



**One Voice Can Change the World:
The PFLAG National Policy Guide and Advocacy Toolkit**

2019-2020 Edition

Table of Contents

[Different Types of Advocacy](#)

[Engaging In Self Advocacy](#)

[There are three basic components to self advocacy.](#)

[Your personal story is the basis of self advocacy.](#)

[Remember to acknowledge your personal safety.](#)

[Engaging in Individual Advocacy](#)

[Get informed about the issues](#)

[Remember that every step counts](#)

[Engaging in Community Advocacy](#)

[Chapter Organizing](#)

[Coalition Building](#)

[Taking Action as a Community](#)

[Remember the power of community efforts](#)

[Different Methods of Advocacy](#)

[The Right to Share Your Story](#)

[Where to Share: Social Media and Local Press](#)

[*A Note: Be aware of harsh anti-equality groups*](#)

[Use Your Story to Emphasize PFLAG's Purpose](#)

[Advocacy Methods: Lobbying](#)

[Direct Lobbying vs. Grassroots Lobbying](#)

[Playing by the Rules: Lobbying Dos and Don'ts](#)

[Psyching Up: Knowing How and Why Legislators Value PFLAGers' Voices](#)

[Lobbying: A Step-By-Step Plan](#)

- [1\) Find your representative.](#)
- [2\) Make the call.](#)
- [3\) Do your homework.](#)
- [4\) Make the visit.](#)
- [5\) Follow up and follow through.](#)

[Know Your Audience: Talking Points for Allies & Adversaries](#)

[When talking to our allies...](#)

[When talking to the “moveable middle” \(i.e. those who may be on the fence\)...](#)

[What’s Next?](#)

[PFLAG National Legislative Priorities for 2016-2017](#)

[Bills We Support](#)

[Bills We Are Monitoring](#)

[Housing Fairness Act of 2015](#)

[Tips](#)

[Tips For Organizing An Event](#)

[Tips for Writing A Campaign Action Plan](#)

[Sample Campaign Action Plan: Employment Non-Discrimination Act \(ENDA\)](#)

[Pinpoint Goals](#)

[Identify Targets](#)

[Determine Constituents, Allies, and Opponents](#)

[Organizational Considerations](#)

[Tactics](#)

[Tips for Building Coalitions](#)

[Tips for Contacting the Media](#)

[Tips for Writing an Op-Ed](#)

[Quick Hits](#)

[The Plan, Paragraph-By-Paragraph](#)

[Tools](#)

[Sample Email \(preferred\) or Fax for Scheduling a D.C. or In-District Meeting](#)

[PFLAG's Elected Official Visit Report Form](#)

[PFLAG National Glossary of Terms](#)

[PFLAG National Trainings](#)

[PFLAG National Field and Policy Staff and Volunteers](#)

[PFLAG National Volunteer Regional Directors](#)

[About PFLAG](#)

[For more information, please contact us:](#)

Introduction to the 2019-2020 Edition

No voice is more powerful or persuasive than that of a PFLAG member. As people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+), their parents, families, friends, and allies, we know firsthand the impact that discriminatory laws have on ourselves and our loved ones. Our stories of the pain that prejudice inflicts—and the joy that equal treatment brings—are enormously important and impactful in moving fair legislation forward and in opposing anti-LGBTQ+ bills and resolutions, whether in Congress or back home in cities and states across the nation.

Our voices have helped move equality forward on important issues like marriage equality, advocating for family acceptance, safer schools, trans rights, and workplace fairness. It is essential that we, as PFLAG members, continue to educate key decision makers about the issues that affect our families.

Federally, we urge Congress to grant important opportunities to continue education efforts vital to the ultimate passage of legislation including [The Equality Act](#), the [LGBT Data Inclusion Act](#), [Safe Schools Improvement Act](#) (SSIA), [Student Non-Discrimination Act](#) (SNDA), [Do No Harm Act](#), and [Every Child Deserves a Family Act](#) (ECDF), as well as other critical bills necessary to extend full equality to our LGBTQ+ loved ones and ourselves.

At the state and municipal levels, PFLAGers have helped deliver recent victories including the monumental Supreme Court decision on June 26th, 2015, that declared marriage equality the law of the land, a decision achieved through decades of perseverance and hard work by advocates and activists, LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies alike. While recent legal backlash against that victory has meant more than one hundred discriminatory anti-LGBTQ+ bills, religious freedom laws (RFRAs) using the word religion as a guise for discrimination, and, notably, a wave of specifically anti-trans legislation cropping up at the state level across the country, PFLAG members have fought and defeated, and are still fighting to prevent these bills from becoming law. In recent years, PFLAGers have aided in the defeat of dozens of anti-LGBTQ+ bills in Texas, advocated for a transgender public accommodations anti-discrimination law in Massachusetts, campaigned against conversion therapy in states across the country, and helped overturn existing discriminatory laws across the country.

This year, we all need to continue to work hard to educate federal, state and local elected (and soon-to-be elected!) officials so that we are prepared to move pro-LGBTQ+ legislation forward, pass bills, and broaden awareness among legislators of their importance. To ensure the success of our education efforts, this year's *One Voice Can Change the World* focuses on tools to stay engaged on critical pieces of legislation, regardless of whether bills are federal, state or municipal—especially with the rise of state backlash bills and anti-trans legislation.

After tragedies like the shooting in Orlando which targeted LGBTQ+ and Latinx individuals, we are reminded of the need for legislative pushback on blood ban laws, as well as nationwide anti-discrimination and anti-hate crime protections for LGBTQ+ people. We see a call to reframe community dialogue and calls to action within lobbying efforts to appeal to basic human connectedness and dignity to change the hearts and minds of those changing the laws—an effort at which PFLAGers have always excelled. Orlando as well as the continuous surge of hate-based violence, especially as it occurs disproportionately against trans women of color, reminds us of the need to elevate cultural understanding of discrimination among LGBTQ+ people as it is amplified by intersecting issues of race, economic status, physical ability, and other factors. As we advocate to change or promote policies, a concurrent goal is to change culture. PFLAGers do this by telling their stories and by meeting unfounded fear with necessary facts.

One Voice... also continues to emphasize the importance of including our transgender and gender-expansive loved ones in all of the work that we do. This guide includes background information and links to talking points on each topic and information on the “how-to” rudiments of everyday citizen lobbying.

It is critically important that PFLAG families let elected officials know where they stand on important legislative and administrative issues.

While we have seen progress and a shift towards greater acceptance in culture and politics, we also know that our opponents are tireless in their efforts to block progress and roll back equality for LGBTQ+ Americans. Culture and public opinion is changing positively in many places—people support equality in the U.S. by much larger percentages than even one year ago—but resistance to change becomes increasingly extreme. There is still a long fight ahead for many of our issues.

And these issues are urgent—HB2 has been the cause of unbelievable discrimination in North Carolina, and trans individuals across the country are battling dangerous bills proposed by state officials. We cannot allow anti-LGBTQ+ equality voices to dominate the debate in any jurisdiction; we must take advantage of every opportunity to meet directly with our Senators and Representatives. Because of how often our federal legislators are home, we can request meetings with them any time they are away from DC. We must lead back home with our governors and state legislators, our mayors and city council members and with our county commissioners.

As a part of this publication, there is a guide on how to become an effective advocate for LGBTQ+ equality, as well as a review of the rudiments of how to be an effective citizen lobbyist.

Please note, though, that the issues and guidelines provided here are just starting points. You can always visit the PFLAG National website at pflag.org for the latest news and information about important issues facing the LGBTQ+ community. This guide and toolkit will provide you direction and resources for all stages of advocacy, will help you take the next steps in moving LGBTQ+ equality forward, and will support your efforts via tips and tools, as well as personal stories from PFLAG members who have been advocating for themselves and their LGBTQ+ loved ones.

If you find something you're reading that you'd like to discuss further, you can contact [PFLAG National's Director of Policy Diego Sanchez](#) or your PFLAG National Chapter Engagement Coordinator for more information, or with any questions you might have. Their contact information can be found online at pflag.org/about-ourpeople.

Part I: Advocacy

I originally joined PFLAG for support and education after my son came out. Eventually I became more active and started advocating in my community.

– Linda Stroupe, PFLAG Greensboro;
South Atlantic Regional Director

There are many reasons and ways to be an advocate for policy change that will benefit us and our LGBTQ+ loved ones.

- **Allly voices are critical.** As Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” A diverse group of thoughtful, committed citizens provides multifaceted framing that can appeal to a range of audiences. Straight allies have a unique voice that can be extremely persuasive when it comes to issues of equality because they won’t directly benefit from policy changes or new laws being passed. We so often hear that people are involved in the equality movement because “it is the right thing to do” or because “all people are equal” which have greater impact among some audiences coming from a straight person. Allies have had a hugely important role in all civil rights movements, and will continue to be essential in the movement for LGBTQ+ equality.
- **LGBTQ+ voices are powerful.** While we know many of our members are families and allies, PFLAG also includes LGBTQ+ individuals. Advocating for equality can be intimidating at first, especially as a person who knows firsthand its importance. It can also be an incredible opportunity—as long as one is safely out, vocal, and in a position to do so—to stand up for what directly affects you and your friends. Your voice is unique and powerful and since no one knows your experience quite like you do, sharing your story is vital to showing people who may know less about LGBTQ+ issues the reality of your lived experience. With this in mind, it is also vital that allies remember to focus on elevating LGBTQ+ voices wherever possible and being sure to stand behind LGBTQ+ individuals through advocacy rather than standing in their place.
- **Advocacy is fun!** While some PFLAG members may start out as reluctant advocates, hesitant to speak out for equality, many, over time, become actively engaged in this part of the PFLAG mission, sharing their stories and desire for their LGBTQ+ loved ones to be treated equally. With a little time and a lot of inspiration from compatriot PFLAG members, you too can join the ranks of advocates working for LGBTQ+ equality.

- **Advocacy is educational.** Through educating others about current LGBTQ+ issues, we are required to become more aware and learn more ourselves—about current legislative priorities and where our fight is headed, about the communities we live in and the government officials who represent us, and about the processes by which laws and public opinions change.
- **Anyone, anywhere, can be an advocate.** Advocacy can include basic, everyday steps to promote LGBTQ+ equality. Starting a casual conversation about equality, your personal story or upcoming events your PFLAG chapter is hosting is another great and simple way to advocate.

Different Types of Advocacy

To adequately address the three-pronged PFLAG mission of support, education, and advocacy, and help you achieve your advocacy goals, we will look at a few different types of advocacy: Self advocacy, individual advocacy, and community advocacy.

Self advocacy is about standing up for yourself concerning a cause that directly affects you. Self advocacy is the most personal, and thus a very effective method of advocacy.

With **individual advocacy**, one still takes personal steps to promote LGBTQ+ equality via local, state, and federal policies; but this advocacy is often done in support of another person who is directly affected by or on behalf of a cause which one feels strongly about.

Community advocacy focuses on the shared goals of a group or multiple groups, and happens through different types of collective work, including **organizing within your PFLAG chapter**, and **partnering with or building coalitions** with like-minded organizations to work towards goals.

Engaging In Self Advocacy

Self advocacy is about drawing from one's own personal experience to speak out about important issues. This form of advocacy is foundational to all other kinds of advocacy, because it gets to the heart of an issue. It is the problems experienced firsthand by individuals which exemplify the need for culture and policy to change in the first place, and which inform what those changes need to look like. Self advocates are the faces of our community and act as the voices of our issues.

