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The Progression of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement in the United States:

The Human Rights Campaign

Tabitha Adams

DePauw University Honor Scholar Program

Class of 2019

Sponsor: Salil Benegal

Committee Members: Bruce Stinebrickner and Jeannette Johnson-Licon

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Acknowledgements

While I could write for pages and pages thanking people for their assistance in this project's completion, I will try to be as brief as possible. Particularly since this paper is already 150 pages long. I would first like to thank my Honor Scholar Sponsor, Professor Salil Benegal. From meeting with me countless times, exchanging innumerable emails, suggesting multiple different readings, setting much needed deadlines, and providing highly constructive feedback, this project would not have been completed without his stellar guidance. I have greatly enjoyed working with Professor Benegal throughout this process and will miss his mentorship immensely once graduating from DePauw. Second, I would like to thank my first and second readers, Professor Bruce Stinebrickner and Jeannette Johnson-Licon. I would like to thank each of them for their willingness to serve on my committee and providing extremely helpful feedback on my project throughout the year. Whether it be thesis statement suggestions, structure and grammar recommendations, notes on historical context, or simple conversations at the gym, their guidance was truly invaluable. I would especially like to thank Jeannette Johnson-Licon for all of our Hoover Dining Hall breakfast discussions about the LGBTQ+ community. They were some of the highlights of my project.

I would also like to thank Amy Welch and Kevin Moore for helping me navigate my way through the Honor Scholar Program all these years. Especially for talking with me at length during the final month of my project. Amy Welch is a true shining star of the Honor Scholar Program; DePauw University is extremely lucky to have her. A special thank you is warranted to the Honor Scholar's Principia Consortium Program at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. From playing the bagpipes to playing on the Glasgow Women's Basketball Team, those were the

best few months of my life. I will forever be grateful to DePauw's Honor Scholar Program for providing me that incredible study abroad experience.

Not only am I grateful to those directly involved in the Honor Scholar Program, but I would also like to thank all my family and friends. Thank you to all my Kappa and DU friends for listening to me discuss my project continuously and being a constant support system as I finished my project. I would also like to thank my mother for listening me discuss my project at length during Winter Term, Spring Break, and over the phone. The best advice I got throughout this process was during a short minute of frustration in January when I threw up my hands and vocalized a desire to quit the program altogether. While I was just blowing off steam in the moment, my mother recognized this and merely replied, "That is a silly thing to say." That was the end of conversation and since that moment, I never once contemplated quitting. I am so thankful I listened to her and finished this project.

I would lastly like to thank the Human Rights Campaign. Without interning at the organization this past summer, I never would have been inspired to research and write on this topic. Through completing this project, I have learned an immense amount about the organization, the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement, and even my own identity. LGBTQ+ history is not commonly taught in high school or university. Through interning at the HRC and conducting this project, I have come to learn about an important community and movement in the United States that I firmly believe everyone ought to learn about as well. So, thank you to the HRC for inspiring me to learn more about LGBTQ+ people and thank you to LGBTQ+ people across time and space for being such an inspirational community. Keep fighting the good fight and eventually equality will come. I firmly believe this to be true.

Preface on Terminology

Due to the formation, expansion, and transformation of LGBTQ+ identities, this paper uses the wording *LGBTQ+ Rights Movement* to describe the overall history of LGBTQ+ rights attained over time in the United States. (Kranz and Cusick 3) use *gay* as an umbrella term to encompass everyone who identifies as non-heterosexual, yet even they note that not all transgender folk use this terminology. (Egan and Sherrill “Marriage and the Shifting Priorities,” 232) interchangeably use the terms *gay* and *LGBT*¹ in the attempts to be as inclusive and readable as possible. However, these different scholars published their works in 2005 so they are not as up to date with 2019 terminology. In an attempt to be both inclusive and historically correct, each chapter and section of this paper uses the term, phrase, or description that was the common terminology of that time period. As (Escoffier 202) describes, since the 1950s each ensuing wave of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement has been identified politically as “homophile, gay, gay and lesbian, lesbian feminist, queer, and LGBT.” (Faderman xvi-xx) provides a more detailed overview of the terms’ history and explains her own use of terminology.

For example, Faderman describes how the terms *homosexual* and *homophile* formed and were commonly used in the 1940s and 1950s, while *gay* was used as an in-group term known mainly to people who identified with the homosexual community. *Gay* as an umbrella term for people who identify with same-sex attraction popularized in the late 1960s and 1970s during and after the Stonewall Inn raid and riots. *Gay* is often used as this umbrella term today. As groups

¹ LGBT stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (Egan and Sherrill, “Marriage and Shifting Priorities,” 232; Escoffier 202; Kranz and Cusick 3).

splintered in their identities and organizational structures in the 1960s and 1970s, women coined the term *lesbian* to describe their identity of women attracted to other women. The 1980s witnessed the morphed wording *gay-and-lesbian* in an attempt to be more inclusive of both identities. This word was commonly used to describe the movement leading into the 21st century.

However, as *bisexual*, *transgender*, and *queer* became terms people increasingly identified with in the 1970s to 1990s, the acronym *LGBT* and *LGBTQ* have popularized within American society. There has been debate as well over the letters' order, with lesbian feminists favoring *LGBT* rather than *GLBT* since the *L* would precede the *G*. Some have even attempted to stretch the acronym to *LGBTQQIAAP*,² however, this acronym has not been popularly used by scholars, nor those in mainstream American society. Though *gay* is still an umbrella term commonly used by members of society to describe people who identify as LGBTQ+, this paper uses the terminology *LGBTQ+* to include all identities people choose to identify with, as symbolized in the + sign. Therefore, this paper uses the phrase, *LGBTQ+ Rights Movement*, to outline this history and to encompass each identity throughout their respective time frame.

² LGBT acronym to include Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Allies, and Pansexual (Faderman xvi-xx).

Introduction

Same-sex marriage, metrosexuals, gender neutral bathrooms, access for lesbians to in-vitro fertilization, gay adoption, bisexual erasure, “out” queer political candidates, transgender military bans. These are a few of the national headlines surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity in recent years. To the casual observer, the ubiquity of media coverage on the queer community,³ and/or a gender identity other than cisgender,⁴ is a recent phenomenon. Historically, LGBTQ+ people were categorized as mentally ill, immoral, social deviants. As recent as 50 years ago, the American press commonly used slurs like “trannies,” “faggots,” “fairies,” and “dykes” (Bausum 5, 14; Faderman xviv; Morris). Viewed and spoken about in such negative ways during the past 70+ years has had enormously disempowering political effects on the LGBTQ+ community (Sherrill and Wolinsky 102). In the United States during the 1950s, where this paper’s historical overview begins, members of the LGBTQ+ community were referred to as homosexuals,⁵ if even acknowledged at all. During this time, gay and lesbian activists were just beginning to develop an identity politics and flex their social and political muscle. How, in seven decades, did the lives of LGBTQ+ people move from the shadows to the socio-political center? Where did the modern U.S. LGBTQ+ Rights Movement begin? How has it expanded and transformed over time in the fight for equality? And, what historical lessons and

³ Queer community is also often used as an umbrella term for people who identify as some orientation other than heterosexual, such as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. This term popularized in the 1990s among many younger Americans (Faderman xviv).

⁴ Cis-gender people are those whose gender identity corresponds to the sex they were assigned with at birth. Non cis-gender people are those such as non-binary, gender-variant, or transgender people (Faderman xviv).

⁵ Homosexual is defined as “a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex” (Wesley 153).

organizations played a role in shaping this movement? These are some of the questions that inspired the formation of this project.

It's a worthy and difficult goal to demonstrate how LGBTQ+ people in the United States have gone from being a socially abhorrent, politically powerless group during a large portion of the 20th century to now having a powerful political presence in the country's current climate. Over the years, the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement has contained multiple people and organizations, advocated in both social and political spheres, operated in different manners and approaches, and as this paper lays out, for a somewhat common goal of LGBTQ+ equality (Rimmerman 6-7). Ultimately, the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement has championed for social and political change while simultaneously facing immense challenges and oppositional forces.

So, how has the LGBTQ+ community managed this social movement, moving from the isolation of the closet to front steps of the White House? By going roughly decade to decade, this paper will examine the different waves and strategies of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement from the 1950s to present-day 2019. It should be noted that there's nothing particularly magical about January 1, 1950. LGBTQ+ people existed well in advance of December 31, 1949. However, "the Fifties in America" are notable for the public perception of "traditional American values" that have been historically juxtaposed with the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Starting my examination of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement in the 1950s begins this historical overview and connection to the framing of identity politics involving race and gender. Many of the racial and gender issues that arose in the 1950s continued to inform and impact LGBTQ+ activists, organizations, and the overall movement leading up to 2019. By showing how and which rights were fought, lost, and gained, we can better understand where the movement is going today.

Specifically, this paper focuses on the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the nation's largest civil rights organization that advocates for LGBTQ+ rights in the United States today. The HRC formed in 1980 as a small Political Action Committee (PAC) focused singularly on gay and lesbian issues in the political realm, but is now a political *and* educational organization of over 3 million members with millions of additional allies and supporters. So while this paper's first chapter outlines the important history that led to the formation of the HRC, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 focus much more on the advent of the HRC and their progression as an organization in relation to the broader LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. This specific examination of the HRC looks at the organization's extensive archives of original documents, online information, newsletters, press releases, news media coverage, HRC staff members' and organization's tweets, emails, outside consulting group reports, as well as personal interviews conducted with two key staff members currently working at the HRC. These interviews shed additional light on the HRC, such as the organization's challenges and successes, their transformation as an organization, and what their pro-equality work entails. This research also stems from information unavailable in print or online, such as my personal experiences as an intern in the HRC's Washington, DC office from June to August in the summer of 2018.

By analyzing these sources and experiences, this paper explores five questions pertaining to the HRC and the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. The first question explored is when and where did the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement begin in U.S. history? Second, how did the movement progress to where it is now? Third, how and where does the HRC fit into this progression? Fourth, how has the HRC evolved as an organization to advance the movement? And fifth, where are the HRC and LGBTQ+ Rights Movement going next? Through exploring these types

of questions, this paper demonstrates five key points. First, the original membership and focus of the HRC mirrored other mainstream political organizations before and during the time by being mainly white and upper-middle class. Second, like the LGBTQ+ Movement more broadly, the HRC initially pursued an assimilationist political agenda that focused exclusively on gay and lesbian issues. Third, although their demographic makeup and political strategy were successful in gaining rights and growing the organization, such a homogenous membership and narrow focus had the side effect of marginalizing the personal experiences of other socioeconomic, racial, and gender identities. Fourth, as the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement transformed to include educational and coalition initiatives with non-LGBTQ+ issues and organizations in an effort to maximize political rights and gain public recognition, so did the HRC. Finally, in recent years, following critiques of its exclusivity and singular focus, the HRC has worked diligently to improve its record on diversity, inclusion, and to become a more welcoming organization to people of all backgrounds and issues.

