Lasting Impact: The Fight for LGBTQ+ Rights in 2017

"From Orlando to North Carolina: Queer Policy Across America,”
Brandeis Queer Policy Alliance’s 2017 ‘DEIS Impact event

For more, check out the Human Rights Campaign’s preview of pro- and anti-LGBTQ+ state and local policy: http://bit.ly/2kvxwwQ

In 2016, 250+ anti-LGBTQ equality bills were introduced in America, and thanks to governor vetoes and extraordinary LGBTQ rights advocacy efforts, only 5 passed. However, the fight in 2017 looks to be even greater.

THE GOOD:
- Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, and Ohio may add gender/sexual orientation to their non-discrimination laws
- Colorado, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Mexico, and Rhode Island may have the opportunity to ban conversion therapy
- California is the most promising state, with a Democratic supermajority
- Same-sex marriage seems safe; Trump can only appoint a new homophobic judge
- Trump believes transgender folks should be legally protected, BUT only by state law
- Conversion therapy will probably not be legitimized

THE BAD:
- In January 2017, legislative sessions begin, and more states are Republican-controlled in the House, Senate, and Governor’s office
- Most anti-LGBTQ bills are expected to be introduced in the South, as in 2016
  - Dozens of bills are already on the docket for consideration
- Texas seems the most worrisome

THE UGLY (Pay attention to these!):
- In Massachusetts, opponents of equality want to put a repeal of our new gender identity public accommodations law on the ballot in November 2018
  - freedom massachusetts will try to protect the law when it goes on the ballot
- Mike Pence is a notorious homophobe with a long history of anti-LGBTQ political success; unclear what he may do so far
- Affordable Care Act is in peril - important for transgender folks who get gender-affirming healthcare through Obamacare
- House Bill 1612, in Virginia, is a monster of a bill. It both mandates that people use bathrooms matching their birth certificates AND that if a student outs themself to an educator, parents must be notified.
Lasting Impact: Join the Fight for LGBTQ+ Rights in 2017

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Access and support Brandeis’ LGBTQ+ Resources

Queer Policy Alliance is Brandeis’ only LGBTQ+ activism club. We educate about queer history and empower students to take action on LGBTQ+ issues. QPA meets every other Thurs, 9:15-10:15 pm, in the Gender and Sexuality Center.
The Gender and Sexuality Center is Brandeis’ home for LGBTQ+ clubs, students, and allies. Located within the GSC is the Queer Resource Center, which provides confidential peer counseling to students and educational outreach to campus.

Keep up to date on current events:

2. This great HRC fact sheet lays out Trump’s past/present positions on LGBTQ rights: http://bit.ly/2aojs51
3. Pay attention to local politics. Contact school board members, state legislators, mayors, etc. to keep them accountable for LGBTQ rights.
4. Sign up to Human Rights Campaign’s AM Equality for daily updates on the fight for equality. See TheSixtyFive.org for weekly social justice calls to action.

Engage in activism:

1. Call/email your member of Congress; make it a habit.
   a. Find an amazing spreadsheet with scripts/contact info for many social/political issues here. They have a weekly call to action. http://bit.ly/2fAqI9j
   b. TheSixtyFive.org is a fantastic website for weekly anti-Trump political action that grew from this spreadsheet.
2. Tell Paul Ryan you support ACA: Paul Ryan is conducting a phone poll on the ACA (Obamacare), hoping to hear popular opposition to it. Want to express support for the ACA? Call (202) 225-3031. You’ll hear a brief recording about HR-3762, Ryan’s proposal to gut the ACA. Then, just press 1 if you support Obamacare, 2 if you oppose it.

Donate/support organizations

- The Human Rights Campaign, the largest LGBTQ civil rights organization, educates the public and advocates for LGBTQ rights. Donate or volunteer!
- Donate to the Trevor Project and Lambda Legal
- Donate to Waltham House, a safe home for LGBTQ youth in Waltham
- Be aware of MassResistance. It is an anti-LGBTQ hate group in Waltham.