With this in mind, self advocacy may be carried out by LGBTQ+ individuals as well as parents, friends, and allies, depending on the matter at hand.

Advocating for oneself can be a powerful way to dispel misconceptions about a topic and change the lives of others with similar stories, but it is foremost a powerful way of standing up

for oneself and acknowledging the need for justice and change in one's personal life. Self advocacy may be intimidating at first because it deals with personal matters, but the reward is great. Committing to being a self advocate means refusing to accept business as usual, acknowledging that one's circumstances are not insurmountable, and taking responsibility by working to change the outcomes of those circumstances.

There are three basic components to self advocacy.

- 1) **Identify your own goals.** Self advocacy starts with considering all the nuances of your issue and what changes are necessary to achieve the progress you would like to see in your personal situation. You may then consider how your situation may bear on the experiences of others, and with whom who you most need to share your story to accomplish the necessary changes—government officials, community leaders, or others.
- 2) **Know your legal rights.** Before you speak out about your issue, know in what ways your rights have been violated. This may require a little research on existing policies, or may be very clear, but either way, be prepared to argue your claims if necessary. While your ultimate goal is bringing reality and personality to the issue and not making a legal argument, knowing a little about current policies can help you frame the conversation. Knowing your rights also means understanding how you deserve to be treated as a constituent in bringing your issue to a representative, in undertaking a court case, in providing a personal testimony. You have the right to be heard, and the right to fairness in whatever role you have been given to share your story.
- 3) **Communicate your goals and knowledge of your rights to others.** When crafting your points to share, think about your audience, the points you need to get across, the narrative you want to tell, and the tone which will be most effective in telling it. After knowing your own mission, share with others—legislators, community members, or otherwise—to inspire others and make change happen!

Your personal story is the basis of self advocacy.

Sharing your story is often one of the strongest means of building awareness and support. Personal reflections open the minds of people who may have not considered such a perspective before. This form of advocacy allows those who may have been opposed to or uninformed about LGBTQ+ equality to put a face to LGBTQ+ individuals and those who have LGBTQ+ loved ones whose lives have been affected adversely by discrimination. While people can dispute policies, they cannot dispute your personal experiences. PFLAG members have been known and respected for decades for sharing their own stories to change hearts, minds, and policies.

Self advocacy can intersect other forms of advocacy, as while it focuses on individual experience, it highlights the experiences of others with similar concerns who may be affected

by that advocacy. Harvey Milk stood up for the LGBTQ+ community at large, but spoke to his own experience as a gay man to do so. Jim Obergefell, plaintiff in the case that led to the affirmative SCOTUS ruling on marriage equality, spoke on his own behalf to advocate for his right to marry, and his actions had nationwide repercussions.

Remember to acknowledge your personal safety.

Lastly, if you are an LGBTQ+ individual advocating for your personal rights, do so only if you feel you comfortable or are in a safe position to share your story, especially if you are not publicly out. Also remember there is no obligation to come out in any area of your life if doing so risks your well-being.

Engaging in Individual Advocacy

People need to know that they know people affected by these issues.

– Sharon Groh-Wargo, President PFLAG
Cleveland

As individual advocacy is primarily about supporting other people, our PFLAG members who are family or allies to LGBTQ+ individuals are likely candidates for this work. Sam and Julia Thoron, for example, openly spoke against Proposition 8 in California, as they expressed their desire for their gay child to have the same rights as their straight child.

My wife and I never treated our children differently. We never loved them any differently, and the law shouldn't treat them differently either.

– Sam Thoron, PFLAG San Francisco,
PFLAG National Board President,
ex-officio

Parents everywhere related to the Thorons, as all people desire basic rights and justice for their children. In 2012, President Obama posthumously awarded Jeanne Manford, the founder of PFLAG, the Presidential Citizens Medal. This medal is awarded to “whose service has had a sustained impact on others’ lives and provided inspiration for others to serve.” He told the story of Jeanne Manford speaking and marching for her son Morty.

The President shared that Jeanne

took to the streets with a simple message: No matter who her son was – no matter who he loved – she loved him, and wouldn't put up with this kind of nonsense. And in that simple act, she inspired a movement and gave rise to a national organization that has

given so much support to parents and families and friends, and helped to change this country.

In fact, the groundwork Jeanne laid built PFLAG and its network of over 200,000 family members and allies united for LGBTQ+ equality. Jeanne's story unites with thousands of other PFLAG members' tales, and continues today to change hearts and minds.

Telling people why LGBTQ+ equality is important to you will remind them that this issue affects real lives.

Get informed about the issues

Every heart needs to be reached so you need to take every avenue. Telling stories is the most powerful but more people will listen if you are well educated.

– Joni Stacy, PFLAG Omaha; Regional Director; PFLAG National board member

In addition to sharing stories on behalf of an individual, issue, or movement, the fight for LGBTQ+ rights is strengthened when individual advocates are able to accurately inform others about current topics, such as relevant upcoming legislation and the current status quo.

When discussing an issue or bill, know as much as possible about the topic by researching it and talking with other advocates. Always remember, if you are unsure of an answer to a question, acknowledge that you do not know and reach out to our [National Office](#); we can quickly put you in touch with the experts.

Remember that every step counts

The fact that so much could be done is what I find most intimidating about advocacy. But start small and grow as you can.

– Jason Willis, member, PFLAG Abingdon

While advocacy may seem overwhelming because there is still much work to be done, remind yourself that every small step forward leads to further equality for millions of LGBTQ+ people across the country. Every conversation about why you are wearing a PFLAG pin, or why a transgender work colleague was fired after transitioning, is one more seed planted for potential change.

Engaging in Community Advocacy

Your chapter and coalitions are great resources to help advocate for equality! They can help support members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies by offering a community of like-minded people to organize, and educate the public about LGBTQ+ equality. The next step is to use these tools of personal growth, chapter organizing, and coalition building to take action on a larger scale: to advocate for legal protections and policies promoting diversity, inclusion, equality, and justice.

Two great ways to get involved in community advocacy as a PFLAG member include chapter organizing and coalition building.

Chapter Organizing

It is the goal of every PFLAG chapter to offer a safe and inclusive space for families, allies, and LGBTQ+ people to find support, resources, and the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded individuals to advocate for full equality. Advocacy through chapter organizing fosters this mutual support while increasing PFLAG's visibility as a champion on the frontlines of changing hearts and minds.

Here are a few ways to encourage advocacy as a chapter:

- **Incorporate advocacy into regular meetings.** While you should keep advocacy activities separate from your support groups, you can always include advocacy in your regular chapter meetings by discussing upcoming legislation, current injustices, and recent progress. You can also provide materials such as this guide for your members at each meeting. Use your meetings to support each other, educate members, discuss ways to advocate, and encourage all members to participate in your group activities. When leaders demonstrate their excitement for this work at a meeting, their enthusiasm spreads to other members.
- **Organize events to spread awareness about LGBTQ+ equality.** Special events are a fun way to spread awareness about PFLAG and PFLAG's legislative priorities, local, state, and federal. You can host workshops, invite people to make presentations, and/or offer to host a debate around a particular issue. Service-focused events, such as donation drives or a dinner reception focused on World AIDS Day are also great ways to directly serve the LGBTQ+ community while promoting equality. Events are useful to educate, motivate, and unite people for progress.

It's important to host events to raise awareness and donations. Hosting events from an educational perspective brings people with a common interest together.

– Mark Patro, member PFLAG Baltimore

Organizing with your chapter requires paying attention to certain logistics not included in individual endeavors. To begin event organizing, for instance, you should create a detailed and strategic plan for the event so it is beneficial to all who attend. You can create committees within your chapter to manage various tasks.

For example, if you are hosting a film screening of Teaching Tolerance's *Bullying* to raise awareness about the need for safe schools legislation, there should be a Publicity committee to advertise the event, a Logistics committee to book the location and organize proper equipment, and a Policy committee to facilitate discussion before and after the film of ways we can work together to make our schools safer. The purpose of committees is to delegate tasks so that all aspects of the event can be addressed and the occasion can be as effective as possible. Leaders of the chapter should oversee committees to ensure that there is proper coordination and cohesion. If you are hosting your first event, start small, perhaps with a barbeque for your chapter and coalition, and gradually build to larger events. All committees and members should convene after the event to evaluate successes and difficulties, brainstorm ways to strengthen future events, and celebrate everyone's hard work!

Coalition Building

Coalitions are groups comprised of multiple organizations with different missions, uniting together to achieve a common goal. Typically, these groups share leadership responsibilities, resources, and agree upon a structure to make decisions. Building a coalition is a fantastic way to foster community among like-minded organizations, allowing you and your chapter to join a broader community group or campaign.

Here are some steps for getting connected through coalitions:

- **Identify and contact like-minded organizations.** It is important to research what coalitions and like-minded groups exist in your community. For example, if you would like to join an interfaith alliance with various spiritual groups to promote tolerance in your community, you should research if there is a similar coalition already in existence. If there is, it may be useful to reach out to the groups in the coalition and express your support and desire to help in anyway. If there is not an existing coalition already established, you can create one!

- **Create a contact list of such local like-minded organizations that may be interested in joining a coalition.** Whether you are looking to join an established coalition or form a new one, you should use an outreach letter explaining PFLAG’s mission and your interest in joining the broader coalition. Some coalition members may be obvious PFLAG partners, such as state equality organizations, and local chapters of the PTA; however, there may also be some less-expected allies, such as faith groups, environmental organizations, immigration organizations, or more traditional civil rights organizations. Jenn, a PFLAG member from Maine, for example, teamed up with Homeless Voices for Justice. Though PFLAG and Homeless Voices for Justice may not have the exact same goal, both organizations promote progress, and joining forces can help spread each other’s messages to larger audiences. Uniting for social justice of all types builds mutual support and helps bring equality for all.
- **Utilize existing relationships.** When building a coalition, it is a good idea to leverage your existing relationships and organizations, such as your local faith communities, workplaces, unions, or other social justice clubs. Creating a strong and diverse coalition is also a good tactic, as it allows your message to reach a range of audiences. Pete, for example, is a teacher and PFLAG member from Montana. He helped start a statewide safe schools coalition, which is a team of 10 organizations, including Planned Parenthood, faith groups, and law enforcement officers, working to combat bullying. Such a diverse group helps achieve common goals, allows every individual and organization to contribute their unique skills and focus, and spreads messages of equality far and wide.
- **Celebrate gains.** It is very important to commemorate all accomplishments of your coalition. Remember to celebrate your groups’ commonalities and differences, and to always appreciate members of all organizations involved. Kathy, a PFLAG member from Salt Lake City, Utah underscores the importance of thanking and congratulating people in order to show appreciation and retain support for PFLAG. Sending thank you notes after events, for example, is a great way to show gratitude and maintain relationships. After a long campaign, PFLAG members recommend having a potluck or other social gathering for members to relax, have fun, and praise the recent hard work. While PFLAG members work hard to promote the health and well-being of LGBTQ+ people, their families and friends, we play hard as well! We celebrate our successes in order to move forward towards future wins.