By tracing the history of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement from the 1950s to 2019, this paper demonstrates that as the movement grew and transformed, so did the Human Rights Campaign. The HRC did not grow out of thin air, rather their roots are found in the decades leading up to their creation. And though only a small PAC in 1980, the HRC is now the largest pro-LGBTQ+ rights organization in the U.S. today, working on multiple different issues, and has grown to be in the center of the political arena. This is a remarkable feat for an organization not even 40 years old and for a community of people once so thoroughly despised by society. However, as this paper demonstrates, this approach to growth and gaining rights has not been without compromise or critique. Nor is the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement anywhere near

completion. There are many more rights to gain and many more identities in the community to highlight. However, if in seven decades the LGBTQ+ community can make as much progress as this paper lays out, then these rights will eventually be gained. With the help and guidance of the HRC, full LGBTQ+ equality will be achieved in the United States. It is not a matter of *if*, but rather *when*.

Chapter One: Historical Overview

Section 1. Historical Background Before and During the 1950s

In the United States, people often think of homosexuality as a relatively modern phenomenon. Rather, historians have shown that people have engaged in same-sex sexual behavior throughout time and place (Escoffier 192; Morris). Evident in many cultures and time periods is same-sex attraction, love, and relationships among men and women. Additionally, though the term transgender⁶ was only coined in the late 20th century, people who do not conform to either men and women genders also has historical roots dating further back than the second half of the 1900s. Today's non-binary identity for example has precedence in certain Native American traditions called Two-Spirit (Morris). However, while same-sex attraction and behavior has existed throughout human history, LGBTQ+ identity has not (Escoffier 192). Same-sex sexual behavior is different than identifying as someone attracted to their same sex. People can participate in same-sex sexual acts without identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual and people can identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual without participating in the behavior (Stychin 90-91). However, performance of acts often leads to the perception of an identity which stabilizes as an identity as those acts are repeated, rendering the identity to be regulated by external powers (Stychin 95). While behavior and identity are not always conflated between

⁶ Transgender is defined as “a person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity” (Wesley 153).

people that participate in either the behavior or identity, they are often conflated and controlled by people against same-sex attraction, behavior, and identity.

For example, Western European religions have historically exhibited opposition to same-sex sexual behavior, which in turn has become opposition against people with LGBTQ+ identity. The Catholic Church Catechism formally stated in 1986 that homosexual acts are “intrinsically immoral and contrary to natural law” and describes homosexual tendencies as “objectively disordered” (Faderman 425; quoted on HRC.org). Interestingly, the Catechism only specifies the behavior as immoral, not specifically any of the individual LGBTQ+ identities. The Catechism continues to assert that “such persons must be accepted with respect and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.” While against “unjust discrimination,” the Catholic Church does not perform same-sex marriage ceremonies and many parishes in the United States do not accept members in same-sex relationships into their parish. Additionally, Catholic high schools and universities can fire people who are in same-sex relationships or who “come out” about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. This is a rather common occurrence in the United States today.

Furthermore, though in wording against merely same-sex sexual behavior, the current Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis, recently advised bishops to use discretion when interviewing priest candidates (France-Presse). Though priests would uphold vows of chastity and not participate in same-sex relations, Pope Francis still stated that “in consecrated and priestly life, there’s no room for that kind of affection. Therefore, the church recommends that people with that kind of ingrained tendency should not be accepted into the

ministry or consecrated life” (France-Presse). The Catholic Church and many other branches of Christianity are against people that participate in same-sex sexual behavior, citing biblical support in the Old and New Testament’s Genesis, Leviticus, Romans, and Corinthians books (Allberry et al.). This opposition reached its height in the 1970s with the rise of the Religious Right. This evangelical religious movement perceived a correlation between homosexuality and pedophilia among priests, which has led to the current conflation between action and identity in the Catholic Church.⁷ This anti-same-sex sexual behavior eventually translated into criminalization and discrimination against those of LGBTQ+ identity. Ultimately, once same-sex sexual behavior increased in visibility and turned into a visible identity in the United States, societal discrimination dramatically increased too.

A major event that led to same-sex relations coming to the forefront of American society was World War II. The recruitment of millions of male soldiers and female nurses brought homosexual men and women together and demonstrated there was a possibility of life outside of their heteronormative communities⁸ (Duberman 76). WWII helped “create something of a nationwide coming out experience,” resulting in homosexual men and women settling in port or war industry cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, and San Francisco (D’Emilio “Sexual Politics,” 23-31, 39; Epstein 34; Escoffier 192). These cities came to shape urban gay

⁷ Religious Right opposition discussed in depth in Chapter 1, Section 7: Opposition Increases Against the Gay Community, page 49.

⁸ Heteronormative is defined as “noting or relating or attitudes consistent with traditional male or female gender roles and the assumption of heterosexuality as the norm” (Dictionary.com).

subcultures for people to feel accepted by one another and provide them a new way of life.

However, this new life was not always understood, nor accepted by heteronormative society.

Though many homosexual men and women had participated in the war effort, when back home in the United States, most people in the public did not consider them democratic citizens (Sherrill and Yang 20). Early advocates against homosexuals during this time were Dr. Carelton Simon and Dr. Arthur Lewis Miller. Dr. Simon viewed men who participated in homosexual acts as “psychopathic” and “predatory prostitutes.” He publicly applauded Illinois’ treatment of convicted homosexual individuals who were placed in psychiatric wards until they “recovered” (Faderman 3-4). Dr. Simon greatly influenced Dr. Miller in Nebraska to adopt this same psychiatric-based position that homosexual men ought to be medically treated to prevent their acts of homosexuality. Once Dr. Miller ran and was elected into Congress, he turned these ideas into legislation for Washington, DC, called the Sexual Psychopath Law. This law gained traction in the federal government after Alfred Kinsey’s book, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* was published in 1948 (History.com; Faderman 5; Morris). This book was widely read across the country and soon “Kinsey” became a household name (D’Emilio “Sexual Politics,” 34). In Kinsey’s study, he detailed that of thousands of American men interviewed, 46% of men admitted to reacting sexually to both men and women, 37% had had at least one sexual experience with another man, and 10% admitted to living as a homosexual for at least three years (Faderman 5). This book identified just how prevalent homosexual behavior was in society, but rather than normalizing it, people saw it as an encroaching threat to the American way of life (Wesley 152). Furthermore, people opposed to homosexuality began to conflate homosexual

behavior with an identity that resulted in legislation that did not differentiate between the two either (Epstein 34).

Only five months after this book was published in 1948, President Harry Truman signed the Miller Act into federal law.⁹ The Miller Act mandated men who had committed acts of “sodomy”¹⁰ be punished with up to 20 years in prison and an additional review by a psychiatrist to determine if he were a “sexual psychopath” that had committed multiple acts of “sexual misconduct” (Faderman 4-5). Due to Dr. Simon, Dr. Miller, and Dr. Kinsey’s work, most states in the U.S. established sodomy laws that criminalized male homosexual acts (Lauritsen). This widespread criminalization was particularly harmful as these laws ingrained in Americans’ minds the idea that homosexuals were inferior, immoral, and illegal individuals. Such a negative perception in the public helped keep homosexuals as a politically powerless minority group. Reasons for this oppression were that it was both psychologically difficult to coalesce when personally deemed illegal and physically difficult to find other homosexuals willing to organize together around this illegal identity (Sherrill and Wolinsky 116).

Further politically disempowering was an employment discrimination bill supported by President Eisenhower in 1952 that fired men from federal jobs who were perceived to be homosexuals. President Truman and President Eisenhower’s support for anti-homosexual

⁹ Heteronormative is defined as “noting or relating or attitudes consistent with traditional male or female gender roles and the assumption of heterosexuality as the norm” (Dictionary.com).

¹⁰ Sodomy is the act of men having sexual relations with other men. Sodomy finds its roots in the Bible’s Genesis story of Sodom and Gomorrah, who many people in various different religious faiths view to be punished by God for their sinful homosexual acts. While other modern faiths believe they were punished by God for their lack of hospitality, this story is often cited as the reason why homosexual acts are sinful under God, thus rightly punishable under law (Britannica).

legislation led to increased backlash across the country against homosexual men. This backlash occurred in the form of legal arrests, FBI investigations, police raids on bars and businesses frequented by homosexuals, statewide employment discrimination acts, medical electroshock treatment, and even forced lobotomies (Bernstein 540; Bausum 4-5; D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 44; Epstein 35). While dangerous forms of "conversion therapy" still exist in many states today, "treatment" for homosexuals in the 1950s was much more severe. This level of public and political opposition against those participating in homosexual acts eventually led homosexuals to organize in support of their rights. Though an early group had formed in 1924 in Illinois as a result of the state's sodomy laws, called the Chicago Society for Human Rights, this group quickly disbanded due to disorganization among the members and heightened public opposition (CNN; D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 58; Duberman 155; History.com). Better organized groups formed and mobilized in the 1950s after public and political opposition grew, discriminatory laws increased, and shared grievances were realized (McCarthy and Zald 1214; Wesley 154).

The most famous of these organizations was the Mattachine Society, founded by Harry Hay and Chuck Rowland in 1950 (D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 58-61; Morris). While some women were involved in the Mattachine Society, the group primarily comprised of white men (D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 72, 92; Duberman 77). As a result, two women in 1955, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, were inspired to form a group of their own, called the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB)¹¹ (D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 102; Epstein 35; Faderman 77; Morris). Though these

¹¹ The Daughters of Bilitis was named after an 1894 French book of poems, *The Songs of Bilitis*. In these poems, a modern-day lesbian, meaning a woman attracted to other women, named Bilitis lived on the Isle of Lesbos alongside Sappho, an ancient Greek poet (Faderman 77; Morris). From this poem, a lesbian identity was formed for women attracted to other women.

were the first main *homosexual* organizations of their time, neither the Mattachine Society's or Daughters of Bilitis' name screamed "HOMOSEXUALITY" to mainstream society. Rather, these early homophile organizations attempted to eliminate the *sexual* from homosexual and focus on love and assimilation into a politically repressive society that barely even recognized homosexuality as a form of existence (Epstein 35; History.com). These groups' activism thus focused on self-help and education to showcase homosexuality as normal and not as a mental-disorder that could be "cured" (Bausum 21; Bernstein 539; Escoffier 192; Faderman 78-80).

As such, these two groups are considered to be *homophile* organizations, emphasizing community over sexuality. The 1950s saw organizations not wholly advocating for separate civil rights and protections, rather just recognition that gays and lesbians existed and were not a threat to society (Bernstein 543-544; Faderman 89; Rimmerman 16). Ultimately, these groups had to be stealthy, secret, and conservative in their names and tactics due to extreme public aversion towards their identities. Secrecy meant survival in straight society, as well as the ability to carefully spread to those who shared the same sexual desires. Radical activism was not yet a considered concept for either of these groups and if it was, it was quickly expelled due to fear of Communism during the Cold War (D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 78; Duberman 77-78).

The chief civil right advocated for and surprisingly attained only came in 1958 when the Supreme Court ruled that the homosexual magazine, *ONE*, could be published without post office interference (D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 115; Faderman 91-97). In effect, this ruling allowed homosexual magazines the freedom of press. This in turn allowed magazines like *ONE* or the DOB's *The Ladder* to reach larger audiences and increasingly show other gays and lesbians that they were not alone in society. The more these magazines published, the more

Americans learned of homosexuality and began to believe in the possibility of community. Due to these loosely shared beliefs, these groups were able to collectivize their identities into ideologies and begin the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement's first subset social movement: the homophile movement (McCarthy and Zald 1214).

