

# *the history of* **PRIDE**



## Milestones in the American Gay Rights Movement

Adapted from and condensed for space:

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/stonewall-milestones-american-gay-rights-movement/>

**December 10, 1924:** The Society for Human Rights, the first gay rights organization in America, is founded by Henry Gerber in Chicago. Soon after its founding, the society disbands due to political pressure.

**November 11, 1950:** In Los Angeles, gay rights activist Harry Hay founds America's first sustained national gay rights organization, the Mattachine Society.

**September 21, 1955:** In San Francisco, the Daughters of Bilitis becomes the first lesbian rights organization in the United States.

**January 1, 1962:** Illinois becomes the first U.S. state to decriminalize homosexuality.

**June 28, 1969:** Patrons of the Stonewall Inn in New York City riot when police officers attempt to raid the popular gay bar around 1am. Since its establishment in 1967, the bar had been frequently raided by police officers trying to clean up the neighborhood of "sexual deviants." Gay and trans youth clash with aggressive police officers in the streets, leading to a three-day riot during which thousands of protestors receive only minimal local news coverage. Nonetheless, the event will be credited with reigniting the fire behind America's modern LGBT rights movement.



**June 28, 1970:** Christopher St. Liberation Day commemorates the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall riots. Following the event, thousands of members of the LGBT community march through New York City into Central Park, in what will be considered America's first gay pride parade. In the coming decades, the annual gay pride parade will spread to dozens of countries around the world.

**December 15, 1973:** The board of the American Psychiatric Association votes to remove homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses.

**January, 1974:** Kathy Kozachenko becomes the first openly gay American elected to public office when she wins a seat on the Ann Arbor, Michigan City Council.

**November 8, 1977:** Harvey Milk wins a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and is responsible for introducing a gay rights ordinance protecting gays and lesbians from being fired from their jobs. Milk also leads a successful campaign against Proposition 6, an initiative forbidding homosexual teachers. A year later, on November 27, 1978, former city supervisor Dan White assassinates Milk.

**October 14, 1979:** An estimated 75,000 people participate in the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. LGBT people and straight allies demand equal civil rights and urge for the passage of protective civil rights legislature.

**July 3, 1981:** The New York Times prints the first story of a rare pneumonia and skin cancer found in 41 gay men in New York and California. The CDC initially refers to the disease as GRID, Gay Related Immune Deficiency Disorder. When the symptoms are found outside the gay community, Bruce Voeller, biologist and founder of the National Gay Task Force, successfully lobbies to change the name of the disease to AIDS, for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.

**March 2, 1982:** Wisconsin becomes the first U.S. state to outlaw discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

**October 11, 1987:** Hundreds of thousands of activists take part in the National March on Washington to demand that President Ronald Reagan address the AIDS crisis. Although AIDS had been reported first in 1981, it is not until the end of his presidency that Reagan speaks publicly about the epidemic.



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**December 21, 1993:** The Department of Defense issues a directive prohibiting the U.S. Military from barring applicants from service based on their sexual orientation. This policy is known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

**April 1, 1998:** Coretta Scott King, widow of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., calls on the civil rights community to join the struggle against homophobia. She receives criticism from members of the black civil rights movement for comparing civil rights to gay rights.

**April 26, 2000:** Vermont becomes the first state in the U.S. to legalize civil unions and registered partnerships between same-sex couples.

**May 18, 2004:** Massachusetts becomes the first state to legalize gay marriage. The court finds the prohibition of gay marriage unconstitutional because it denies the dignity and equality of all individuals.

**October 28, 2009:** The Matthew Shepard Act is passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama on October 28th. The measure expands the 1969 U.S. Federal Hate Crime Law to include crimes motivated by a victim's actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Matthew Shepard was tortured and murdered near Laramie, Wyoming on October 7, 1998 because of his sexual orientation.

**December 18, 2010:** The U.S. Senate votes 65-31 to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the U.S. Military.

**June 26, 2015:** With a 5-4 decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the U.S. Supreme Court declares same-sex marriage legal in all 50 states.

**April 14, 2019:** Pete Buttigieg launches his presidential campaign, becoming the first openly LGBT person to launch a major presidential campaign. In December 2020, President-elect Biden names Buttigieg as his nominee to be Secretary of Transportation. His nomination is confirmed on February 2, 2021, making him the first openly LGBT Cabinet member in U.S. history.

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