Taking Action as a Community

Advocacy with a group requires considerable planning and organizing. To make the most of advocacy initiatives through your PFLAG chapter and with your wider community, consider the following tactics:

- **Identify specific advocacy goals.** There are many ways to promote LGBTQ+ equality. Your chapter must identify some of the most pressing needs in your communities and ways to address them and promote equality. For example, your chapter may seek to make schools safer, draft an anti-discrimination bill, or tackle hate speech. Once you have a specific advocacy goal, you can create effective methods to accomplish your objectives.
- **Develop a winning strategy.** It is important to have a strategy in order to accomplish your goal. This will likely involve creating a timeline and delegating tasks to members of your chapter and coalition. Rest assured that this strategy does not need to be complex. For example, if you are organizing a meeting to talk to your U.S. Senator, simply state what your intended goal for the meeting is and how you plan to achieve success. If your goal is to get your Senator to support [SNDA](#), you should build a team of community advocates, practice your talking points to persuade your Senator to support the legislation, and create a simple fact sheet with information about PFLAG, SNDA, and how the passage of a bill will positively improve school communities and performance in your state.

PFLAG members have demonstrated their strong strategies and successes time after time. For example, members of the PFLAG Chapter of Howard County-Columbia, Maryland, made a huge stride in November 2011 when their efforts led to the County passing an anti-discrimination bill that prohibits discrimination against transgender people. PFLAG Howard County went to City Council members in July 2011 to create the bill, citing the lack of a statewide law and an attack on a Baltimore City transgender woman. Through their courageous initiation, consistent meetings, and powerful testimony, PFLAG Howard County members helped pass this critical human rights legislation.

Commitment and a simple, well-planned strategy greatly further equality legislation. When creating a strategy make sure to know the basics of your plan while still allowing room for flexibility and unexpected changes. There is a Policy section of this guide that provides tips on how to lobby your senators and representatives effectively and thorough summaries of each bill for which the PFLAG and LGBTQ+ communities are advocating; this information will also be consistently updated and found on our website at [Advocacy 101](#) or by searching our Advocacy tag.

There are also basic steps you can take to promote diversity, inclusion, and equality in your immediate environment. For example, [Straight for Equality™](#), a national outreach and education project of PFLAG National, is offered to workplaces and can support local chapters and communities to empower allies in supporting and advocating for LGBTQ+ employees. Such training can add to existing policies or local practices, or work to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace or community in the absence of such laws.

Remember the power of community efforts

The equality movement has come a long way in recent decades thanks to advocates like you! Through support, education, and advocacy, PFLAG members have changed the hearts and minds of many while promoting inclusive legislation.

For example, after the Pulse tragedy in Orlando, over 60 PFLAG chapters across the U.S. held vigils and interfaith dialogues and fundraisers, organized support meetings and memorial groups for Pride marches. Their collective responses continue to affect their communities in immeasurable ways. By organizing events quickly and reaching out, PFLAG chapters' responses to such hurt has been truly transformative, encouraging healing, unity, and action beyond chapter walls.

You, the 200,000 members and supporters of PFLAG—the true advocates of equality—are the change makers! Grassroots have brought justice a long way, and will continue to move it forward towards equality for all.

Different Methods of Advocacy

This guide has repeatedly emphasized the importance of sharing your personal story because your own first-hand experiences are the most powerful tools for advocacy.

For example, a PFLAG mom with a strong Evangelical background wrote about her initial struggle when her daughter came out. After prayer and reflection, she now has a strong bond with her daughter and her partner, and couldn't be more proud. She is currently the president of her PFLAG chapter and shares her personal journey with others in order to help them embrace LGBTQ+ equality and its huge importance for families everywhere and people of all faiths.

It is personal stories like these that have opened hearts and minds, made marriage equality a national priority and reality, initiated the first-ever anti-bullying caucus in Congress, expanded health-care coverage for LGBTQ+ people, and created huge strides in the LGBTQ+ equality movement over the last forty years. The progress of all civil rights movements is due to the outspoken and courageous voices of people sharing their stories.

The Right to Share Your Story

Meeting with our representatives or their staff members is the perfect time to move the issue of LGBTQ+ equality from the theoretical to the personal. A parent speaking about their child in the context of a family is compelling and hard to ignore. Most people listening think 'how would I feel if this were me.' We cannot be afraid to speak frankly, honestly and from the heart. Bring pictures to punctuate your message. Our stories are our strength.

– Sharon Groh-Wargo, President PFLAG
Cleveland

As constituents, it is your right and duty to contact and persuade your elected officials. You can do this through petitions, letters, phone calls, and meetings. Remember that policymakers, including your local, state and national legislators work for you and depend on your vote, so let your voice be heard.

Where to Share: Social Media and Local Press

Every day I post different things about LGBTQ+ equality, including stories and posts from PFLAG National, magazine and newspaper articles. What I have found is that my friends and family have absorbed the stories and information that I share. After a while, I began to notice that my friends and family copy my posts to their own pages. Thus the message spreads.

– Annette Gross, PFLAG Indiana

Besides sharing intimately with friends and family or formally with local legislators, using both social media and local press is a great avenue through which to share your story and elevate your cause to the forefront of public attention.

Social media tools such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), Snapchat, and more can keep your friends informed while you express your support for LGBTQ+ equality and highlight relevant news stories.

Local press is another great way to keep your community aware of issues concerning the LGBTQ+ community and involved in upcoming events. Sharon, a PFLAG member from Cleveland, suggests calling the local media and volunteering information if they are reporting on a relevant topic. You can also involve your local media by writing letters to the editor, issuing news releases, and posting advertisements for upcoming PFLAG events. Through continued outreach and communication efforts, media tools can help spread PFLAG's mission and shift

public opinion in favor of LGBTQ+ equality. Sharing your personal story, exercising your right as a constituent, and using the media to spread awareness are key tools to being an effective advocate!

Handling Opposition: Framing Your Words in a Positive Light

Now that you have some necessary tools to advocate for LGBTQ+ equality, you must also be prepared to deal with those who oppose PFLAG's mission. Do not fear—we have some basic resources and suggestions to help you deal with resistance.

The tools previously mentioned—personal stories, constituent rights, and media—are crucial in dealing with opponents of equality. For example, if someone writes an anti-equality op-ed in your local newspaper, you can respond, justifying your beliefs and PFLAG's mission. It is important to use positive and articulate language in any of these circumstances in order to strongly convey your point while maintaining a good public image. Rather than attacking the other side, it may be useful to point out your opponent's tactics and to frame the debate on your own terms. Language is powerful, and being intentional in framing your message can be useful to unify people with different perspectives, change minds, and shape prevailing cultural opinions.

Finding ways to relate to those you disagree can make all the difference. When tragedy struck the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, not everyone in the area was on board with LGBTQ+ rights, but the entire city, and countless other cities, found some sense of unity amidst a diverse demographic. People understood, and found themselves part of, a narrative of both shared humanity and shared grief. Orlando reinforced a collective acknowledgement of senseless hate crimes for many who before rarely considered the issues, and while the tragedy cannot be expressed enough, response to the event has been marked by a sense of determination and framed as a call to action for many, PFLAG chapters included.

A Note: Be aware of harsh anti-equality groups

It is unfortunately necessary to be aware of [anti-LGBTQ+ groups](#) that promote anti-equality rhetoric. [The Southern Poverty Law Center](#), a nonprofit that advocates for civil rights of all people, lists 48 hate groups around the country that work against LGBTQ+ equality, including the Family Research Council and Traditional Values Coalition. Other anti-equality groups often at the forefront of hurtful rhetoric and action include the National Organization for Marriage (NOM) and Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX).

If you ever encounter such a group and feel that they pose a risk, do not confront them directly, but rather notify PFLAG National immediately. As PFLAG and other equality organizations continue to advocate and make strides in public opinion and policy, these groups will hopefully

decrease and become less significant. Dealing with anti-LGBTQ+ groups underscores the importance of building strong and diverse coalitions in order to justify the need for equality from several different perspectives. Remember that your efforts and voice help many individuals secure equal rights and deal with negativity.

Use Your Story to Emphasize PFLAG's Purpose

Due to the nature of the conservative community we exist in, we have to be very cognizant of what we are doing. Just being present and talking to people and being nice. Sometimes it's not even talking about PFLAG or LGBTQ+ issues, but just talking as a way in, and then the person usually asks what PFLAG is.

– Jason Willis, member PFLAG Abingdon

Coming from a conservative area, Jason makes sure to use his personal story to advocate for LGBTQ+ equality, rather than resorting to politics. Providing a friendly face and insight into the necessity of LGBTQ+ equality may open the mind of people who had never before considered equality to be a personal matter. PFLAG's strong reputation stems from its many members' powerful and diverse stories. Political rhetoric often leads to division, while personal stories that promote equality and justice affect hearts and minds and empower people to join and advocate for the cause. Remember to be clear and concise with your words!

Advocacy Methods: Lobbying

The Alliance for Justice—an organization committed to strengthening the public interest community's ability to influence public policy, and foster the next generation of advocates—reminds us, “Most nonprofits can and should lobby! Lobbying is one subset of advocacy, and includes both direct and grassroots lobbying.”

But what does lobbying look like, anyhow?

Direct Lobbying vs. Grassroots Lobbying

Direct lobbying is an attempt to persuade lawmakers to pass or not topass a bill. It is any direct communication with a legislator or his or her staff in order to influence current or pending legislation. PFLAG members' visits to legislators and staff on Capitol Hill as part of the national convention and the in-district congressional visits members will make in their communities are considered direct lobbying.

Grassroots lobbying is encouraging the people who live in a lawmaker's district to exercise their influence on their legislators on whether they should vote for or against some legislation.

For example, when PFLAG National contacts members and supporters asking them to take action by contacting their legislators, it is considered grassroots lobbying on the part of PFLAG National. The general rule is that an organization can use a certain amount of the money that it earns to communicate with lawmakers. This happens when PFLAG works to communicate the importance of equal rights for our LGBTQ+ loved ones to elected officials; however, we cannot use more than 20 percent of our budget on these lobbying efforts. **Additionally, PFLAG is not permitted to endorse or oppose any candidate elected to or seeking election for political office.** This rule encompasses all federal, state and local candidates, and this rule applies to all PFLAG chapters.

Playing by the Rules: Lobbying Dos and Don'ts

As a 501(c)3 organization, PFLAG and its chapters have some limitations on how they can lobby and, in particular, some notable restrictions on election issues.

Please keep in mind important regulations and definitions when visiting with lawmakers. To learn more about 501c3 dos and don'ts for lobbying visit pflag.org/501c3rules or consult *Make It Count: The PFLAG National Get Out the Vote Pocket Guide*.

If you have additional questions on lobbying regulations, you can learn more by contacting your PFLAG Field Manager. Visit us online at pflag.org/about/our-people.

Psyching Up: Knowing How and Why Legislators Value PFLAGers' Voices

As a constituent, you are atop priority to your legislators. They know it, and you will be well-served to remember it, too. Legislators value your voice, need your vote and want your visit to learn what your family appreciates and what they need as we progress forward together toward full equality for LGBTQ+ people. Remember:

- **You and your legislators are neighbors.** You live in the same state as your U.S. Senators and in the same district back home as your U.S. Representative. You also have specific State Senator and Representative/Assemblyman elected officials who rely on your vote and are obliged to listen to your voice, as is true for your Governor. At the city and county levels, this is true, too, for your mayor, city councilors and county commissioners. They and their staff work every day for the well-being of your family and also for your support and vote when election seasons arise.
- **For legislators, nothing weighs as much as a constituent's request, need, or opinion.** Research shows it: legislators are listening to constituents and vote with them in mind. You are the attentive and active constituents who are paying attention to your legislators.