Though focusing on acceptance and assimilation in society, it is important to note that this acceptance was advocated for by primarily cisgender, white gay men and lesbian women. Both the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis did not specifically advocate for issues that affected people of color, gender non-conforming folks, or people of lower socio-economic classes. Rather, these groups focused on their normalcy and sameness with white, middle-class heterosexuals. They did not wish to showcase themselves as perverts, criminals, pedophiles, or even as cross-dressing individuals. Though certainly not elite by heterosexual standards, this "elitist" middle-class approach, worked to organize these early groups into a more coherent homophile movement able to use their little power and resources to assimilate into society (McCarthy and Zald 1215). While this assimilationist strategy did work to leverage themselves against homophobia, it ultimately led to marginalizing members of the community that did not conform to this cookie-cutter white, mostly male, middle-class image (Morris). Though today the LGBTQ+ community attempts to encompass all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and focus more on intersectionality, in the 1950s this was not the case. Thus, one of the later critiques of the HRC and LGBTQ+ Rights Movement as having an elitist, mainstream, and moderate style of attaining equal rights finds its roots in the 1950s. This strategy was deemed necessary in the 1950s and so continued to influence the HRC in the 1980s.

The exclusion of the 1950s ultimately led to divisions that would mark the entirety of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. These divisions existed in the homosexual community and between homosexuals and heterosexuals in general. An internal clash that formed in the 1950s was between more radical homosexuals who viewed themselves as different than heterosexuals and assimilationist homosexuals who viewed themselves as the same. This tension has continued to divide the gay and lesbian community leading into the 21st century, particularly within the HRC (D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 90; Faderman 73). Past and present critiques of the HRC has involved their wealthy, white, gay male assimilation-style approach to attaining rights (Marks; Meronek; Stein 71-72). As exhibited in this section, this current critique is similar as the tactics and critiques of these early homophile organizations. As such, the 1950s provides historical evidence of this paper's first key point that the HRC's original membership and focus mirrored other mainstream, assimilationist organizations even prior to their formation in the 1980s.

Section 2. The Politicization of Gay Activism in the 1960s

Before the nationally infamous 1969 Stonewall Inn raid and riots, the 1960s were already experiencing a change in terminology, organization, and strategy among gay and lesbian groups. Gays and lesbians during the 1960s were heavily involved with the decade's sexual revolution and other public protests, such as anti-Vietnam War protests, Black Panther activism, and the women's movement. Due to their involvement in these other social movements, gays and lesbians realized they too needed to gain political traction as a group identity in order to gain societal acceptance (Bausum 21; Epstein 37; Escoffier 192). Though the idea was ultimately

rejected by assimilationist groups like the Mattachine Society and DOB, there was early discussion of a possible “Homosexual Bill of Rights” that would advocate for greater rights in American society (Faderman 81-82). In the 1950s, such a political concept would have been unheard of. However, the 1960s were shaping into a decade of newfound sexual expression, liberal and radical challenges to conservative society, and greater levels of public protest that made this “Homosexual Bill of Rights” concept possible.

At the same time that greater levels of political activism were occurring, there was also a formation of gay and lesbian terminology and identity (Stychin 92-93). Rather than strictly calling themselves *homosexuals*, the term *gay* formed as a more positive and affirming identity (Stychin 93). When people proclaimed their gayness in a new proud manner such as gay activist, Frank Kameny’s “Gay is Good” slogan, they found other people of similar sexuality and formed communities that further affirmed the identity (Faderman 190; Stychin 90-93). Though this gay identity shifted again in the 1970s and took on different gender and racial lens, it was in the 1960s that *gayness* procured as a stronger, more stable identity that people could organize and mobilize around. *Gay* became the umbrella term that many gay men and lesbian women used to describe their identities. Ultimately, with this adoption of terminology came greater organizational ability.

To be sure, while recognizing gayness as an identity and that political action needed to occur in protection of this identity, there was still division. For one, not all women identified as *gay*, rather they continued to use the term *lesbian*. These differences became further pronounced

leading into the 1970s with the rise of lesbian separatism.¹² Additionally, due to lack of transgender¹³ awareness or activism, the 1960s saw separate organizations form. For example, the Conversion Our Goal or Change: Our Goal (COG) established and published magazines like *Tranvestia* to help “transsexuals navigate their way toward sex reassignment surgery and educated the public about transsexuality” (Marston). The public media itself rarely discussed transgender people and if they did, it was strictly in medical terms and done so negatively.

While I discuss transgender issues in much greater detail in chapter three, I wish to outline a few of the ways that transgender people were viewed in the 1950s-1960s. During this time, transgender people were simplified as merely “cross-dressing” individuals to be laughed at in comedic films like *Some Like It Hot* (IMBd). However, when “cross-dressing” people were out in the public not only dressing differently, but also identifying with a different gender, they were admonished by society. The difference between sex and gender was not recognized or understood by the public at this time. Therefore, transgender people were viewed as “deceitful” “impersonators” that were not biologically the gender they claimed to be and therefore rightfully criminalized in courts (Snorton 145-151). This was especially the case for transgender women of color, who were highly negatively covered in national news media in comparison to white transgender women like Christine Jorgensen (CNN; Mock 113-119; Snorton 139-175). Important to note is that progress has since occurred in popular culture, seen in the famous life and career of the black trans woman, Laverne Cox. However, this is just one example in comparison to the hundreds of trans women of color still largely targeted in hate crimes, violent assaults, and

¹² Lesbian separatism is discussed further in Chapter 1, Section 4: Late 1969 to Early 1970s: Gay Liberation Begins, page 32.

¹³ Often called transsexual at this time (Marston).

murders. For example, of the 28 transgender people killed just in 2018, all but one was a woman of color (Christensen; HRC.org; Ranklin). The American public rarely discusses these lives and deaths. While the public's silence was much worse in the 1960s, it is still not perfect today.

Not only did identity issues among women and transgender people exist during this time, but there were also organizational and political strategic differences. On one end were homophile assimilationists who promoted change from within the government's already established institutions (Faderman 109). By assimilationist, this means embracing a "rights-based perspective," that "works within the system" in an incremental manner to gain slow, gradual progress (Rimmerman 5). American politics is slow and so many people viewed that political activism must also work slowly within this system. These assimilationists were largely an older generation of white, cisgender, middle-class gay men and lesbian women. Essentially, they were people that had easier access, acceptance, and mobility in government institutions. People outside these categories, such as younger men and women, people of color, and gender non-conforming folks, often favored a more radical "liberation" approach to gaining rights (Bernstein 542; Faderman 175). By liberation, this means favoring a drastic cultural change that is "transformational in nature and often arises outside the formal structures of the U.S. political system" (Rimmerman 5-6). Liberationists did not seek to have a seat at the table like assimilationists, rather they sought to overturn the table and all the norms, organizations, and institutions sitting around it. Rather than focusing on "equality" like assimilationists, they were focused on "liberty" (Egan and Sherrill "Marriage and Shifting Priorities," 229). Though many younger, more radical gay and lesbian activists originally joined the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis, they soon were disenchanted with these quiet, conservative assimilation

efforts (Epstein 37; Duberman 78). Radical liberation tactics were seen to allow for greater inclusion of the community, fluidity of expression, and as real forms of resistance to attain freedom in society. Soon the quiet, conservative approach to gaining societal recognition that had been necessary in the 1950s no longer had the same level of appeal in the 1960s.

These assimilation and liberation divisions resulted in homophile organizations like the Mattachine Society to break off in 1961 into many different organizations. For example, organizations soon emerged like the Homophile Action League, Homosexual League of New York, and the Mattachine Society Washington (MSW) (Duberman 102; Epstein 36; Faderman 123, 125). In particular desire for stronger political action was the MSW's founder, Frank Kameny, who criticized the homophile's "genteel, debating society approach" to progress (quoted in Epstein 36-37; Faderman 125, 133). Though still promoting homosexuality as a positive attribute and doing so in traditional, professional suit attire, the MSW were more "militant," "grassroots," and "tooth-and-nails" types of political activists than the original Mattachine Society (D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 152). The MSW changed from the homophiles' education approach and took on a civil liberty approach by making active calls, speeches, newsletters, picket protests, and filing court cases against the state and federal government for full homosexual equality (D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 153; Faderman 133, 137). Indeed, the MSW litigated for greater rights and protections, such as not losing one's government or military job for being gay and increasing pressure on the public to support gay issues (Bernstein 543; History.com). This early 1960s change in social movement strategy mirrored that of the civil rights movement occurring among black Americans. Kameny's "Gay is Good" thus became the gay activists' version of the civil rights' "Black is Beautiful" (Epstein 37; Faderman 158). To be

sure, while the MSW's tactics were more politicized than the original Mattachine Society's approach, they were eventually considered to be moderate and mainstream in comparison to the radical activism of the 1970s. However, in the 1960s, the MSW did demonstrate a change.

For these groups, one event that gained the most public awareness of homosexuals' mistreatment in society came in 1965 when a dance hosted by the Council on Religion and the Homosexual was raided by police (Faderman 104-108). This council was surprisingly made up of many homophile and faith leaders in California. While these faith leaders did not fully condone homosexual behavior, they also did not condone police harassment and societal discrimination (Faderman 102-108). This event demonstrated to Californians the level of harassment homosexuals received from police even when supported by heterosexual church leaders. Additionally, the event demonstrated to a certain extent church support for homosexual's civil rights, albeit if only in California. This event ultimately showcased the need to change the political system from within through litigation; a strategy political groups like MSW came to pursue. Rather than assimilation through merely cultural acceptance came the need for assimilation through gaining civil and political rights too.

In prior years, most gay and lesbian activism had been at the grassroots level. In an attempt to expand nationally were coalition efforts to bring together different militant organizations across the United States. Two key coalition examples are the 1963 East Coast Homophile Organization (ECHO) and the 1966 North American Conference of Homophile Organization (NACHO) (Bernstein 545; D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 161; Faderman 142). It was in these groups and conventions that differences between the moderate and militant assimilation approaches became even more pronounced, particularly between older and newer generations of

gay activists (D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 166, 173). These differences included: gradual and educational tactics versus militancy; work with heterosexual allies versus separatism; coalition work with other organizations versus single-issue isolationism; purely political work versus focus on self-help and counseling issues; and even gay men versus lesbian women (Bernstein 545). Though many of these tensions have diminished over time, (Bernstein 545) argues that the coalition versus single-issues activism conflict has continued into the 1990's LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. This conflict has made its way into the Human Rights Campaign as well, which notably began as a very single-issue oriented organization. Focusing solely on gay and lesbian issues was the common mindset of these organizations in the 1960s and consequently permeated into the future mindsets of the HRC's founders. This paper's second key point that the HRC mirrored the movement by initially working on assimilating into society through a singular focus finds its origins in the 1960s. Conflicts in the 1960s in this regard are not isolated to the 1960s, rather continue to exist for years to come.

