

# LGBT Rights:

## A Civil Liberties Briefing



Equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people is a core civil liberties issue. The ACLU champions a world free of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

This means a place **where LGBT people can parent, work, love, and live openly and with respect**; where there is fair treatment on the job and in schools, housing, public places, health care, and government programs.

**Did you know?** The ACLU has been a fierce advocate for the rights of LGBT people for over 75 years and today brings more LGBT cases to court than any other national organization.

## The Next Battleground for LGBT Equality

### Did you know?

The Ohio legislature has been voting down LGBT nondiscrimination bills for the past twenty years.

In June 2015, the Supreme Court guaranteed same-sex couples the freedom to marry nationwide. It was the culmination of decades of work by the ACLU and represented a dramatic transformation in the country's attitude toward LGBT people.

While marriage equality was a historic victory for the LGBTQ community, the fight is far from over. We are still pushing for legal and lived equality for LGBT Ohioans.

**LGBT people should be able to live free from discrimination.** While there is widespread public support for making discrimination illegal, few states have laws that specifically protect all LGBT people.

Ohio is one of 28 states that has no non-discrimination protections for LGBT people. That means that **LGBT Ohioans can be fired from their job, denied housing or simply refused service** just because of who they are or who they love.

Time and again, Ohio legislators refuse to uphold their duty to advocate for all Ohioans' rights. But the ACLU of Ohio is fighting back against discrimination so that all people in Ohio are treated equally.

The ACLU of Ohio has joined together with the Human Rights Campaign and Equality Ohio to form "Ohio Competes." This coalition is working together to pass legislation to protect Ohioans from discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.



## Religious Freedom is a Shield, Not a Sword



Religious freedom is a fundamental American value that we cherish and work hard to defend.

We **must draw the line when people use their religion to discriminate against others for who they are.** Sadly, as LGBT people gain greater equality under the law, we are seeing a troubling push to allow anyone, including businesses and government officials, to use their religious beliefs to discriminate. These demands often appear as “religious exemptions” through litigation and legislative proposals.

The ACLU is at the forefront of **making sure that religion is not used to discriminate against LGBT people.** Nobody should be turned away from a business, refused service by government officials, or evicted from their home just because of who they are.

**“Whenever I got sick as a kid, only one of my dads could come with me to the doctor because they can’t both be my legal guardians. Things got really stressful whenever he couldn’t take off work to take care of me.”**

**— Tevin Johnson-Campion, ACLU activist whose two dads were plaintiffs in a freedom to marry case before the Supreme Court.**

## Spotlight on Trans Rights: What’s at Stake?



There are approximately 1.4 million transgender people in the United States whose basic civil rights have yet to be fully acknowledged. Public education is critical to raise awareness and gain support for laws and policies that allow transgender Ohioans to live free from discrimination.

**Ohio is one of only three states where transgender people cannot change the gender marker on their birth certificates.** Additionally, transgender people have a more difficult time obtaining culturally competent medical care, face discrimination when simply using the bathroom, and are overrepresented in the homeless population and the criminal justice system. **We believe all transgender people should have full protection under the law.**

We are committed to working alongside transgender advocates to educate the public and our lawmakers by raising awareness on the issues affecting Ohio’s transgender community.