- **Legislators document constituents' stories because they matter.** Whether at the federal, state or local level, legislators speak on the record and reference letters they've received and conversations they've had with their constituents. This is true, for example, of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which became the first federal law that explicitly includes gender identity alongside sexual orientation.
- **Legislators write bills when families tell them about their needs.** Here's an example concerning a priority for PFLAGers: the [Every Child Deserves a Family Act \(ECDF\)](#) which gives LGBTQ+ parents equal consideration to adopt or foster youth by any public agency that receives federal funds. At the news conference to launch this important federal bill, sponsors Congressman John Lewis (D-GA), Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) each accompanied a constituent family to tell the story of why this bill is needed now.
- **Legislators need to hear your family's stories.** They care. Legislators ask their staffers, "What are constituents saying?" You hold the answers that add value to the staffers' jobs. Less than one third of constituents weigh in, so please, speak out!

Lobbying: A Step-By-Step Plan

1) Find your representative.

While Congress is usually in session from early January until October or November, lawmakers frequently return home to their districts to meet with constituents and discuss important issues. States vary as to when or how long their sessions occur. The state legislative websites will tell you when they are in session, or call PFLAG National and we can help. PFLAG members should throughout the year contact their representatives' in-district offices to find out when they may be able to arrange an in-person meeting with the lawmaker, or a meeting with a staff member if the lawmaker is unavailable.

Follow these simple steps to contact your federal legislators about a particular bill:

- Find your elected officials [here](#) and choose the bill for which you wish to advocate. Note that your information remains private except to the legislator you are reaching so that they can count your contact as one from their constituents.
- A note on State Representatives and Senators: State legislatures have varying sessions, with some being a year-long process and others presenting a very short window of opportunity to influence legislation. For more information on your state's legislative calendar, visit Project Vote Smart online at [votesmart.org](#).

- During an election season, it may also be useful to check out the aforementioned PFLAG [Get Out the Vote](#) guide for additional tips and best practices specifically on lobbying and organizing in such a time.

2) Make the call.

Once you've found your legislator's name on the letter confirmation displayed, go to popvox.com/congress to look up your legislator's office information, call their local office and explain that you would like to meet with the legislator, and why. Be sure to say that you are a constituent, meaning that you live in the lawmaker's home district if a representative or state if a senator. That will signal the legislator's scheduler priority consideration on the lawmaker's calendar. Also be prepared to submit an official request for your meeting, either by fax or email.

Keep in mind that you may not receive a meeting with your lawmaker, but may instead be scheduled to speak with staff members. Staff members make critical decisions and advise your congressperson on important issues. Take the meeting seriously and keep in mind that staffers are the "eyes and ears" of your representative or senator, both at federal and state levels.

3) Do your homework.

Before meeting with your legislator, you should:

- Identify three or four PFLAG members who can attend the meeting with you;
- Set an agenda mapping out which topics you will discuss and who will cover which topics;
- Plan on spending two-to-three minutes on each topic, and be sure to research your lawmaker's record on LGBTQ+ issues: which measures did he or she support? How did he or she vote on issues such as civil rights, judicial nominees, and privacy? Use that information to shape the message you deliver during your meeting. For example, if your representative is a former teacher, consider focusing on safe-schools issues and tell stories about issues your children face in school.

4) Make the visit.

Always be sure to show up early for your appointment, and dress neatly. Your primary spokesperson (see below) should thank the staff members or representative for granting the meeting and for their positive votes and/or support on issues in the past. To make your visit as productive as possible, remember to:

- Select one person to be the primary spokesperson for your group.

- Make your “ask” at the beginning.
- Stick to your agenda (unless the legislator leads differently) and respect the time given.
- Personalize your story and localize issues: relate what you are asking for to a personal experience and a local need.
- Take family photos with you to your meeting. Pictures, coupled with your personal stories, help put a real face on what can sometimes be abstract issues for legislators.
- Ask questions and listen to the answers.
- Acknowledge that the representative may not be ready to commit to your position yet, but also ask that they keep an open mind...and be clear that you want to continue the relationship and dialogue with them.
- End on a positive note, and return to a feel-good talking point that leaves a positive impression and shows appreciation to the representative or their staff for meeting with you.

5) Follow up and follow through.

Send a thank-you note after your meeting, restating any agreements and reiterating your requests. And, if you’ve promised additional information for the lawmaker, be sure to include that along with your note. Offer to be a resource for the representative. We would love to hear from you when you reach legislators. Feel free to email Diego Sanchez, our Director of Policy at dsanchez@pflag.org at any time.

Know Your Audience: Talking Points for Allies & Adversaries

It is essential that PFLAG families meet and talk with every lawmaker, including those who are already supportive on our issues and especially those who are not. Our stories can cement a supportive lawmaker’s positive stance, move those who may be on the fence about critical issues towards a more supportive stance, and possibly change the hearts and minds of those who simply may not have heard from someone with an LGBTQ+ loved one before.

When talking to our allies...

- **Remember** to thank them for standing up for our LGBTQ+ loved ones:
- **Reiterate** how important their support is to you as a constituent.

- **Ask** your lawmakers to cosponsor legislation that they may already be supporting, if they can. By co-sponsoring a bill, our elected leaders go on record to document their support.
- **Find out** how you can help support their efforts. By offering to help move legislation forward, you can further show your elected leaders that they are not fighting the good fight(s) alone.

When talking to the “moveable middle” (i.e. those who may be on the fence)...

- **Remember** to emphasize the real impact their support will have on real families in their district(s):
- **Talk** about how support for LGBTQ+ issues will affect your family and loved ones.
- **Ask** your representative what their specific concerns or hesitations may be about a particular bill, and discuss those concerns.
- **Invite** your representative and their staff to attend a PFLAG meeting to hear from other families in the district who also care about the issue.
- **Offer** PFLAG and your chapter as a resource for the lawmaker and their staff.

When talking to those who are opposed to our issues...

- **Remember** to have a respectful conversation, keep lines of communication open, and offer to correct any misinformation they might have.
- **Emphasize** how an unfavorable vote on a particular issue will impact your family.
- **Challenge** their assumptions that fair-minded votes may not be popular—in fact, many people support certain fair-minded measures.
- **Offer** to your lawmaker more informative depth about the issues, and offer PFLAG as a resource.

What’s Next?

Now that you have the basic guidelines for advocacy, you are ready to begin learning about PFLAG’s legislative priorities. Meanwhile, start reaching out to like-minded organizations to form coalitions, and start researching ongoing events or legislation to take action. Remember that every person you talk to about LGBTQ+ equality is a step towards progress. Share your story and have fun!

For further resources, please visit the advocacy pages on the PFLAG website: pflag.org/advocacy-101.

Part II: Policy

PFLAG National Legislative Priorities for 2019-2020

PFLAG National prioritizes a number of federal bills each year and updates them regularly. PFLAG also follows a number of bills beyond the initial active priority list, watching for any movement and moving them to priority status, either when action is likely by legislators or when current events move a bill to higher attention and engagement.

For each bill you will find the name, abbreviation if denoted, bill number, what the bill will do, what you should request of your legislator, PFLAG talking points, and any important notes you might find useful.

New legislation is posted on the PFLAG National website often, so be sure to check our news and blog sections and/or make sure you receive Policy Matters, distributed by email on the first and third Friday of each month. You can also search the federal database for more current legislation at congress.gov, and search your state government's website for relevant local legislation. State and local bills are prioritized when PFLAGers and their state or municipal coalitions are focused on moving particular bills throughout legislative seasons.

Bills We Support

In addition to the bills listed in the following pages, look out for the LGBT Data Inclusion Act, which importantly calls for the collection of LGBTQ+ information during the census to better understand the LGBTQ+ population in the U.S.; and Do No Harm, a bill which acknowledges the importance of freedom of religion while stating that religious beliefs cannot exempt someone from policies that prevent discrimination. On the other side of Do No Harm is a religious freedom bill (RFRA) called FADA, or the First Amendment Defense Act—a bill we strongly oppose as it would allow discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals—on which the House held a hearing on the one-month anniversary of Orlando.

Keep watch for other legislation calling for the repeal of the blood ban, which prevents gay men from donating blood; a few bills, including the “Stop Harming Our Kids Resolution,” which move to outlaw conversion therapy; initiatives to combat hate crimes; and H.R. 827, which would formally honor members of the Pulse Orlando attack.

Passed The House

[The Equality Act](#)

Bill Number

Reintroduced in the House as [H.R.5](#) by Rep. David N. Cicilline (RI-1) and in the Senate as [S.788](#) by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)

Purpose of Bill

The Equality Act will amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal laws such that LGBTQ people are treated as a protected class under federal law. It will also strengthen and expand protections for those already designated as belonging to a protected class.

Action Request

Ask your Senators to support this bill. If they are not a co-sponsor of the bill, ask them to support it by co-sponsoring. If they are already a cosponsor, be sure to thank them.

Talking Points

- ***The Equality Act will strengthen anti-discrimination protections not just for the LGBTQ community, but for everyone, including women and communities of color.*** The bill will add protections from discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation and gender identity to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and expand the definition of public accommodations. It will bar religious freedom from being used as a defense for discrimination against any protected class.
- ***LGBTQ people deserve to be treated like every other protected class.*** People who are LGBTQ currently lack equal protections regarding employment, public services and spaces, public education, fair housing, credit, and access to jury service. This bill will extend the same rights to LGBTQ Americans that are currently afforded to other protected groups.
- ***The Equality Act will provide full protection from discrimination for all LGBTQ individuals in the U.S.*** Passing the Equality Act will end inconsistencies that vary by geography and ensure that, no matter where an LGBTQ person lives or visits, they enjoy the same protections as all other people.

[House Resolution: Expressing opposition to banning service in the Armed Forces by openly transgender individuals](#)

Resolution Number

Introduced as [H. Res. 124](#) by Rep. Joe Kennedy III (MA-4)

Purpose of the Resolution

[This resolution](#) (1) strongly opposes President Trump's ban on transgender members of the Armed Forces, (2) rejects the scientific and medical claims upon which it is based, and (3) strongly urges the Department of Defense to not reinstate the ban and to maintain an inclusive policy allowing qualified transgender Americans to enlist and serve in the Armed Forces.

Action Request

If your member of congress co-sponsored or voted in favor of this resolution, remember to thank them.

[PRIDE Act](#)

Bill Number

Introduced as [H.R.3299](#) by Rep. Judy Chu (CA-27).

Purpose of the Bill

This bill amends the Internal Revenue Code to provide for equal treatment of same sex married couples. It permits such couples to amend their filing status to married filing jointly for tax returns outside of the statute of limitations and modifies tax rules relating to married couples to include same sex couples.

Action Request

If your member of congress co-sponsored or voted in favor of this resolution, remember to thank them.

Introduced; Pending Hearing

Healthcare:

[The Do No Harm Act](#)

Bill Number

Reintroduced in the House as H.R.1450 by Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy, III. (MA-4).

Purpose of Bill

The [Do No Harm Act](#) will amend the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA) to limit its use in cases involving discrimination, child labor and abuse, wages and collective bargaining, access to health care, public accommodations, and social services provided through government contract.