As the 1960s came to an end, so did many of these organizations and coalition efforts. These organization efforts were short-lived due to lacking strong unified leadership, financial resources, and internal coherence. Yet, this increase in organizations forming, increase in gay visibility, and advent of new mobilization ideas does demonstrate the 1960s to be a time of growing political awareness and desire for greater political activism (Faderman 127). Still though, this desire only came to national fruition at the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s. Thereby, the turn of the 1960s is when a true gay rights movement begins rather than the homophile movement of the previous decade. The event that helped transform the homophile

movement and splintered beginnings of identity-oriented activism into the modern LGBTQ+ Rights Movement was the 1969 raid and riots on Stonewall Inn (Duberman xv).

Section 3. The 1969 Stonewall Inn Raid and Riots

Prior to the Stonewall Inn raid and riots were numerous other public protests and efforts of activism in the United States (D’Emilio “Sexual Politics,” 199; Faderman 115; Schraub 1446). Protests occurred due to the police’s frequent harassment of gays, lesbians, and people “masquerading” as someone of a different gender. This police harassment took the form of entrapment policies in men’s restrooms and frequent raids on gay and lesbian bars. To counter-protest these practices and policies, gay and lesbian activists held “Sip-Ins” at businesses that refused homosexuals service, similar to the black civil rights movement’s “Sit-Ins” (Faderman 118-119). These early gay rights demonstrations occurred in the early-to-mid-1960s in cities such as Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. However, these protests did not gain much media attention and so never sparked a larger national movement (Faderman 117; Morris). Rather, this national movement began at Stonewall Inn.

To provide a bit of background knowledge, Stonewall Inn is a gay bar situated on Christopher Street, Greenwich Village in New York City. The gay bar opened in 1966 interestingly under the authority of the Genovese Mafia family (Duberman 181; Faderman 172). Because homosexual activity and liquor sales in gay bars were illegal during the 1960s, gay bars were frequently raided by the police. One of the ways the Mafia was able to own and operate gay bars in NYC was through paying off the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and State

Liquor Agency (SLA) (Carter 18; Duberman 184-185). Though members of the gay community were not particularly thrilled with having to rely upon the Mafia to provide them a place to socialize, because of sodomy laws criminalizing homosexual behavior, many felt as if they had no other choice. However, the total illegality of gay bars eventually proved too much for New York City to allow, leading to heavy backlash in the late 1960s (Bausum 23; Carter 47). The city government and police cracked down particularly hard during the summer of 1969.

The police raid and ensuing riots on Stonewall Inn began early in the morning on June 28th, 1969. A troop of eight NYPD officers arrived at Stonewall Inn with two female officers already undercover inside, ready to seize the bar's illegal alcohol and arrest the bar owners and any patrons in the way. Police shouted, "Police! Open up!" and officers flooded the bar, turned on the lights, shut off the music, and lined up of the bar's approximated two hundred guests (Faderman 172). Though previous raids at Stonewall Inn usually resulted in guests dispersing on the streets, on June 28th this was not the case. As patrons were ID'd by the police and then released outside, crowds began to form. Though the crowds were tame at first, as more and more patrons were getting arrested and even wrestled into police cars, one woman in handcuffs yelled to the crowd, "Why don't you guys do something?" (Faderman 174). This call to action sparked gay activist, Craig Rodwell and the crowd to chant "Gay Power!"; yell; protest; throw "copper" coins, stones, beer cans, bottles, bricks, etc.; and overall fight back against the police (Bausum 42-44; D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 232; Faderman 174). As the Hispanic drag queen/street transvestite Sylvia Rivera proclaimed, "It's the revolution!" (Faderman 174). And so, the gay rights revolution had begun.

Prior to this riot, gays and lesbians had mainly only participated in or even lead protests for other causes. As discussed in the previous section, there were efforts at political activism, but mostly on the grassroots level. Any national mobilization efforts did not last long and were rife with internal conflicts. However, this time the protest was purely for gays and lesbians (Faderman 176). The Executive Director of the New York Mattachine Society, David Leitsch, attended the riots and later said to have thought, “This is what Lenin must have felt like at the revolution. It’s the best thing that could happen for gays” (Leitsch quoted in Faderman 176). Though this riot ultimately disrupted the Mattachine Society’s civil and conservative organization for good, even Leitsch understood the utter significance of the night. As Craig Rodwell accurately predicted, these riots “will go down in history as the first time that thousands of homosexual men and women went out into the streets to protest the intolerable situation which has existed in New York City for many years” (quoted in Bausum 67).

It is important to note that many scholars argue that the riots at Stonewall “were at the time but one in a series of uprisings,” and only a part of the gradual rise in gay activism of the 1960s (Bernstein 544; Epstein 38). The 1966 Compton Cafeteria riots in San Francisco are a prime example of an anti-police riot that occurred three years before Stonewall but is not as popularly known today (Broverman). One reason this riot has largely been forgotten is that it was primarily led by inner-city gender non-conforming folks (Broverman). This diminished the news media’s awareness, care, or coverage of the uprising. Therefore, one of the main factors for the remembrance of Stonewall Inn versus Compton Cafeteria is that Stonewall included gays and lesbians more than just trans folk and so was prone to more news media coverage.

Due to this increased media coverage, there were greater numbers of activists able to draw inspiration from the riots. Serving as a catalyst for future activism has resulted in Stonewall Inn to be remembered in history as sparking the modern gay rights movement (Bausum 66; Carter; CNN; Escoffier 192; History.com; Morris; Schruab 1446). Or as (Duberman xv, 224) declares, the “empowering...symbolic event of international importance” that altered the course of gay and lesbian activism from the past and progressed it moving forward in the U.S. and world (Duberman xv, 224). Ultimately, the Stonewall Inn raid and riots are significant because even if they were not the first riot to occur in the U.S, they were the first to inspire a new form of gay liberation to occur. This in turn exposed the tactical differences between “respectable and established” professionals and people whose impulses were more towards radical militancy (D’Emilio “Sexual Politics,” 205). These differences became increasingly more pronounced leading into the 1970s.

Section 4. Late 1969 to Early 1970s: Gay Liberation Begins

Following the initial raid on Stonewall Inn, the gay liberation movement within the broader LGBTQ+ Rights Movement began the very next night on June 29th, 1969. Angry crowds formed once again on Christopher Street against the police’s continued invasion of Greenwich Village. Similar shouts for “Gay Power!” rang out while even greater opposition formed against the police. Gay and lesbian protestors shouted, “Liberate the street!” and “Christopher Street belongs to the queens!” (quoted in Bausum 69; Faderman 185). Reclaiming both the previously negative term “queen” and the street itself, this raid and riots inspired many gays and lesbians to

become “homosexual separatists.” This weekend of riots signified a “time for homosexuals to declare themselves,” and partake in a more radical, liberation style of advocating for gay rights across the United States (Faderman 177, 178).

Moreover, the excitement at Stonewall Inn did not stop that weekend. Further inspired by these riots was a July 27th, 1969 march of over 500 gay and lesbian protesters. Just one month after Stonewall, these gay and lesbian activists rallied together in New York to protest and speak out about gay rights (Bausum 74; Faderman 195). Just a year later on the anniversary of Stonewall, June 28th, 1970, the first annual Christopher Street Liberation Day March commenced after a week of Gay Pride events in NYC (History.com; Faderman 207-208). This march was significant to the gay liberation movement for three reasons. One, it demonstrated that Stonewall Inn’s raid and riots would not be forgotten in New York City. Two, the march was a very public, political statement and one of positivity as the marcher’s turned the WWII Pink Triangle symbol used by the Nazis to denote homosexual men in concentration camps into a badge of gay pride (History.com). The thousands of people marching in the 3-mile street parade were proudly proclaiming their homosexuality in a public manner and people cheering on the sidelines were proclaiming their support (Bausum 76-77). And three, this was the first Pride Parade that inspired all future Pride Parades in the nation (Faderman 198-199).

Ultimately, it was “the first moment when the closet door was actually opening and the gay community was coming out into the light” (marcher quoted in Bausum 78). Coming out became “posed as the key strategy for building a movement” as it became clear that “sexuality was political” and “coming out was a profoundly political act” (Corber 48; D’Emilio “Sexual Politics,” 235; Epstein 38; Escoffier 193-194; Stychin 91). No longer were gays and lesbians

solely advocating for assimilation into mainstream society, rather many were now advocating for total liberation from the constraints constructed by a heteronormative society. By coming out in large droves, gays and lesbians were gaining visibility and helping to combat the feeling that they were hopelessly outnumbered and politically powerless during this time (Sherrill and Wolinsky 116). Coming out was thus seen as the necessary political act that would help garner visibility and eventually enact socio-political change. As the 1970s continued, this visibility became increasingly more important for the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement.

Furthermore, this first gay pride parade attracted thousands of gays, lesbians, and straight allies to gather in NYC. Such large crowds inspired additional cities like Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and even in Paris and London, to host pride events of their own (Epstein 39). Though gays and lesbians were widely spread across the U.S., which negatively impacted their ability to gain political power, these pride parades demonstrated events that gays and lesbians could come together for in the same location (Sherrill and Wolinsky 116). These pride events were not only celebratory and fun, but they were also symbolic in showing that gays and lesbians were united in their struggle despite their regional distance.

As a result of these pride marches, new gay rights activists and groups began to form across the country too. Groups that emerged consist of the Mattachine Action Committee, Gay Liberation Front (GLF), Pink Panthers, Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), and Committee for Homosexual Freedom (Bausum 75; D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 233; Faderman 179). These new groups pulled heavily from the grassroots strategies and tactics used in other movements at the time, such as the anti-war protests, women's liberation movement, hippie movement, Third World liberation movement, and the Black Panthers (Epstein 38). These other movements

demonstrated effective ways to mobilize, helped form a culture of authoritarian distrust, and inspired new ideas such as the elimination of the “rigid distinction” between homosexuality and heterosexuality. Though these newly created groups and ideas did not always agree or persist over time, the vast number of groups, marches, and beliefs that formed in the aftermath of Stonewall demonstrates the national excitement that the 1969 raid and riots sparked in the gay and lesbian community. Frank Kameny’s “Gay is Good” transformed into Craig Rodwell’s, “Gay Power.” This transition contained radical political implications and consequently resulted in organizational division.

While gays and lesbians were inspired by the surge of activism immediately following Stonewall, the ensuing activism was fragmented. Fragmented not only in new radical forms of liberationist activism, but also fragmented between men and women. This particular gender division would persist throughout the 1970s (Faderman 344). There was clear misogyny in the gay male community that either excluded, silenced, or contained a very small percentage of women in their gay liberation groups. As a result, lesbian women formed their own liberation networks and feminist groups. These groups consisted of the National Organization for Women (NOW), Lesbian Liberation Front, Lesbian Nation, Lavender Menace, Radicalwomen, and the *Furies* (D’Emilio “Sexual Politics,” 227, 236; Epstein 48; Escoffier 198; Faderman 201, 228-241; Morris). As a result of this increase in lesbian feminism in the 1970s, different waves arose and splintered into *cultural feminists* and *lesbian separatists* (Epstein 48). Mainstream cultural feminists included some lesbians and advocated for general women’s issues. Issues such as creating battered women’s shelters, rape crisis centers, offering self-defense classes, and

providing more cultural activities, events, and businesses for women (Bernstein 546; Morris; Stoller 271).

