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act is the first federal law to specifically protect LGBT people.

- **LGBT Elected Officials:** The number of openly LGBT elected officials in America rose 73 percent between 2000 and 2009, from 257 to 445.
- **Public Opinion:** The percentage of the public supporting the right of openly gay and lesbian people to serve in the military grew from 62 percent to 75 percent. Support for marriage equality has grown from 35 percent in 2000 to 39 percent today; there has been an even larger increase in support for relationship recognition that involves many of the rights of marriage, from 45 to 57 percent.
- **Safer Schools:** In 2000, only one state had a safe school law that specifically cited sexual orientation *and* gender identity/expression for protection; by 2009 that rose to 13 states. The number of Gay-Straight Alliance Clubs in high schools grew from 700 to 4,700, a nearly six-fold increase.

The report also includes data on areas with mixed or negative results.

- **Marriage Opposition:** In 2000, 5 states had blocked marriage equality through a statewide vote; today, 31 have done so, including 29 states amending their constitutions to prohibit the recognition of same-sex marriages.
- **Homophobia in schools:** The percentage of LGBT students reporting hearing homophobic remarks in school has remained above 99 percent and LGBT students who report experiencing harassment in school edged up (up from 83.2 percent to 86.2 percent.)
- **HIV/AIDS:** New HIV infections among adolescent and adult men who have sex with men grew 10 percent, from 28,000 to 30,800, as did the percentage of new HIV infections overall that occurred among men who have sex with men, which rose from 51 percent to 53 percent.
- **Military Service Ban:** In spite of overwhelming public support for the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the U.S. military continued to discharge hundreds of gay and lesbian service members, with the cumulative number of discharges under the 1993 policy nearly doubling during the past decade. The only “positive” note was that the number of annual discharges decreased from 1,241 in 2000 to 619 in 2008 (the most recent year for which data are available), apparently because of the urgent need for soldiers to fight the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2002.

A more in-depth and longer term analysis of progress toward LGBT equality can be found in MAP’s “The Momentum Report – 2009 edition,” which is available at [www.lgbtmap.org](http://www.lgbtmap.org). MAP is a think tank founded in 2006 that produces and disseminates research aimed at helping speed advancement of equality for LGBT people.

The Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund is a private family foundation created in 1953 which has awarded more than \$364 million in grants to support fundamental rights and opportunities for all people. It has invested nearly \$42 million in promoting equal rights and opportunities for gays and lesbians since 2002.

## Media Contacts for Comment on “A Decade of Progress on LGBT Rights”

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