Action Request

Ask your Members of Congress to support this bill. If they are not a co-sponsor of the bill, ask them to support it by co-sponsoring. If they are already a cosponsor, be sure to thank them.

Talking Points

- ***The Do No Harm Act will make sure RFRA is used in line with Congress's original intent.*** RFRA was introduced to grant all individuals equal respect and protection under the law by protecting their freedom to worship and believe as they do or will; it was never intended to be used as a license to discriminate against others.
- ***The freedom to worship and the right to live free of discrimination are not mutually exclusive.*** Both of these are core American values that shape our nation, and need to be protected.
- ***This legislation is crucial to the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ individuals and their families.*** The Do No Harm makes sure that employers cannot use RFRA to deny workers wages, engage in child exploitation and abuse, and limit access to health care.

Statistics:

[LGBTQ Essential Data Act](#)

Bill Number

Reintroduced in the House as [H.R.3280](#) by Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (NY-18) .

Purpose of Bill

[The LGBT Data Inclusion Act](#) will require Federal population surveys to collect voluntary, self-disclosed information on sexual orientation in certain surveys, and to establish data standards that require a routine assessment of needed changes in survey methods related to asking such questions.

Action Request

Ask your Members of Congress to support this bill. If they are not a co-sponsor of the bill, ask them to support it by co-sponsoring. If they are already a cosponsor, be sure to thank them.

Talking Points

- ***Data collection about LGBTQ individuals is critical in understanding the issues that impact them.*** We need data from LGBTQ individuals in order to pinpoint the issues they face and come up with solutions.
- ***The LGBT Data Inclusion Act will foster legislation that is beneficial to LGBTQ individuals.*** Good data often serves as the foundation of good legislation; we need numbers to back up the issues that affect LGBTQ individuals every day.
- ***The LGBTQ Essential Data Act does not require anyone to disclose information about their sexual orientation or gender identity if they don't want to.*** Answering these questions is completely voluntary; individuals who refuse to do so cannot be subjected to fines or penalties.
- ***Collected information is confidential and cannot be used against an individual.*** Information collected relating to sexual orientation or gender identity is maintained in accordance with the confidentiality and privacy standards and policies for the protection of individuals applicable to that survey, and cannot be used in a manner that would adversely affect any individual.

[National Statistics on Deadly Force Transparency Act](#)

Bill Number

This bill was introduced in the House as [H.R.119](#) by Rep. Steve Cohen (TN-9).

Purpose of Bill

[This bill](#) will require the Attorney General to collect comprehensive, publicly available data from law enforcement agencies in all cases when an officer uses deadly force. Law enforcement agencies will also be required to keep these data records for at least four years. Noncompliant state or local governments will have their federal funding reduced.

Action Request

Urge your Senator or Representative to support and cosponsor this act, especially if they are in the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations. Thank them if they have already done so.

Talking Points

- ***LGBTQ people, especially transgender people, have been historically subject to police violence and brutality.*** This bill aims to hold law enforcement agencies accountable for acts of violence and decrease that violence.
- ***Many LGBTQ people are also members of other communities vulnerable to police violence and brutality.*** People of color, low income communities, and immigrant communities are more likely to experience violence from police than their peers.
- ***Law enforcement agencies must gain the trust of minority populations in order to fully protect and serve them.*** By cultivating transparency in law enforcement agencies, this bill will help pinpoint areas where law enforcement agencies can improve.

[Khalid Jabara and Heather Heyer National Opposition to Hate, Assault, and Threats to Equality \(NO HATE\) Act](#)

Bill Number

This bill was introduced in the House as [H.R. 3545](#) in the House by Rep. Don Beyer (VA-8)

Purpose of Bill

1. Promotes efforts to modernize the national hate crime reporting and data collection system.
2. Helps hate crime victims receive assistance and support
3. Encourages state and local authorities to improve their approach to hate crime, including reporting and data collection, and requires the federal government to address underreporting and related issues.
4. Creates opportunities to restore communities and address the root causes of hate crime through alternative sentencing for offenders.

Action Request

Urge your Senator or Representative to support and cosponsor this act, especially if they are in the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations. Thank them if they have already done so.

Talking Points

- ***LGBTQ people, especially transgender people, have been historically subject to police violence and brutality.*** This bill aims to hold law enforcement agencies accountable for acts of violence and decrease that violence.
- ***Many LGBTQ people are also members of other communities vulnerable to police violence and brutality.*** People of color, low income communities, and immigrant communities are more likely to experience violence from police than their peers.
- ***Law enforcement agencies must gain the trust of minority populations in order to fully protect and serve them.*** By cultivating transparency in law enforcement agencies, this bill will help pinpoint areas where law enforcement agencies can improve.

Seniors:

[Ruthie and Connie LGBT Elder Americans Act](#)

Bill Number

Reintroduced in the House as [H.R. 1777](#) by Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (OR-1).

Purpose of Bill

[This bill](#) does the following to achieve those outcomes:

1. Includes LGBTQ+ older adults as a “vulnerable population” with greatest economic and social need
2. Permanently establishes and continues to fund the National Resource Center on LGBTQ+ Aging.
3. Requires the Assistant Secretary of Aging to oversee data collection on LGBTQ+ older adults and their service needs.
4. Prioritizes research and development grants for organizations working to improve LGBTQ+ health, long term care needs, and access to culturally responsive services.

Action Request

Ask your Members of Congress to support this bill, especially if they serve on the House Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. If they are not a cosponsor of the bill, ask them to become a co-sponsor.

Talking Points

- Provides funding to research the health and welfare of LGBTQ Elders

Youth:

[The Safe Schools Improvement Act \(SSIA\)](#)

Bill Number

Reintroduced in the House as [H.R.2653](#) by Rep. Linda T. Sanchez (CA-38).

Purpose of Bill

SSIA, which was passed the House as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in the last Congress, will instruct school districts to implement a comprehensive anti-bullying policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity, and will require states to include bullying and harassment data in the surveys conducted statewide to distinguish what needs are unmet in their schools.

Action Request

Ask your Members of Congress to support this bill, especially if they serve on the House Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. If they are not a cosponsor of the bill, ask them to become a co-sponsor.

Talking Points

- ***Bullying and harassment harm children in our nation's schools.*** According to [GLSEN's National School Climate Survey](#), high numbers of LGBTQ+ students report regular anti-LGBTQ+ behavior along with feeling unsafe at school. Yet only [21 states and the District of Columbia](#) have comprehensive legislation that protects students against anti-LGBTQ bullying and harassment.
- ***Comprehensive anti-bullying and harassment policies work.*** Enumerated (i.e. specifically naming sexual orientation and gender identity or expression) anti-bullying policies are the most effective at addressing anti-LGBTQ and bias-based bullying.
- ***The bill cultivates respect which will create safer schools.*** Research shows that bullying and harassment are serious problems that impede students' academic progress and overall mental health. The bill provides language ensuring that all students have a safe learning environment which helps reduce the nation's growing dropout rate.

[Every Child Deserves a Family Act \(ECDF\)](#)

Bill Number

Reintroduced in the House as [H.R. 2640](#) by Rep. John Lewis (GA-5) and in the Senate as [S. 1303](#) by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY).

Purpose of Bill

ECDF will prohibit any child welfare service provider receiving federal assistance from discriminating against prospective adoptive or foster parents based solely on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, or based on the sexual orientation or gender identity of the child involved.

Action Request

Ask your Members of Congress to support this bill, especially if they serve on the House Ways & Means Committee or the Senate Finance Committee. If they are not a co-sponsor of the bill, ask them to support it by co-sponsoring. If they are already a cosponsor, be sure to thank them.

Talking Points

- **This bill will increase the number of safe and supportive homes available to children by 2 million.** Enacting the bill will increase adoptions rates as well as provide more stability and decrease risk factors for youth in foster care, yielding an annual cost savings of three to six billion dollars.
- **Many states have policies and practices that adversely impact LGBTQ and unmarried parents.** This lack of uniform protection leaves children vulnerable to the individual biases of agencies and caseworkers and results in children being denied consideration for adoption or foster care.
- **LGBTQ parents are already raising happy, healthy children.** There are over 1 million LGBTQ parents raising children in the U.S. according to recent data. Some states already apply non-discrimination practices in their foster care and adoption practices with great success.

[Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act](#)

Bill Number

Reintroduced in the House as [H.R.2747](#) by Rep. Mark Pocan (WI-2) and in the Senate by Sen. Patty Murry (WA) as [S. 1492](#).

Purpose of Bill

This bill will prohibit the exclusion and discrimination of public school students in federally-assisted educational programs on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. It will also authorize federal departments and agencies to enforce these prohibitions by cutting off funding to education programs found to be violating them.

Action Request

Urge your senators and representatives to become a cosponsor of this bill, especially if they are in the House Committee on Education and the Workforce or the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. If they have already cosponsored it, make sure to thank them.

Talking Points

- ***Schools need to be held accountable.*** This bill motivates schools to tackle discrimination and harassment by authorizing federal departments and agencies to cut off funding to education programs that are found in violation of the legislation.
- ***We need a clear definition of harassment.*** This bill defines harassment as any action that impedes a student's learning process and creates a hostile environment at an institute of higher learning.
- ***Students need to be able to assert their rights.*** This bill allows students to take a violation to court if they are excluded, discriminated against, or harassed.

Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act

Bill Number

Reintroduced in the House as H.R. XXXX by Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA)

Purpose of Bill

This bill would reflect the medical consensus that so called “conversion therapy” or the fraudulent practice of trying to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity, inflicts immeasurable harm on those subjected to it, and turns a profit for scammers posing as mental health professionals by banning the practice.

Action Request

Urge your senators and representatives to become a cosponsor of this bill, especially if they are in the House Committee on Education and the Workforce or the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. If they have already cosponsored it, make sure to thank them.

Talking Points

- ***Being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or gender non-conforming is not a mental illness to be cured and should never be treated as such.*** Conversion therapy is a sham—according to medicine and common sense—and is incredibly discriminatory and harmful towards members of the LGBTQ+ community, especially children who already face increased harassment and discrimination.
- ***Conversion therapy can cause lasting harm to the mental health and wellbeing of those subjected to it.*** Those who have experienced conversion therapy are more likely to attempt suicide than their peers.
- **An Ipsos/Reuters poll found that 56 percent of adults in the U.S. support banning youth conversion therapy by mental health professionals.**

Anti-Discrimination:

Fair Pay For All Act

Bill Number

This bill was introduced by Rep. Anthony Brown (MD-04) as [H.R.3468](#).

Purpose of Bill

[Fair Pay For All Act](#) would guarantee equal pay for every American - regardless of who they are or who they love - by amending the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938 to expand the definition of sex to include “sexual orientation” and “gender identity.”

Action Request

Ask your representatives to support and cosponsor this bill if they have not yet done so, especially if they are part of the House Financial Services Committee.

Other:

Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act

Bill Number

This bill was introduced by Rep. Pramila Jayapal (WA-07) as [H.R.2415](#) and by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) as [S.1243](#).

Purpose of Bill

[The bill](#) curtails indefinite detention of migrants by, 1) mandating that all detained immigrants have access to a bond hearing before an immigration judge, and 2) shifting the burden to the government to prove that asylum seekers and other immigrants should be detained because they pose a risk to the community or a flight risk.