On the other hand, lesbian separatism formed as a subset to the mainstream gay-and-lesbian and feminist movements. Lesbian separatists called again for the personal to be political, asked for other women to come out and declare their lesbianism, and eventually formed their own communities and lesbian communes (Epstein 48-49; Faderman 234, 238). Their “feminism is the theory and lesbianism the practice” slogan conveys how lesbian separatists were able to assert their own place in society away from men and straight women (Stoller 270). However, this newfound lesbian separatism often only included white women and biologically born females, not “pre- or post-operative transsexuals.” Additionally, it often only included lesbians, not bisexuals whom were often deemed “traitors” that continued to take advantage of “heterosexuals’ privilege” (Duberman 265-267; Epstein 50). Though around this time ideas of universal bisexuality¹⁴ were circulating as a means to eliminate the strict heterosexual and homosexual labels, lesbian separatists disavowed such notions as still within patriarchal society (Escoffier 196-197). Due to many areas of division, lesbian feminism de-centralized as the 1970s continued and a definitive lesbian-oriented politics did not fully persist.

Due to these divisions, coalition building was difficult among gay men, lesbian women, people of color, and trans folk. These communities shared grievances against society’s heterosexual oppression, but did not share a common identity or mechanism to address this

¹⁴ Bisexuality is defined as, “a person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to males/men and females/women. This attraction does not have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference for one gender over others” (Wesley 153). Bisexuality is commonly thought of as ranging on a spectrum, not necessarily a 50/50 split.

oppression. On one hand, some scholars report people who experienced moments of the feminist and lesbian movement including people of color and different socio-economic classes. These alliances occurred partly out of necessity due to women lacking the same financial resources as men (Stoller 271-272). On the other hand, many people of color, drag queens, and transgender people still felt left out of these mainly “quasi-ethnic” identities that were white, middle-class, cisgender, gay, lesbian, and feminists (Epstein 43; Escoffier 200; Faderman 193, 200; Stychin 93-94). Particularly excluded were trans folks, who were declared “parodies” of womanhood by GAA and GLF members. The GAA and GLF “essentially booted transgender people from their ranks to appear more mainstream” and gain more public support (Alexander and Yescavage 40; Nownes 101). Additional acts of exclusion were not allowing trans folks to participate in the Gay Pride Rally in 1973, despite their original political activism during the Stonewall Inn riots (Duberman 236-237). Similar to the silence surrounding the Compton Cafeteria riots, Sylvia Rivera’s central role as a trans woman of color leading the Stonewall Inn riots has been all but erased in the popular narrative of the movement. Trans folk, especially trans folk of color, were ultimately silenced by these mainstream organizations of the 1970s.

Furthermore, on the racial side there were gay activists, such as Dick Leitsch and Jim Foster, who did not believe that civil rights for black Americans was related to the gay-and-lesbian struggle. They witnessed homophobia in the black civil rights movement and were subsequently resistant to blacks who were resistant to them (Duberman 216, 230, 258). As a result, they were solely concerned with gay rights and forming alliances with people in power who were more willing to meet their demands. Neither Leitsch or Foster worked to coalesce with liberationist gays, blacks, and antiwar activists that sought to “restructure American society”

entirely (Duberman 216, 230-231). Due to this exclusion, people of color formed their own Third World Gay Revolution organization, lesbians of color formed the National Black Feminist Organization to counter the false universality of white, lesbian feminism, and “street transvestites” like Sylvia Rivera formed the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) (Duberman xiv, 234-235, 251; Epstein 41, 50). A myriad of identities and organizations arose.

These differences between sexes, races, and gender identities proved too difficult to overcome and resulted in the “fragmentation of the Left” (Bernstein 546; Duberman 246-247). Though these different groups of people were on the left side of the political spectrum in opposition to anti-gay conservatives, they were not yet formulated into one political agenda, strategy, or even identity. Once again, divisions along gender, racial, socio-economic class, and strategic lines were rampant within the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. In this section, I have outlined these many divisions to provide historical context for the issues that exist during the remainder of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement and for the issues that eventually mark the HRC. Demonstrated in the 1970s is clear historical precedence for the types of problems that the HRC eventually encompasses as an organization during the 1980s to present day 2019.

Section 5. Early 1970s Consensus

Despite these divisions, there were some forms of collaboration in the early 1970s. One example is the 1972 Democratic Party Committee Convention (Faderman 250). One of the candidates, George McGovern, had previously promised the Gay Activist Alliance he would promote gay and lesbian rights if elected U.S. President (Faderman 250). This political promise

prompted the GAA to unite leaders from 85 different gay and lesbian groups across the country to form the National Coalition of Gay Organizations. This coalition planned how to get McGovern nominated at the DNC convention, add gay and lesbian rights to the Democratic Party platform, and overall elect more gay and pro-gay politicians (Faderman 250-251). While the Democratic Party did not fulfill this coalition's goals, the 1972 DNC did demonstrate different gays and lesbians coming together from all over the U.S. for a common political cause. Additionally, it provided gays and lesbians a national podium to speak on behalf of their rights and community (Faderman 258). Furthermore, it set the groundwork for the Democratic Party to become more supportive of LGBTQ+ rights.

Another issue that brought the divided gay and lesbian community together was the American Psychological Association's (APA) classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder (Bernstein 547; CNN; D'Emilio "Sexual Politics," 238; Morris; Schraub 1446). After years of continual protests, speaking at the APA's annual conventions, and letters sent to the APA from groups like the MSW, GLF, GAA, and GayPA, the APA finally eliminated homosexuality as a mental disorder (Faderman 281, 296). As APA psychiatrist, Dr. Robert L. Spitzer, asserted in an interview with the *New York Times* in 1973:

"We feel we have to keep step with times. Psychiatry, which once was regarded as in the vanguard of the movement to liberate people from their troubles, is now viewed by many, and with some justification, as being an agent of social control. So, it makes absolute sense to me not to list as a mental disorder those individuals ... not in conflict with their sexual orientation" (Dr. Spitzer quoted in "The A.P.A. Ruling" 109; Faderman 296).

Although the interview later conveys that some APA members still believed homosexuality to not be as optimal as heterosexuality, the APA still agreed that homosexuality ought to be removed as a disorder that required medical treatment. This ruling allowed gays and lesbians

greater access to mental healthcare without fear of psychiatric attack on their sexual orientation. In addition, the ruling was a symbol to the gay and lesbian community that “being gay became something to celebrate, to share, to enjoy” (Bausum 80). Beforehand, being gay was a “stigmatized condition” that kept gays and lesbians from gaining social and political power (Sherill and Wolinsky 116). This APA ruling at the very least helped remove this stigmatization and provided gays and lesbians a greater opportunity to gain individual and collective power. While gay, lesbian, feminist, and racially focused groups were still divided at this time, this APA ruling was a major victory that gays and lesbians accomplished together and could celebrate together.

Two additional areas that facilitated greater communication and a sense of community were religion and family. In regards to religion, the first publicly out gay minister was ordained by the United Church of Christ in 1972, inspiring other churches to follow suit. Though the Catholic Church and other conservative evangelical Christian churches were still against homosexuality,¹⁵ the 1970s saw gay people find a home in certain religious faiths. Soon other gay congregations formed or came to welcome gays and lesbians, such as Los Angeles Metropolitan Community Church, Church of the Holy Apostles in New York City, St. John’s Lutheran Church in Miami, gay Catholics formed a group called Dignity and gay Episcopalians formed Integrity, and a gay and lesbian synagogue formed called Etz Chaim (D’Emilio “Sexual Politics,” 238; Epstein 46; Faderman 216, 322, 326). Though many mainstream religions were

¹⁵ Opposition discussed in depth in Chapter 1, Section 7: Opposition Increases Against the Gay Community, page 49.

still opposed to homosexuality, these newfound churches and community centers demonstrate that a religious home for gays and lesbians still existed in American society.

In addition to new religious groups forming during this time were also family-oriented groups. A leading organization that formed in 1972 was Parents and Friends of Gays.¹⁶ Though certainly not every gay person's friend or family member joined this organization, the organization did provide gays and lesbians a greater support network. Additionally, they worked to counteract conservative "family value" organizations and demonstrated to the American public that there were families who openly loved and supported their gay and lesbian children (Faderman 299, 445-447). These efforts worked to grow society's awareness, acceptance, and affection towards gays and lesbians.

Ultimately, these religious and familial acceptance-based efforts were essential for the gay and lesbian community to gain socio-political power and help advance the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement forward (Sherrill 470; Sherrill and Wolinsky 113-114). Furthermore, they demonstrate that not everyone in society was opposed to gays and lesbians. Overall, the 1972 DNC, 1973 APA ruling, and this influx in religious and familial support demonstrates that there were possibilities of unity. Clearly LGBTQ+ people had the propensity to come together to enact change and gain support from the public. While still rife with internal and external conflicts, all hope was not lost. Finding common ground was difficult, but not impossible.

¹⁶ In 1982, Parents and Friends of Gays changed their name to Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, commonly known as PFLAG today (Faderman 299).

Section 6. Liberation Breeds Greater Politicization

As a result of these aforementioned areas of consensus and community, gays' and lesbians' visibility grew in American society. With greater levels of gay and lesbian visibility came greater levels of political action (Bausum 79). Examples of political action during this time were the creation of over 750 new gay rights, legal, and lobby groups that helped to “professionalize” the movement (D’Emilio “Sexual Politics,” 238; Epstein 44; Faderman 259). These “professional” groups that formed and/or increased their efforts were the Gay Activists Alliance; Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund; Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD); National Gay Task Force (NGTF); the first political lobby group for gay rights, the Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL); American Civil Liberties Union’s (ACLU) Gay and Lesbian Rights Project; and later the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF)¹⁷ (Bernstein 557; Epstein 45). Due to being “professional” in suit and style, these organizations are considered a part of the more moderate and mainstream side of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. They did not seek to dismantle the current political system, rather they sought to work within the system to gain rights and recognition.

It is important to note that these “big league” organizations did not initially engage in grassroots mobilization or partake in identity struggles (Faderman 265). Rather, many of these groups were dominated by mostly white, middle-class men that operated with professional Boards of Directors to marshal their place in politics through their privilege as wealthy, white

¹⁷ Renamed the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) in 1995. From 1980 until 1995, I refer to the organization as the HRCF. Following their name change in 1995, I then refer to the organization as the HRC. Anytime the *HRCF* acronym occurs, this means that the project or initiative being discussed occurred prior to 1995. When discussing the organization as a whole, not in relation to their history, I use the acronym *HRC*.

men (Bernstein 549, 557; Epstein 45; Escoffier 200; Faderman 260). A prime example of a group like this was the Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL) that eventually merged into the Human Rights Campaign Fund in the 1980s. As interesting group to contrast the GRNL with is the NGTF given the NGTF's growing role in the movement. Though still a "big league" group, the NGTF was originally more inclusive of women, people of color, and transgender folks. However, even they were not perfectly inclusive at times either.¹⁸ Ultimately, the GRNL and NGTF were new mainstream organizations that operated nationally to work within the socio-political system to gain equal rights and societal acceptance (Duberman 232; Faderman 265).

Because many of these new mainstream organizations lacked total inclusion, other sub-groups formed. Examples are gays and lesbians of color forming the Black Lesbian Caucus and the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays in 1978 (Bernstein 557; Duberman 234; Epstein 45). These types of organizations attempted to combat racism in the gay and lesbian movement, combat homophobia in the black community, and combat sexism in both communities (Bernstein 557). While these efforts intended to span across the nation to enact systemic change, they ended up operating on the local grassroots level. These grassroots liberationists of the 1960s and early 1970s advocated for freedom of sexuality, gender expression, and race in more radical and confrontational ways. Though these liberationist groups contrasted in identities and strategy with mainstream organizations, both of their efforts led to the 1970s' increased politicization.

