

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Statement on International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia
May 17, 2024

On the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia, my administration stands in support and solidarity with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) people around the world as they seek to live full lives, free from violence and discrimination. This is a matter of human rights, plain and simple. The United States applauds those individuals and groups worldwide working to defend the rights of LGBTQI+ people wherever they are under threat. And we are grateful for the contributions that LGBTQI+ people make every day across our Nation.

From day one of my Presidency, my administration has made advancing the human rights of LGBTQI+ people a priority. In my first month in office, I signed a Presidential memorandum on advancing the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons around the world, directing that our diplomacy and development work around the world be conducted in a manner that reflects our commitment to the equal human rights of this population. We have stood up against laws that target LGBTQI+ people for criminal prosecution; worked to protect LGBTQI+ refugees, who are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse; and launched a Strategy To Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, to ensure that our efforts to confront the scourge of gender-based violence address the unique risks and barriers that LGBTQI+ people face. I also signed an Executive order directing my administration to work to prevent the use of so-called conversion therapy, an abusive and discredited practice that often targets children. And my administration continues to engage with governments, faith leaders, families, and communities worldwide to protect and promote respect for human rights, including LGBTQI+ rights.

Efforts like these have yielded tangible results. During the past year, the United States has responded to abuses of LGBTQI+ people abroad. We've developed an approach to foreign assistance that ensures LGBTQI+ people aren't overlooked in our work. We've expanded access for LGBTQI+ people through our refugee programs. And the Special Envoy To Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons, whom I appointed, is driving rapid response to proposed anti-LGBTQI+ legislation around the world. We've seen how American leadership makes a difference: Over the past decade, a growing number of nations have decriminalized same-sex conduct, often with the encouragement of the United States.

Yet we know there is much more to do. LGBTQI+ communities around the world still face hate-fueled violence and discrimination. They still struggle to attain equal access to health care, housing, employment, education, and justice. Like all human beings, LGBTQI+ people deserve equality: equal rights, equal citizenship, equal dignity. It is our shared moral responsibility to fight back against homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia, just as we must fight back against all hate-fueled violence, at home and abroad.

Today marks the 30th anniversary of when the World Health Organization made the wise and overdue decision to declassify "homosexuality" as a mental disorder. That was a victory for LGBTQI+ people and human rights defenders everywhere. Thirty years later, the work of equality continues. The Biden-Harris administration is proud to be a part of it.

NOTE: The statement referred to Jessica Stern, U.S. Special Envoy To Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI+) Persons.

Categories: Statements by the President : International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia.

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