Action Request

Ask your representatives to support and cosponsor this bill if they have not yet done so, especially if they serve on the Judiciary or Homeland Security Committees in the House or the Judiciary committee in the Senate.

Pending Reintroduction

[Repeal Existing Policies that Encourage and Allow Legal HIV Discrimination Act of 2017 \(REPEAL HIV Act\)](#)

Bill Number

This bill has yet to be reintroduced in the 116th Congress.

Purpose of Bill

The REPEAL HIV Act will direct the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Department of Defense (DOD) to initiate a national review of federal and state laws and policies, and judicial precedents involving people living with HIV, and then develop and publicly release best practice recommendations for states and establish a monitoring and evaluation system to measure progress.

This bill does not impact the prosecution of individuals who intentionally transmit or attempt to transmit HIV to another individual.

Action Request

Urge your representatives and senators to support and cosponsor this bill, as it will review current laws that may discriminate against those living with HIV/AIDS. Thank your representatives and senators that have already co-sponsored the REPEAL HIV Act.

Talking Points

- ***We need clear and accurate policies on this issue.*** This law recognizes that policies that regarding people living with HIV/AIDS should reflect evidence-based, medically accurate understandings of HIV transmission, health implications, and treatment, and should not place unique or additional burdens on those individuals solely as a result of their HIV status.
- ***This will be a transparent process.*** The review would be headed by the Attorney General, Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of Defense and all of the results must be shared with Congress and made publicly available.

[LGBT Pride Act](#)

Bill Number

This bill has yet to be reintroduced in the 116th Congress.

Purpose of Bill

This bill will improve standards for data collection on the sexual orientation and gender identity of deceased individuals through the National Violent Death Reporting System.

Action Request

Ask your senators and representatives to support and cosponsor this bill if they have not yet done so, especially if they are on the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Thank your representatives that have already co-sponsored.

Talking Points

- ***LGBTQ people face disproportionately high rates of violence.*** LGBTQ individuals, particularly trans women of color, are especially vulnerable to being the targets of violence, simply because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- ***We need data on the violence faced by LGBTQ people.*** In order to reduce the incidence of violent hate crimes, we need to understand how often it is happening, to what people, and for what reasons. Collecting data is a critical step in determining how to take steps forward.

[Voices for Veterans Act](#)

Bill Number

This bill has yet to be reintroduced in the 116th Congress.

Purpose of Bill

This bill will expand the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans to include LGBTQ veterans.

Action Request

Ask your representatives to support and cosponsor this bill if they have not yet done so, especially if they are part of the House Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Talking Points

- ***LGBTQ veterans deserve to be acknowledged and have their voices heard.*** The repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” is still relatively recent, and this bill would give voice to LGBTQ veterans, who have been subject to a suffocating forced silence for decades, giving them a platform to speak about the issues affecting them.
- ***The presence of transgender service members needs to be acknowledged.*** Even though transgender service only recently legalized, this bill’s language recognizes that transgender people have been serving our country for decades, and that they deserve to be seen and heard.

[Restore Honor to Service Members Act](#)

Bill Number

This bill has yet to be reintroduced in the 116th Congress.

Purpose of Bill

This bill will direct the Secretary of Defense to review the discharge characterization of former members of the Armed Forces who were discharged because of their sexual orientation, at the request of the service member. It will allow such discharge characterizations, as long as the original discharge was based on “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT), or a similar policy in place prior to the enactment of DADT, to be changed to honorable, if determined to be appropriate. The bill will also ensure that oral historians of each military department review the facts and circumstances surrounding the DADT discharges and receive oral testimony of individuals who personally experienced discrimination.

Action Request

Ask your representatives to support and cosponsor this bill if they have not yet done so, especially if they are part of the House Committee on Armed Services.

Talking Points

- ***LGBTQ veterans discharged under DADT deserve better.*** This bill would correct service member records to reflect honorable service for members who were discharged dishonorably under DADT.
- ***LGBTQ veterans deserve to be acknowledged and have their voices heard.*** It is estimated that 100,000 members of the Armed Forces were discharged from the Armed Forces between World War II and September 2011 because of the sexual orientation of the member. These individuals represent an important part of American history, and their stories must be heard if we are to begin to understand the impact of discrimination in the Armed Forces.

[Stop AIDS in Prison Act](#)

Bill Number

This bill has yet to be reintroduced in the 116th Congress.

Purpose of Bill

This bill will direct the Bureau of Prisons to create comprehensive policy to provide HIV testing, treatment, and prevention for inmates in federal prisons and upon reentry into the community, as well as report on the effectiveness of efforts to minimize diseases transmitted through sexual activity and intravenous drug use.

Action Request

Ask your representatives to support and cosponsor this bill if they have not yet done so, especially if they are part of the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations.

Talking Points

- ***LGBTQ people are especially vulnerable to HIV and other STIs due to lack of inclusive preventative education.*** This bill provides LGBTQ inmates with preventative education and provides them with treatment and testing for HIV.
- ***Federal prisons should be motivated to preserve the health of their inmates.*** Since this bill requires the Bureau of Prisons to report on the success rate of their testing, treatment, and prevention programs, federal prisons will have extra incentive to fulfill the legislation's requirements.
- ***Inmates are human beings with autonomy.*** This bill gives inmates the right to refuse routine testing, lessening the risk of potential abuse of authority.

GLOBE Act

Bill Number

This bill has yet to be introduced in the 116th Congress

Purpose of Bill

This legislation codifies Obama Administration tools aimed at promoting LGBTI equality globally, including LGBTI-specific reporting in human rights reports and filling the now-vacant Special Envoy for LGBTI Human Rights position at the State Department; endorses the selective use of existing sanctions to punish those responsible for egregious murders of and abuses directed at LGBTI populations; ensures that U.S. foreign assistance and global health programs are inclusive of LGBTI populations, and, therefore, effectively reach most-at-risk populations; makes decriminalization of LGBTI status a goal in U.S. rule-of-law programs abroad; ensures fair access to asylum and refugee programs for LGBTI persons who face persecution because of their orientation or identities; calls for U.S. government leadership in multilateral consideration of these issues; and underscores that the State Department should deepen efforts to ensure that LGBTI diplomatic personnel and their families are “world-wide available” in the same manner that their straight colleagues are.

Action Request

Ask your representatives to support and cosponsor this bill if they have not yet done so, especially if they are part of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Talking Points

- **LGBTI people deserve to be safe no matter where they live, work or travel.** This bill would direct the State Department to report the status of LGBTI rights in each country as part of their human rights reports.
- **The now vacant LGBTI Special Envoy for Human Rights would work to ensure that diplomatic fairness is a stated mission, and this position should be filled.**

Bills We Are Monitoring

[Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019](#)

Bill Number

This Bill has passed the House as [H.R. 1585](#) and awaits action in the Senate.

Purpose of Bill

This Bill reauthorizes the 1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) which expired in January 2019. This bill provides funding for the prosecution of gender-based violence that is inclusive of transgender and gender nonconforming people. It also provides due consideration to the correctional facilities in which transgender persons are held.

Raise the Wage Act

Bill Number

This Bill has passed the House as [H.R. 582](#) and awaits action in the Senate.

Purpose of Bill

This bill amends the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to increase the federal minimum wage for regular employees over a 7-year period, for tipped employees, and for newly hired employees who are less than 20 years old. The bill sets forth a schedule of annual increases in the federal minimum wage for individuals with disabilities.

Part III: Tips and Tools

Tips

Tips For Organizing An Event

Here are some quick tips for organizing an event, courtesy of the [ACLU's Activist Toolkit](#):

- **Start early.** Begin planning an event and its logistics at least a month in advance (or further, depending on the event's size).
- **Divide and conquer.** Create a committee made up of chapter and coalition members to deal with the various tasks of coordinating. Examples include food, speakers, activities, materials, and publicity.
- **Publicize your event.** Use social media, flyers, posters, emails, newsletters, and local media to let people know about your event. And be sure to include the PFLAG logo on all of your materials! Visit pflag.org/logos for more information and to download logo files.
- **Tell PFLAG National.** Keep PFLAG National informed about any events you are planning so we can fully support your efforts!

In all advertisements, address the 5 Ws:

- Who will be speaking
- What will they be addressing
- When will it happen
- Where will it take place
- Why your group is sponsoring the event

Be brief but accurate and exact (time, address, directions, web links, etc.), and be sure to provide contact information where people can get additional information.

- **Follow Up.** Write a brief wrap-up news story about the event for use in local news and social media. Letting people know what a huge success it was will encourage them to attend your next event. Be sure to write thank-you notes to all who contributed, and a general thank you to all who attended, including information about how the event went (number of attendees, topics covered, funny stories, etc.).

- **Prepare for next time.** Make sure everyone on each committee evaluates what worked and what didn't. Be honest about successes and difficulties so that you're prepared for the next great event!

Tips for Writing A Campaign Action Plan

In order to have the greatest impact when advocating, it may be helpful to write out an organized plan. Below you will find guidelines for effective action in campaigning, courtesy of the [Washington Peace Center's Spring 2012 edition of *The Peace Letter*](#) and the [Midwest Academy](#).

Sample Campaign Action Plan: Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)

Pinpoint Goals

- Short-Term: Learn and raise awareness about the lack of anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people.
- Intermediate: Talk to elected officials and others about ENDA and its importance for LGBTQ+ individuals, their families and friends, as well as for the nation and the economy.
- Long-Term: Once ENDA is passed, ensure employers are upholding the law and not discriminating against anyone for their sexual orientation or gender identity. If you are the victim of discrimination or witness it, please report it to your local authorities immediately.

Identify Targets

- Primary (Who are the people/institutions who can give you what you want?): Elected officials – local and state
- Secondary (Who has influence/power over the decision makers?): Media outlets, constituents

Determine Constituents, Allies, and Opponents

- Constituents (those who are directly affected): LGBTQ+ people and their families and friends
- Allies (those who will join and support your cause): Family members and friends of the LGBTQ+ community, businesses with non-discrimination policies already in practice, friendly legislators

- Opponents (those who oppose your cause): Anti-equality groups such as National Organization for Marriage (NOM) and Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX)

Organizational Considerations

- What do you have (Tools on hand): Knowledge, passion, personal stories, a committed team
- What do you need (Missing pieces): Meeting with elected officials or letters and calls to their office – Bring/send brief fact sheets with information about ENDA and its potential benefits; testimony from those affected by discrimination in the workplace and businesses that support ENDA
- Potential problems (Roadblocks): Resistance from policymakers (refused meetings, political rhetoric, anti-equality beliefs); Anti-equality groups attempt to manipulate public opinion

Tactics

- Pressure Tactics: Have all PFLAG and coalition members consistently make calls and write letters to elected officials. Write op-eds to news outlets. Join forces with businesses and faith leaders who can effectively counter claims from anti-equality groups
- Educational Tactics: Use meetings to inform and empower members to advocate for ENDA. Host public community forums and panels about ENDA and its importance. Use brief fact sheets about ENDA and its potential effects

Tips for Building Coalitions

When approaching other groups, it may be useful to send an outreach letter in which you highlight PFLAG’s mission and alignment with the other group’s mission.

Here is sample text for such a letter.