¹⁸ Discussed again in Chapter 2, Section 4: The 1980s Weren't Just the AIDS Decade, page 71.

Indeed, with more organizations forming, greater civil and political rights were gained in the United States. For example, political candidates began to recognize gays and lesbians as a viable constituency; gay rights groups gained the right to organize; “sexual orientation” was added to over 30 city’s anti-discrimination laws; and many state’s sodomy laws were beginning to be repealed (Bernstein 549). Additionally, gays and lesbians came together to form their own voting bloc and create a well-groomed and intelligent Gay Political Caucus able to influence elections (Faderman 274-276). These early mobilization efforts and organizational successes are evidence that gays and lesbians were beginning to gain a semblance of political power in the U.S. (Sherrill and Wolinsky 118).

Legally, a win for the gay community occurred in the 1975 case, *Doe v. Commonwealth's Attorney for a City of Richmond*. This case essentially split gay identity and gay behavior, which allowed gay people in states with sodomy laws to dodge discrimination if they were not found to participate in gay behavior. Though a complicated ruling, lawyers could use this legal case to limit government harassment of the gay community (Bernstein 548-549). While opposition to gay and lesbian rights still existed at the federal level, these gay organizations could lobby state laws to increase protections and eliminate discrimination laws. By 1978, 21 states had repealed their sodomy laws as a result of this advocacy work (Epstein 45).

These mainstream organizations, particularly the Gay Political Caucus and NGTF, became increasingly prominent when Democrat Jimmy Carter was elected to be the U.S. President in 1976. Prior to his win, the Democratic National Convention appointed their first openly lesbian delegate, Jean O’Leary. This was a significant and symbolic form of political representation for the gay and lesbian community. When President Carter won the election, his

administration allowed space for a few gays and lesbians to work in politics and have their demands be heard by the federal government (Bernstein 549; Faderman 298-301). Gays and lesbians continued to meet with the White House staff throughout Carter's time in office. This was the first time in U.S. history that such a political feat had occurred for the gay and lesbian community. Meeting with the U.S. President is significant not just for the symbolism it invoked, but also because it meant that gays and lesbians were able to voice their concerns and demonstrated to the public that they had a voice worth listening to. Street protests were still valuable, but it is difficult to find common ground and compromise if not meeting face-to-face in a civil and professional setting. Liberationist groups were unable to do this to the same extent that these moderate, mainstream organizations could and did.

However, President Carter still did not adopt gay rights onto the Democratic Party platform. Nor did he come out strongly in favor of gay and lesbian rights. Even so, gays and lesbians' political influence did eventually lead President Carter to sign the Civil Service Reform Act into law, which "prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation in 95% of federal service jobs" (Bernstein 551). Opposition still existed within government, but gay and lesbian activists were gaining a greater presence within the political realm, particularly in the Democratic Party (Escoffier 199). Once politicians in power realized that gays and lesbians had a propriety for organizational structure, membership mobility, and community votes, gays and lesbians began to gain political power of their own.

In addition to gaining political influence among people already in government, there were electoral wins of openly LGB politicians to office. In 1974, Kathy Kozachenko became the first openly lesbian American elected to public office by winning a seat on the Michigan City

Council. Additionally, Elaine Noble became the first openly lesbian candidate to be elected to state office in the Massachusetts State Legislature (CNN; Epstein 46; Faderman 393-395). More widely known today than either Kozachenko or Noble is Harvey Milk's 1977 electoral win in San Francisco (History.com; Faderman 397). Though Harvey Milk was previously was silent on his gay identity when living in New York City, he was inspired by the 1970's gay liberation movement to act out in California.

In the 1970s, Harvey Milk moved from New York City to San Francisco and ran for the city's Board of Supervisors. Though running for office and failing three times, in 1977 he finally won. As a gay activist and politician in San Francisco, Milk urged other gays and lesbians to "Come out, come out, come out" (Bausum 81). Harvey Milk saw the potential benefits of people coming out in large numbers after witnessing the 1970's Christopher Street Liberation Day March where many people had "come out" in support. Both these calls in the 1970s to "come out" and Kozachenko, Noble, and Milk's electoral wins in general are significant for two reasons. For one, gays and lesbians in the U.S. were largely outnumbered, lacked group concentration and constituent formation, and were seen as this "other" in society. Consequently, they lacked positive public affection and political power (Sherrill and Wolinsky 116). "Coming out" allowed the American public to recognize gays and lesbians not as some "other," but rather as their neighbors, friends, family, and ultimately as humans. Gays and lesbians had the opportunity to be a visible and powerful political force that could and would come together to vote. Moreover, vote for candidates that represented gays and lesbians. This leads to the second reason: the power of political representation. Similar to how women and different ethnic and racial politicians advocate more effectively for their identities, gay and lesbian politicians are

found to better effectively represent their own issues too (Haider-Markel et al. 568). By Kozachenko, Noble, and Milk winning office, the LGB community had more powerful and effective representation in politics. Ultimately, these electoral wins and calls to come out were highly symbolic and politically significant for the gay and lesbian community at the time.

In addition to gaining greater visibility by people “coming out,” gays and lesbians also gained visibility through the creation of the rainbow flag (Bausum 93; History.com). The rainbow flag was stitched by Gilbert Baker at the request of Harvey Milk in 1978 and consisted of eight colors: pink, red, orange, yellow, green, turquoise, indigo, and violet (pictured in Figure 1; Young). The flag was quickly crystallized as the symbol of the gay rights movement because it allowed gay people to fly its vibrant colors in pride and allowed straight people to fly it in support. Furthermore, it was another way that Harvey Milk’s call to “come out” was adhered to as the colors were quite ostentatious and perceived as a flamboyant version of “gayness.” By flying it, there was no hiding of one’s true self or support of other’s true selves. Ultimately, this rainbow flag had immense symbolic and political importance in the 1970s since it gave the gay and lesbian community a symbol to rally behind and mobilize others to rally behind as well.

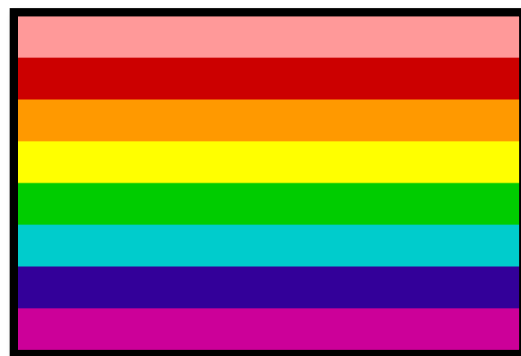


Figure 1

Before the 1960s-1970s gay liberation movement occurred, homophile activists had advocated purely for self-love and assimilation into society. However, in order to assimilate into society, gays and lesbians must first be seen and acknowledged as a legitimate identity. It is difficult to assimilate an identity such as homosexuality if the public does not even recognize homosexuality as worthy of assimilation or still views it as a mental disorder that ought to be excluded. Gays and lesbians only came to gain political power in the late 1960s to 1970s once they gained greater levels of group visibility (Bernstein 539-541). This group visibility came through the political act of “coming out” in the public (Epstein 40; Escoffier 198; Stychin 93). Liberationists of the 1970s did not shy away from society, rather proclaimed themselves loudly and proudly in the United States. The 1978 rainbow flag aided and accelerated this proud process of “coming out” immensely.

Although the gay liberation movement existed in fractured organizations and strategies, the years following Stonewall did help show society the worthiness, dignity, and sheer number of gay and lesbian people in the United States. Furthermore, the gay liberation movement conveyed the willingness and ability of gays and lesbians coming together for common causes affecting them. Though nowhere near full societal acceptance or social movement coherence, the 1970’s gay liberation movement was a step towards progressive political change and a step necessary for garnering greater political power and public recognition (Sherrill and Wolinsky 116). Many historical lessons were learned from the 1970s and subsequently applied to later decades of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. Furthermore, society can draw upon these historical lessons and apply them to the current state of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement in the United States.

Section 7. Opposition Increases Against the Gay Community

Unfortunately for gays and lesbian in the United States, the 1970's political and cultural change led to cultural and political opposition. This opposition is most famously exemplified in Harvey Milk's assassination in 1978, in which his assassin's lawyer defended his murder as an act of panic and depression brought on by a diet change to sugary foods such as Twinkies. Unbelievably, this "Twinkie Defense" worked to convict Milk's murderer for only voluntary manslaughter, setting the precedent for future cases that tried to use a similar "gay panic" defense (Bausum 81-93). However, Harvey Milk's violent assassination was only a culmination after years of opposition to gays and lesbians in society (Faderman 402-403). The 1970s saw the first major wave of anti-homosexual organizations form and institutions reaffirm their opposition to homosexual activity. These institutions largely consisted of the Catholic Church and evangelical Christian organizations like the Pro-Family Coalition and National Council of Catholic Women (Faderman 312, 316). Collectively, this conservative opposition was known as the Religious Right, which turned into the politicized New Right (Escoffier 195, 202).

The New Right movement formed as a counter-movement to the 1960s and 1970s liberation of sexual behavior and identities. In addition to opposing homosexuality, the New Right also opposed increased women's rights, abortion, birth control, sex education in schools, and sex outside of marriage (Escoffier 195; Faderman 306-308). The New Right essentially advocated for "traditional" family, gender, and heterosexual orientation norms in the U.S.' Christian-centric society as a way to resist the growing visibility of the gay and lesbian community (Epstein 46; Faderman 311). It is interesting to note that in the 1970s as gays and lesbians were gaining greater societal recognition and political influence that public backlash

grew to form into the New Right (Haider-Markel 19-21a; Nownes 99-100). This is interesting because in 2016, (Bishin et al.) conducted a study that found when greater political rights are gained by members of the LGBTQ+ community, public backlash does not increase. Not even among Evangelicals. These findings contrast to previous conducted studies that posit public and political backlash are factors for why politicians do not support pro-LGBTQ+ measures (McThomas and Buchanan 445). Yet, by 2016 (Bishin et al.) conclude that waiting to attain or grant LGBTQ+ rights due to fear of public backlash is no longer a warranted concern. Though this concern of public backlash may no longer exist in 2016, it surely did in the 1970s.

Direct public and political impacts of this opposition were felt on multiple fronts in the 1970s. For one, public opinion of gays and lesbians was extremely low at 70% of Americans still believing same-sex relations were wrong (Yang 478). And though some states were beginning to repeal their sodomy laws, other states like Texas only increased them further, such as criminalizing same-sex acts between women too (Faderman 273). Perhaps most galvanizing was in Dade County, Florida in 1977. Former pageant queen and staunch Southern Baptist, Anita Bryant, spearheaded the Save Our Children organization and successfully campaigned the repeal of Dade County's anti-discrimination ordinance for gays and lesbians (Epstein 47; Escoffier 198-199; Faderman 333). Inspired by Bryant's declared "holy war" and "Christian Crusade," was Protestant minister Jerry Falwell who helped form the Moral Majority in 1979. He then toured with Anita Bryant across the United States in opposition to gay and lesbian rights (Bernstein 553; Faderman 335-337, 350-359; Kranz and Cusick 37). The Religious Right quickly gained in publicity and popularity by operating on a common anti-gay agenda.