Dear (Name of group or Leader of group),

I am writing on behalf of PFLAG _____. We appreciate your work for LGBTQ+ equality [highlight group’s specific mission] and would like to join forces to achieve our common goal. As a chapter of PFLAG, we strive to promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons and

their families and friends through support, education, and advocacy to end discrimination and secure equal rights.

To effectively realize our goal, we would like to form a coalition between our organizations. Some of our upcoming projects and campaigns include

_____.

Please let me know at your earliest convenience if you are interested in forming a coalition. We believe that together, we can achieve equality for all.

Thank you,

[Your name], [Your Chapter Leadership Role]

[Signatures of other PFLAG members]

Be sure to choose a strategy that will allow everyone to contribute their unique skills to the goal, even unexpected supporters, like those from advocacy groups whose missions are complementary but not necessarily similar (for example, teaming up with an environmental advocacy group). Most of all be clear, concise, and appreciative when approaching potential coalition members.

Tips for Contacting the Media

Both press releases and media advisories are important tools for contacting the media, but each serves a different purpose. A press release shares news about your chapter, such as your reaction to an important news item or change in law, or allows you to share information about new programming, a change in leadership, or upcoming activities. A media advisory, or media alert, invites the media to a specific event, such as a news conference or presentation, an event that may or may not be open to the public.

Since the media advisory is an invitation, it's sent to press who are likely to attend, whereas a press release is sent to a larger audience. A media advisory, then, would more likely be sent to local press or local television, whereas a press release would be sent nationally, or include magazines and radio stations as well.

To be sure of the greatest possibility of coverage and/or media attendance, media advisories should be sent at least twice, once a few weeks before the event and then again a day or so before the event as a reminder. You only need to send it more than this if there is a drastic change, or an important addition to the event lineup, such as the inclusion of a VIP who will be attending. Press releases are sent out only when relevant, and only with important shareable news.

Templates for both press releases and media advisories—as well as other resources for working with the media—can be found at pflag.org/resource/toolsandtemplates.

Tips for Writing an Op-Ed

Adapted from the [ACLU's Activist Toolkit](#):

Quick Hits

- Use short, simple sentences.
- Avoid jargon.
- Explicitly support or oppose something.
- Personalize the op-ed with an anecdote.
- Link the op-ed to a current news story but keep the focus local.
- Follow the particular paper's guidelines for submission closely.

The Plan, Paragraph-By-Paragraph

- Start with a personal anecdote.
- Make your main point in the first or second paragraph.
- Begin to elaborate two, maximum three, supporting points in the following paragraphs.
- Make sure your paragraphs are short and contain one main idea.
- Use facts, statistics and studies to support your arguments. Do not, however, be overly legal. Use metaphors (sports, movies and music work best) to relate complex ideas.
- Conclude with a paragraph that draws the piece together and links to your opening anecdote.

Tools

Note: These and other resources can be found at pflag.org/resource/toolsandtemplates.

Sample Email (preferred) or Fax for Scheduling a D.C. or In-District Meeting

The Honorable [First Name] [Last Name]

Attn: Scheduler

U.S. Senate OR U.S. House of Representatives/State Sen. or House-Assembly/City Council

[Street Address]

[City, State Zip]

Re: Appointment with [insert legislator's name here]

VIA EMAIL/FACSIMILE: [fax number]

Dear Senator/Representative [Last Name]:

I am writing to request a meeting with you in your [Washington, D.C. or name of city where the nearest district office is located] office for [insert date and time or leave time open to meet the legislator's tight schedule].

I, along with members of PFLAG [Chapter Name], the organization representing the parents, families, and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people in [insert city or state name], would like to discuss upcoming legislation that impacts our LGBTQ+ loved ones.

I hope that you can accommodate this request, and I will contact your office shortly to schedule this meeting if a response is delayed. In the meantime, you can contact me at [insert phone number] or [insert e-mail] if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[your name]

PFLAG [chapter name]

Sample Legislative Thank-You Letter

The Honorable [First Name] [Last Name]

Attn: Scheduler

U.S. Senate OR U.S. House of Representatives /State Sen. or House-Assembly/City Council

[Street Address]

[City, State Zip]

Re: Appointment with [insert legislator's name here]

VIA EMAIL/FACSIMILE: [fax number]

Dear Senator/Representative [Last Name]:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me, along with members of PFLAG [insert chapter name], the organization representing the parents, families and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) people, on [insert date and time].

We appreciate the thoughtful discussion on the rights of our LGBTQ+ loved ones living in [insert name of state/district here]. We value your time and attention on these issues which is of vital concern to our families and many of your other constituents.

We look forward to working with you to help create a more just society for our LGBTQ+ loved ones through addressing important civil rights legislation like [include name of specific legislation if applicable].

[Be sure to include any follow-up information if you were asked a question and unable to answer it during the meeting. If this section is longer than one paragraph, include it as a one-page attachment, remembering to be brief, clear and concise in all of your communications.]

Thanks again for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at any time if I can be helpful to you.

Sincerely,

[your name]

PFLAG [chapter name]

PFLAG's Elected Official Visit Report Form

Please fill out a visit report form after each visit and return it to your Field Manager upon completion. This is crucial information that will help us track elected officials who have learned about the issues and those who have not, as well as which members have connected with you.

Basic Information

Name and Title of Elected Official: _____

State/District: _____

Date Visited: _____

Time Visit Start/End: _____

Information on Elected Official/Staff

Did you meet with the Legislator, staff or both? _____

What staff members were present? _____

Name/Title: _____

Name/Title: _____

Information on Your Team: Who Came on the Visit?

Name/E-mail: _____

Name/E-mail: _____

Was the official supportive of including sexual orientation and gender identity in legislation?

Did the legislator express any reservations about adding sexual orientation and gender identity to legislation? If so, what were they? _____

What questions did they ask? _____

Looking Ahead

What would you suggest as next steps with this office? Other comments? Please use an additional sheet if needed. _____

Part IV: Resources

PFLAG National Glossary of Terms

AFAB: Acronym meaning *Assigned Female at Birth*. AFAB people may or may not identify as female some or all of the time.

Affirmed Gender: An individual's true gender, as opposed to their gender assigned at birth. This term should replace terms like *new gender* or *chosen gender*, which imply that an individual's gender was chosen.

Agender: Refers to a person who does not identify with any gender.

Ally: A term used to describe someone who is supportive of LGBTQ+ individuals and the community, either personally or as an advocate. Allies include both heterosexual and cisgender people who advocate for equality in partnership with LGBTQ+ people, as well as those who are LGBTQ+ who are supportive of other identities within the community.

AMAB: Acronym meaning *Assigned Male at Birth*. AMAB people may or may not identify as male some or all of the time. (See *Gender*)

Androgynous: Having elements of both femininity and masculinity. An androgynous individual, whether expressed through sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, is known as an androgyne.

Aromantic: Refers to an individual who does not experience romantic attraction. Sometime abbreviated as *aro*.

Asexual: Refers to an individual who does not experience sexual attraction. Each asexual person experiences relationships, attraction, and arousal differently. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy or sexual abstinence, which are chosen behaviors, in that asexuality is a sexual orientation that does not necessarily entail either of those behaviors. Sometimes abbreviated as *ace*.

Assigned Sex: The sex that is assigned to an infant at birth based on the child's visible sex organs, including genitalia and other physical characteristics.

Assigned Gender: The gender that is assigned to an infant at birth, which may or may not align with their sex at birth.

Assumed Gender: The gender others assume an individual to be based on the sex and gender they are assigned at birth, as well as apparent societal gender markers and expectations, such

as physical attributes and expressed characteristics.

Binding: The process of tightly wrapping one's chest in order to minimize the appearance of having breasts, often by using a binder.

Biological Sex: Refers to anatomical, physiological, genetic, or physical attributes that determine if a person is male, female, or intersex. These include both primary and secondary sex characteristics, including genitalia, gonads, hormone levels, hormone receptors, chromosomes, and genes. Often also referred to as "*sex*," "*physical sex*," "*anatomical sex*," or specifically as "*sex assigned at birth*." Sex is often conflated or interchanged with gender, which is more social than biological, and involves personal identity factors as well.

Bisexual: Refers to an individual who has the capacity for attraction—sexually, romantically, emotionally, or otherwise—to people with the same, and to people with different, genders and/or gender identities as themselves. People who identify as bisexual need not have had equal experience—or equal levels of attraction—with people across genders, nor any experience at all: it is attraction and self-identification that determine orientation. Sometimes referred to as *bi* or *bi+*.

Cisgender: Refers to an individual whose gender identity aligns with the one typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Closeted: Describes a person who is not open about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Coming Out: For people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, the process of self-identifying and self-acceptance that continues throughout one's life, and the sharing of their identity with others. Sometimes referred to as *disclosing* (see *Disclosure* below). Individuals often recognize a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/gender-expansive, or queer identity within themselves first, and then might choose to reveal it to others. There are many different degrees of being out: Some may be out to friends only, some may be out publicly, and some may be out only to themselves. It's important to remember that coming out is an incredibly personal and transformative experience. Not everyone is in the same place when it comes to being out, and it is critical to respect where each person is in that process of self-identification. It is up to each person, individually, to decide if and when to come out or disclose.

Demiromantic: Used to describe an individual who experiences romantic attraction after a sexual connection is formed.

Demisexual: Used to describe an individual who experiences sexual attraction after an emotional connection is formed.

Disclosure: A word that some people use to describe the act or process of revealing one's transgender or gender-expansive identity to another person in a specific instance. Some find the term offensive, implying the need to disclose something shameful, and prefer to use the term *coming out*, whereas others find *coming out* offensive, and prefer to use *disclosure*.

FTM/F2M: A trans male/masculine person who was assigned female at birth.

FTX/F2X: A genderqueer or gender expansive person who was assigned female at birth.

Gay: The adjective used to describe people who are emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to people of the same gender (e.g., gay man, gay people). In contemporary contexts, *lesbian* is often a preferred term for women, though many women use the term *gay* to describe themselves. People who are gay need not have had any sexual experience; it is the attraction and self-identification that determine orientation.

Gender: A set of social, psychological, and/or emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations, that classify an individual along a spectrum of man, woman, both, or neither.

Gender-Affirming Surgery (GAS): Surgical procedures that can help people adjust their bodies to more closely match their innate gender identity. Not every transgender person will desire or have resources for surgery. This term should be used in place of the older term *sex change*. Also sometimes referred to as *sexual reassignment surgery* (or *SRS*), *genital reconstruction surgery*, or *medical transition*.

Gender Binary: The disproven concept that there are only two genders, man and woman, and that everyone must be one or the other. Also implies that gender is biologically determined.

Gender Dysphoria: The distress caused when a person's assigned sex at birth and assumed gender is not the same as the one with which they identify. According to the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSMV), the term "...is intended to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults."

Gender Expansive: An umbrella term sometimes used to describe people that expand notions of gender expression and identity beyond what is perceived as the expected gender norms for their society or context. Some gender-expansive individuals identify as a man or a woman, some identify as neither, and others identify as a mix of both. Gender-expansive people feel that they exist psychologically between genders, as on a spectrum, or beyond the notion of the man/woman binary paradigm, and sometimes prefer using gender-neutral pronouns (see *Personal Gender Pronouns*). They may or may not be comfortable with their bodies as they are, regardless of how they express their gender.

Gender Expression: The manner in which a person communicates about gender to others through external means such as clothing, appearance, or mannerisms. This communication may be conscious or subconscious and may or may not reflect their gender identity or sexual orientation. While most people’s understandings of gender expressions relate to masculinity and femininity, there are countless combinations that may incorporate both masculine and feminine expressions—or neither—through androgynous expressions. An individual’s gender expression does not automatically imply one’s gender identity.

Genderfluid: Describes a person who does not consistently identify with one fixed gender, and who may move between gender identities.

Gender Identity: One’s deeply held core sense of being a woman, man, some of both, or neither. One’s gender identity does not always correspond to biological sex. Awareness of gender identity is usually experienced as early as 18 months old.

Gender Neutral: Not gendered. Can refer to language (including pronouns and salutations/titles—see *Gender-neutral salutations or titles*), spaces (like bathrooms), or identities (being genderqueer, for example).

Gender-Neutral Salutations or Titles: A salutation or title that doesn’t identify the gender of the person being addressed in a formal communication or introduction. Also used for persons who do not identify as a binary gender, addressing someone where the gender is unknown, or if the correspondence-sender is unsure of the gender of the person to whom the correspondence is being sent. *Mx* is the most commonly used gender-neutral salutation (e.g. “Dear Mx. Smith...”).

Gender Nonconforming: An outdated term used to describe those who view their gender identity as one of many possible genders beyond strictly man or woman. More current terms include *gender expansive*, *differently gendered*, *gender creative*, *gender variant*, *genderqueer*, *nonbinary*, *agender*, *gender fluid*, *gender neutral*, *bigender*, *androgynous*, or *gender diverse*. PFLAG National uses the term *gender expansive*.

Genderqueer: Refers to individuals who identify as a combination of man and woman, neither man or woman, or both man and woman, or someone who rejects commonly held ideas of static gender identities and, occasionally, sexual orientations. Is sometimes used as an umbrella term in much the same way that the term *‘queer’* is used, but only referring to gender, and thus should only be used when self-identifying or quoting someone who self-identifies as genderqueer.

Gender Socialization: The process by which an individual is taught and influenced on how they should behave as a man or a woman. Parents, teachers, peers, media, and books are some of

the many agents of gender socialization.

Gender Spectrum: The concept that gender exists beyond a simple man/woman binary model, but instead exists on a continuum. Some people fall towards more masculine or more feminine aspects, some people move fluidly along the spectrum, and some identify off the spectrum entirely.

Gender Variant: A term, often used by the medical community, to describe individuals who dress, behave, or express themselves in a way that does not conform to dominant gender norms. (See *gender expansive*.) People outside the medical community tend to avoid this term because they feel it suggests these identities are abnormal, preferring terms such as *gender expansive* and *gender creative*.

Heteronormativity: The assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities

Heterosexual: Refers to a person who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to a person of the opposite gender

Homophobia: An aversion to lesbian or gay people that often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias. Similarly, *biphobia* is an aversion people who are bisexual, and *transphobia* is an aversion to people who are transgender. Collectively, these attitudes are referred to as *anti-LGBTQ+ bias*.

Homosexual: An outdated clinical term often considered derogatory and offensive, as opposed to the generally preferred terms *gay*, *lesbian*, or *queer*.

Intersex/Differences of Sexual Development (DSD): Refers to individuals born with ambiguous genitalia or bodies that appear neither typically male nor female, often arising from chromosomal anomalies or ambiguous genitalia. Medical professionals often assign a gender to the individual and proceed to perform surgeries to 'align' their physical appearance with typical male or female sex characteristics beginning in infancy and often continuing into adolescence, before a child is able to give informed consent. The Intersex Society of North America opposes this practice of genital mutilation on infants and children. Formerly the medical terms *hermaphrodite* and *pseudo-hermaphrodite* were used; these terms are now considered neither acceptable nor scientifically accurate.

Latinx: An inclusive, gender-neutral term, sometimes used in place of the gendered, binary terms *Latino* or *Latina*, used to describe a person of Latin-American origin or descent.

Lesbian: Refers to a woman who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to other women. People who are lesbians need not have had any sexual experience; it is the

attraction that helps determine orientation.

LGBTQ+: An acronym that collectively refers to individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. It is sometimes stated as *LGBT* (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) or *GLBT* (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender). The addition of the *Q* for *queer* is a more recently preferred version of the acronym as cultural opinions of the term focus increasingly on its positive, reclaimed definition, which recognizes more fluid identities; and as a move towards greater inclusivity for gender-expansive people (see *Queer* below). The *Q* can also stand for *questioning*, referring to those who are still exploring their own sexuality and/or gender. The “+” represents those who are part of the community, but for whom LGBTQ does not accurately capture or reflect their identity.

Lifestyle: A negative term often incorrectly used to describe the lives of people who are LGBTQ+. The term is disliked because it implies that being LGBTQ+ is a choice.

Misgender: To refer to someone, especially a transgender or gender-expansive person, using a word, especially a pronoun or form of address, which does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify.

MTF: A trans female/trans feminine person who was assigned male at birth. Often considered an over medicalized and somewhat outdated term.

MTX: A genderqueer or gender expansive person who was assigned male at birth.

Nonbinary: Refers to individuals who identify as neither man or woman, both man and woman, or a combination of man or woman. It is an identity term which some use exclusively, while others may use it interchangeably with terms like *genderqueer*, *gender creative*, *gender nonconforming*, *gender diverse*, or *gender expansive*. Individuals who identify as nonbinary may understand the identity as falling under the transgender umbrella, and may thus identify as transgender. Sometimes abbreviated as *NB* or *Enby*.

Out: Generally describes people who openly self-identify as LGBTQ+ in their private, public, and/or professional lives. Some people who are transgender prefer to use the term *disclose* (defined above).

Outing: The deliberate or accidental sharing of another person’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression without their explicit consent. Outing is considered disrespectful and a potentially dangerous act for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Pansexual: Refers to a person whose emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction is to people inclusive of all genders and biological sexes. People who are pansexual need not have had any sexual experience; it is the attraction and self-identification that determines the

orientation.

Personal Gender Pronouns: A personal gender pronoun, or PGP—sometimes called *proper gender pronoun*—is the pronoun or set of pronouns that an individual personally uses and would like others to use when talking to or about that individual. In English, the singular pronouns that we use most frequently are gendered, so some individuals may prefer that you use gender neutral or gender-inclusive pronouns when talking to or about them. In English, individuals use *they* and *their* as gender-neutral singular pronouns. Others use *ze* (sometimes spelled *zie*) and *hir/zir* or the pronouns *xe* and *xer*. Replaces the term *Preferred Gender Pronoun*, which incorrectly implies that their use is optional.

Queer: A term used by some people to describe themselves and/or their community. Reclaimed from its earlier negative use, the term is valued by some for its defiance, by some because it can be inclusive of the entire community, and by others who find it to be an appropriate term to describe their more fluid identities. Traditionally a negative or pejorative term for people who are gay, *queer* is still sometimes disliked within the LGBTQ+ community. Due to its varying meanings, this word should only be used when self-identifying or quoting someone who self-identifies as queer (i.e. “My cousin identifies as queer”).

Questioning: Describes those who are in a process of discovery and exploration about their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or a combination thereof. For many reasons this may happen later in life and does not imply that someone is choosing to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer.

Same-Gender Loving: A term sometimes used by some members of the African-American/Black community to express an alternative sexual orientation (gay/bisexual) without relying on terms and symbols of European descent.

Sexual Orientation: Emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings toward other people. While sexual behavior involves the choices one makes in acting on one’s sexual orientation, sexual orientation is part of the human condition, one’s sexual activity does not define one’s sexual orientation; typically, it is the attraction that helps determine orientation.

Stealth: A term used to describe transgender or gender-expansive individuals who do not disclose their transgender or gender-expansive status in their public or private lives (or certain aspects of their public and private lives). The term is increasingly considered offensive by some as it implies an element of deception. The phrase maintaining privacy is often used instead, though some individuals use both terms interchangeably.

Transgender: Often shortened to *trans*. A term describing a person’s gender identity that does not necessarily match their assigned sex at birth. Transgender people may or may not decide to

alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically to match their gender identity. This word is also used as an umbrella term to describe groups of people who transcend conventional expectations of gender identity or expression—such groups include, but are not limited to, people who identify as transsexual, genderqueer, gender variant, gender diverse, and androgynous. See above for common acronyms and terms including *female to male* (or *FTM*), *male to female* (or *MTF*), *assigned male at birth* (or *AMAB*), *assigned female at birth* (or *AFAB*), *genderqueer*, and *gender expansive*.

Transition: A term sometimes used to refer to the process—social, legal, and/or medical—one goes through to discover and/or affirm one’s gender identity. This may, but does not always, include taking hormones; having surgeries; and changing names, pronouns, identification documents, and more. Many individuals choose not to or are unable to transition for a wide range of reasons both within and beyond their control. The validity of an individual’s gender identity does not depend on any social, legal, and/or medical transition; the self-identification itself is what validates the gender identity.

Transsexual: A less frequently used—and sometimes misunderstood—term (considered by some to be outdated or possibly offensive, and others to be uniquely applicable to them) which refers to people who use (or consider using) medical interventions such as hormone therapy or gender-affirming surgeries (GAS), also called *sex reassignment surgery* (*SRS*) (or a combination of the two) or pursue medical interventions as part of the process of expressing their gender. Some people who identify as transsexual do not identify as transgender and vice versa.

Two-Spirit: A term used within some American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) communities to refer to a person who identifies as having both a male and a female essence or spirit. The term—which was created in 1990 by a group of AI/AN activists at an annual Native LGBTQ conference—encompasses sexual, cultural, gender, and spiritual identities, and provides unifying, positive, and encouraging language that emphasizes reconnecting to tribal traditions. (*With thanks to Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board [NPAIHB].*)

PFLAG National Trainings

As part of PFLAG's commitment to educating our communities, we offer a wide variety of training programs to help develop skills, promote understanding about key issues, and create engaged advocates for equality everywhere. Check out [PFLAG Academy Online](#) to learn more.

To learn more about trainings from our Straight for Equality program, visit Straight for Equality at straightforequality.org/ContactUs.

PFLAG National Field and Policy Staff and Volunteers

For reliable and consistent news on LGBTQ+ topics, be sure you are signed up through our website to receive [Policy Matters](#), delivered every other Friday afternoon. Send an email with your name and email address to info@pflag.org if you believe you are NOT receiving this, or other correspondence from PFLAG National.

As always, [PFLAG National staff and Regional Directors](#) are here to answer questions, give you important information on issues, and provide insight on how to have the most effective meeting possible with your elected leaders.

About PFLAG

PFLAG is the first and largest organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people, their parents and families, and allies. With over 400 chapters and 200,000 members and supporters crossing multiple generations of families in major urban centers, small cities, and rural areas across America, PFLAG is committed to creating a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed.

PFLAG's vast grassroots network is cultivated, resourced, and serviced by the staff of PFLAG National, located in Washington, D.C., the National Board of Directors, and 13 volunteer Regional Directors.

For more information, please contact us:

Email: info@pflag.org

Phone: (202) 467-8180

Mail: 1828 L Street NW, Suite 660, Washington, D.C. 20036

Website: pflag.org

Facebook: facebook.com/pflag

Twitter: [@pflag](https://twitter.com/pflag)

Instagram: [@pflag](https://www.instagram.com/pflag)