This agenda included using “religious freedom” arguments to assert that businesses should be allowed to discriminate against serving gays and lesbians. Additionally, this anti-gay agenda asserted that gays and lesbians were corrupting America's children and were overall sinful, unnatural, and diseased people. Though this agenda formed 40-50 years ago in response to the growing visibility of gays and lesbians, it still finds resonance today among many religious conservatives (Bernstein 554). A quite recent example of the “religious freedom” clause being used to legally discriminate occurred in the 2018 Supreme Court case, *Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd. v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*. In a 7-2 vote, the Supreme Court ruled that a bakery in Colorado was allowed to refuse service to a gay couple wishing to buy a wedding cake on the grounds that this sale violated the owner’s religious beliefs (Howard). Clearly the conservative religious opposition that formed in the 1970s has made its way into present times.

While the rise of the New Right was a major threat to gay and lesbian rights in the United States, their opposition actually inspired gays and lesbians to organize, mobilize, and act out further (Faderman 347, 360). As a result, cooperation and an increase in gay and lesbian activism occurred. Examples of increased activism include Gay Pride parades growing dramatically in size and politicization; organizations such as the NGTF doubled in membership; a law that would have fired all gay and lesbian public-school teachers in California was crushed; the Briggs’ Initiative, also known as Proposition 6, that would have halted the repeal of California's sodomy law failed; and numerous other cities’ anti-discrimination laws were upheld in the courts (Bernstein 553-554; Epstein 47; Escoffier 199; Faderman 367-369, 389).

On top of these successes, the decade ended with the first national March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights in 1979. This march was in the works prior to Harvey Milk’s

assassination, but increased in necessity after his assassin's ridiculous trial, verdict, and light sentencing (Bernstein 553-554; Escoffier 199; Faderman 409-411). With Harvey Milk, the gay and lesbian rights movement finally had a "national icon" or "martyr" to rally behind (Faderman 411). To be sure, the movement was still not without conflicts over leadership and organizational strategies, nor did it end the back-and-forth "culture war" between gays-and-lesbians and their conservative opponents. However, the March on Washington did consist of thousands of gays and lesbians working together to demand rights from the federal government (Faderman 318). Furthermore, it demonstrated the gay-and-lesbian rights movement was a legitimate national movement and publicized to other gays and lesbians across the country that they were not alone (Epstein 47; Faderman 90, 348, 378, 413-414). Indeed, the National Lesbian and Gay Communications Network (NLGCN) quickly formed after the march occurred to continue on this type of energized grassroots work (Bernstein 555).

Clearly the extreme levels of public and political opposition that formed in the 1970s did not squash the gay-and-lesbian rights movement. Rather it became quite obvious that greater collaboration and organizational efforts needed to occur in order to grow public and political support for the gay and lesbian community (Faderman 363, 370). On the one hand, the increase in religious opposition worked to suppress gays and lesbians and curtail support for their rights and identities. This opposition ultimately impacted how many "big league" assimilationist organizations came to operate. These groups believed that progressive political action could not be too sudden or it would only be struck down by this powerful opposition. On the other hand, this growing opposition only incited new radical liberation activists and organizations to act out further. It is from the midst of the growing New Right opposition and increase in both types of

gay and lesbian activism that the HRCF was soon established and came to mirror organizations of the movement. However, the HRCF clearly came to mirror the mainstream, assimilation organizations of the 1970s and not those of radical, liberation origin. As such, this paper's first and second key points find historical grounding in the 1960s-1970s time frame of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement.

Chapter Two: The Human Rights Campaign and More

Section 1. Research Methodology

Prior to discussing the Human Rights Campaign Fund's (HRCF) formation in 1980, their organizational structure, and their early work as an organization, I wish to detail how this information was gathered. One of the main components of my research is from a large collection of primary and secondary HRC documents that were compiled by Brenda J. Marston for Cornell University Library Archives. Other areas of information I investigated include the HRC's website, campaign finance record websites, outside consulting company's reports, newspaper articles, HRC tweets and emails, as well as conducting two interviews with top HRC staff members. These interviews were with the HRC's National Field Director, Marty Rouse, and the HRC's Youth & Campus Engagement Director and HRC U Internship Coordinator, Candace Gingrich. These interviews were initiated through contacting the HRC's Field Coordinator, Eriberto Velazquez and then through contacting the two staff members via email myself. Both interviews were over the telephone and touched on topics related to the HRC's past and present work, areas of growth they have experienced, challenges the organization has faced, critique the HRC has received and their response to such critique, status as an organization today, and the future of the organization and LGBTQ+ Rights Movement going forward. Full transcripts of the interviews can be found at the end of this paper prior to the bibliography. Marty Rouse's interview appears in Appendix 1 on page 150 and Candace Gingrich's interview appears in Appendix 2 on page 167.

These two interviews provide important information on the Human Rights Campaign unable to attain from solely online or in-print resources. Furthermore, they provide context and support for knowledge I gained while interning at the HRC in the summer of 2018. The crux of this paper's research on the Human Rights Campaign that follows this section stems from examination of these many primary and secondary sources, interviews with current staff members, and then comparing this gathered information to my own personal experiences while interning at the HRC. Through analyzing these sources, this paper's five key points are further fleshed out by putting the HRC in relation to the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement during the 1980s and in the years leading up to present-day 2019.

Section 2. The Human Rights Campaign Fund Forms

The 1970s' dramatic rise of the conservative New Right revealed just how low public and political support was for the gay and lesbian community. Professional studies were conducted as well that demonstrated the level of disdain the American public had for gays and lesbians. For example, an early 1980s American National Election Studies (ANES) survey asked a group of participants to measure on a "feeling thermometer" how they felt towards gays and lesbians (Sherrill and Wolinsky 96). Of people surveyed, 61.5% felt below 50 degrees towards gays and lesbians, 30.5% felt zero degrees, and only 2.3% felt above 90 degrees (Sherrill and Wolinsky 96-97). These numbers are important because the public's lack of support and affection towards gays and lesbians negatively impacted their ability to successfully gain equal rights and political power during this time (Sherrill 470; Sherrill and Wolinsky 97; Sherrill and Yang 21). By the

end of the 1970s, public support for gays and lesbians was clearly lacking, thus so was their political power. This lack of support framed how mainstream organizations of the time period, including the Human Rights Campaign Fund, approached advocating for rights.

In 1980, the HRCF entered the gay-and-lesbian rights movement as a mainstream organization intent on achieving the same goal of gay and lesbian equality (McCarthy and Zald 1218). The HRCF differed however as the first gay and lesbian political action committee (PAC) in the United States (Kranz and Cusick 171; Stein 70). The organization was founded by Steve Endean, a well-seasoned gay rights activist who had lobbied for Minneapolis to adopt a gay rights ordinance in the early 1970s¹⁹ and then served as the GRNL's director in 1978 (Faderman 265; Kranz and Cusick 191). As discussed in the previous chapter, the GRNL was established during the "mainstream" or "big-league" gay-and-lesbian rights movement of the 1970s. The GRNL joined these large organizations to lobby members of Congress and raise money for political candidates who either identified as gay or lesbian or supported gay and lesbian issues (Faderman 265). The HRCF was founded by Endean in a similar mindset and organizational goal as the GRNL. Just as electoral work and political representation mattered for gaining political support in the 1970s with the election of Kozachenko, Noble, Milk, and President Carter, it mattered in the 1980s as well.

Due to the public's opposition to the gay and lesbian community and need to gain this political representation, Steve Endean worked to gain the "middle" of America's support, not just those on the "fringe" (Endean quoted in Faderman 265). This form of assimilationist

¹⁹ This gay rights ordinance eventually passed in Minneapolis in 1993 (Faderman 265).

advocacy work was dubbed “Gay Inc.” by radicals who did not approve of their professionalized “Suit” style of political activism (Faderman 265). However, from the viewpoint of Steve Endean, the GRNL, and soon the HRCF, radical efforts would only serve to further alienate the majority of Americans, not bring them to their side as allies. It was from these types of mainstream efforts in the movement’s history and in response to the growing conservative New Right that the HRCF came to operate as an incremental, boardroom style organization (Marston; Stein 70). Similar to the critique of mainstream organizations in previous years of the movement, the HRCF earned criticism from people who did not believe this approach to be as revolutionary, effective, or inclusive of everyone in the growing community.

From the beginning the HRCF’s focus was strictly on gay and lesbian issues in the political realm. For example, the HRCF’s original focus is listed in four distinct areas on an early publicized brochure (“Human Rights Campaign Fund: An Introduction” in Marston). The first area is the legislative protection of gays and lesbians from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Second, adequate federal funding for AIDS research and treatment programs as the AIDS epidemic increased.²⁰ Third, reform of immigration laws which now prohibited gay people from entering the country. And fourth, to end exclusion of gay people from military service. A key takeaway from this brochure is that the HRCF was focused exclusively on “lesbian and gay civil rights,” not on other identities, non-gay and lesbian issues, or in forms of government beneath the federal level (Marston). The HRCF’s sole mission was, “to advance the cause of lesbian and gay civil rights by supporting and educating candidates for

²⁰ AIDS discussed in depth in Chapter 2, Section 3: Gay Power Meets AIDS Epidemic, page 63.

federal elective office” (“The By-Laws of the HRCF” in Marston). The 1980s show the HRCF to be very singular focused on gay and lesbian rights and only focused on these rights at the highest political level. This approach was viewed by “big-league” organizations as the most effective way to gain public and political support of gays and lesbians in order to better assimilate and be accepted into American society.

An example of the HRCF’s assimilation approach to gaining equal rights and political power is through their desire to acquire money. Wealth was crucial for the HRCF to procure as a PAC because the organization needed it to make campaign contributions, gain political representation, better advocate for gay and lesbian civil rights, and overall “multiply [their] political power” (Marston; Sherrill 469; Sherrill and Wolinsky 105). Obtaining pro-gay and lesbian political representation ultimately proved to be essential for the HRCF to succeed as a PAC and as a pro-gay and lesbian organization (Haider-Markel et al. 568-569, 576). Non-mainstream organizations were not as financially focused as the HRCF during this time, however this focus helped bring the HRCF early success as an organization.

Success occurred just in 1980 when the HRCF registered with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and made their first campaign contribution to Jim Weaver, a Democrat in Oregon who went on to beat his New Right opponent (Marston; Stein 70). Two years later the HRCF was added to Washington, DC as a non-profit political committee. Just like other mainstream, “Suit” types of organizations forming during this time, the HRCF had a Board of Directors and a small paid staff of 15 members (“Articles of Incorporation HRCF” in Marston; Faderman 265). Through these sorts of financial and electoral measures, the HRCF’s early work

was dedicated towards bringing “the gay movement into the mainstream of the American political process” (Stein 71).

To gain this wealth and embed the HRCF into the American political system, the HRCF relied upon wealthy donors. One way to get large donations was through hosting massive fundraising dinner events. The first National Dinner was held in New York City’s Waldorf Astoria in 1982, featuring former Vice President Walter Mondale as their key speaker (Stein 70). Having Mondale’s presence at the HRCF’s National Dinner made national news headlines as he was a possible contender for the upcoming presidential election. Albert R. Hunt for the *Wall Street Journal* reported, “Some observers argue that playing interest group politics may be shortsighted; if Mondale is elected it might limit his flexibility and freedom to govern” (Hunt quoted in Marston). Though this particular newspaper did not see Mondale’s presence at the HRCF fundraising event as a positive political move, his presence was highly significant for the newly founded HRCF. Walter Mondale’s presence demonstrated the potential political power that the HRCF could and would soon emulate.

Other ways the HRCF gained wealth and grew their organization was through increased membership. The HRCF was able to capitalize on their growing membership, or “constituent” base, by asking supporters for donations, receiving mail contributions, hosting additional fundraising events, and gaining money from the Board of Directors who each had to raise an annual \$5,000 for the organization (Marston; McCarthy and Zald 1221). As a result of these fundraising efforts, in 1982 the HRCF was able to donate over \$140,000 in their first major electoral campaign to 118 congressional candidates. These candidates went on to earn the HRCF an 81% electoral success rate (HRC.org). Over the years the HRCF has not lost this high

electoral success rate (*Charity Navigator*; Marston). Already within their first two years, the HRCF was demonstrating their ability to gain wealth, acquire national media attention, grow public membership support, and establish an early onset of political power.

Furthermore, once the HRCF became FEC approved, the organization was able to expand much larger as a PAC (“Articles of Incorporation HRCF” in Marston). Structural changes subsequently occurred in 1983 when Vic Basile was named the new Executive Director and again in 1985 when the GRNL merged with the HRCF, making one large, all-encompassing organization (Kranz and Cusick 24; Marston; Stein 70). The GRNL’s original mission had been to lobby on pro-gay and lesbian legislation, secure AIDS funding, and rework discriminatory immigration laws. This mission was similar to the HRCF’s so a merger in 1985 made logistical sense in order to maintain and strengthen both their organizations’ missions. The HRCF was no longer just a PAC, but now took on political lobbying efforts as well.

While the HRCF was still primarily focused on politics, they soon began to incorporate small education efforts too. This transformation occurred when they merged with the GRNL’s Right to Privacy Foundation. This branch of the organization operated as a think tank for pro-gay and lesbian policies from 1981 to 1989 and was headed by Steve Endean and Frank Kameny, the well-known gay activist, MSW co-founder, and GLA founder (Marston). Frank Kameny’s involvement with HRCF projects is noteworthy as he was one of the activists to break from the homophile movement’s “genteel” ways in the 1950s-1960s (Faderman 123). As outlined in the previous chapter, though the MSW’s work demonstrated a break from the homophile movement, in the late 1960s-1970s their style of politics was left behind by more radical liberationists. Once again in the 1980s Frank Kameny was a part of the more conventional style of advocating for

equal rights. In the end, by merging with the GRNL, the HRCF joined other gay activists and organizations of the mainstream gay-and-lesbian rights movement. Simply put, the HRCF was a product of their time.

Additional periods of early transformation for the HRCF occurred due to the AIDS epidemic. The HRCF's AIDS related work procured in their tax-exempt Human Rights and Health Fund in 1986, later renamed The Triangle Institute (TTI) in 1988 (Marston).²¹ The primary work of the TTI was focused on AIDS research during the worsening AIDS crisis of the 1980s-1990s (Marston). Additionally, the TTI helped create gay and lesbian caucus networks, further merging with the National Coming Out Day Project (NCOD) that the HRCF incorporated in 1993 (Marston). The HRCF's TTI of the 1980s was a precursor of the HRC's Foundation branch today, which focuses on education and community building efforts. Though the HRCF formed solely as a political organization, the work of the TTI began to increase the organization's education and community efforts moving into the 1990s. While political work was still the primary focus of the HRCF, it was slowly realized that education and community organizing were also necessary to gain rights. Politicians would not be guaranteed to support gay and lesbian rights if they did not have the support of their constituents. Therefore, the HRCF began to slowly alter their efforts to grow the support of the American public.

In order to gain the public's support, the HRCF proceeded cautiously and rather conservatively. The HRCF did not seek to make waves in the political realm like liberationists of

²¹ The TTI was once again renamed and rebranded in 1995, called the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Discussed later in this chapter, the HRC encompasses two branches: the political arm of the HRC PAC, and the education arm of the HRC Foundation (HRC.org; Marston).

the 1970s did, rather they sought to work within politics and gain political support for their pro-gay and lesbian agenda. Additionally, despite the growing visibility of diversity in race and socio-economic status of the gay and lesbian community, the HRCF consisted of a “fairly monolithic” social composition (Epstein 45). “Fairly monolithic” means that the HRCF was “95% white gay men,” as many of these mainstream organizations were during this time in the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement (Gingrich in Appendix 2). The HRCF merely mirrored these mainstream organizations due to forming from the minds of these mainstream organizations. From their debut, the HRCF was very much a part of the “big-league” facet of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement.

Ultimately, the HRCF hoped to gain mainstream societal support through acquiring politician’s support, growing their membership outreach, increasing their fundraising efforts, and focusing primarily on gay and lesbian issues in the political realm. While this strategy mirrored the mainstream movement at the time, it worked to marginalize people of different racial, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Additionally, it was in opposition to people and organizations who viewed liberation and radical tactics to be more effective and inclusive of these different identities. Though the HRCF’s mainstream approach proved to be initially successful in growing the HRCF, it did lead to critique and eventually required the organization to change. Demonstrated just in the early formative years of the HRCF are three of the five main points outlined in this paper’s introduction. The remainder of this paper advances these arguments and shows ways in which the HRCF came to address these initial critiques.

Section 3. Gay Power Meets the AIDS Epidemic

Whilst the HRCF was establishing itself in the political arena and beginning to expand, political opposition was amplifying as well. The New Right gained even greater power in the United States when the highly conservative President Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980. Once in office, Reagan cut the communication lines between gay and lesbian groups to federal agencies and the U.S. federal government began imposing anti-gay and lesbian legislation. Legislation such as blocking Washington, DC's sodomy law repeal and continually trying to get Congress to pass the Family Protection Act, which would have eliminated funding for anyone who advocated for homosexual rights (Bernstein 555-556). Though coalition efforts between different gay and lesbian organizations worked in some cases to dismantle conservative legislation in the 1980s, what truly helped bring together gays and lesbians while simultaneously decimating the community was the U.S. AIDS epidemic (Bernstein 556; Stychin 94).

Before and after the cause of the AIDS' transmission was known, AIDS was publicly and politically linked to men having sex with other men. Initially the illness was called GRID for "gay-related immune deficiency," and coined as the "gay disease" or "gay cancer" in the U.S. (Epstein 52; Escoffier 205; Faderman 420). Members of the New Right attacked the gay community, arguing that AIDS was "God's revenge for immorality," distributed cards that read, "PRAISE GOD FOR AIDS," and newspaper articles headlined that AIDS was "Nature Striking Back" (Bausum 84; Bernstein 558; Pat Buchanan quoted in Epstein 52; Faderman 416). Fear and blame of AIDS on the gay community resulted in limitation of gay men's access to housing, jobs, and healthcare (Faderman 416). This negative language once again re-stigmatized gay identity into medical terms, diminishing the progress gained when the APA eliminated

homosexuality as a medical disorder in 1973. As the 1980s continued, this re-stigmatization only intensified the community's loss of political power and loss of the public's willingness to come to their aid (Sherrill and Wolinsky 116). With no public or political support, the gay community had to turn to each other to help medically, financially, educationally on the causes and prevention of AIDS, and eventually mobilize together to advocate for action by the federal government (Bausum 84-85, 89; Bernstein 560; Epstein 53).

To address these challenges, new grassroots organizations formed to solely focus on AIDS advocacy work. Two key organizations were New York's Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) and San Francisco's AIDS Foundation (Bernstein 558). These organizations concentrated on same-sex domestic partnership benefits, health insurance, bereavement leave, adoption reform, inheritance rights, family legal protections, and other anti-discrimination measures (Bernstein 559; Faderman 453; Stoller 280). Joining these gay male AIDS activists were lesbian women, lesbian separatists, and heterosexual women (Faderman 419). Reasons for why lesbian women assisted in AIDS work were due to having "shared values, sympathy for political goals, and existing organizational membership," prior medical service experience, and seeing an opportunity to attain activist jobs in a depleting job market (Bausum 86; Bernstein 559; Epstein 53; Stoller 270, 275-277). Women formed the Women's AIDS Network (WAN), while gay Latinos and lesbian Latinas formed the Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos (GLLU), to help bridge the gap between the gay and lesbian community and the Latin American community (Faderman 420). Not only bringing new identities into the movement, AIDS also galvanized previously nonpolitical gay men, particularly as the movement's former leaders died from AIDS related illnesses (Bausum 85; Bernstein 559; Escoffier 208; Stoller 277). Despite their previous

differences, these groups and activists realized the need to come together and fight an enemy that knew no distinction: AIDS (Faderman 421).

Mainstream political organizations that were not yet focused on grassroots work also began to participate in AIDS activism. The growing 1980's AIDS epidemic made the issue unavoidable. Achieving "legitimization through disaster," these early organizations professionalized and became increasingly well-established, wealthy organizations that attempted to work with local and federal agencies to secure funding for AIDS research and for their organizations (Altman 301-315; Epstein 54). Groups like the GRNL formed an AIDS Campaign Trust to focus on campaigning for government attention to the growing crisis (Stein 70). The HRCF took on these types of lobbying efforts when the GRNL merged with the HRCF in 1985. Furthermore, the HRCF added AIDS related work of their own. This work consisted of "MEDPACs," which contained "up-to-the-minute, authoritative reports on the medical aspects of AIDS from major newspapers, magazines, and medical journals" (Marston). In addition to educating people on AIDS work in the government, the HRCF also successfully joined efforts with other organizations like the NGLTF and Lambda Legal. Together they helped to get the Civil Rights Restoration Act passed in 1988, the Fair Housing Amendments Act passed, and acquired increased federal funding for AIDS by the end of the 1980s (Stein 71). Though still focused on gay and lesbian issues, the HRCF demonstrated the ability and necessity for coalition work with other gay and lesbian organizations.

Additionally, the HRCF joined with hundreds of other gay, lesbian, and bisexual organizations for National AIDS Lobby Days. These lobby days worked to pressure the federal government to pass AIDS-related legislation, such as passing the American with Disabilities Act

to include people with HIV and AIDS and passing the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resource Emergency Act (CARE) in 1990 (“AIDS Movement Turns 20” in Marston; Stein 71). Leading into the early 1990s, the HRCF continued to engage in AIDS-related advocacy work, as well as work to promote women’s healthcare and reproductive rights. It was at this time that the HRCF began to take positions on issues that were not exclusively gay and lesbian related (Stein 71). Particularly under the leadership of Vic Basile from 1982 to 1989 and then Tim McFeeley from 1989 to 1995, the HRCF began to grow and “broaden its activities” and build coalitions with “feminists and African American movements” (Stein 70). One project where the HRCF began to address women’s issues was a new Lesbian Program in 1989 that intended to expand the organization’s demographics and focus to include more lesbian women (“Lesbian Program” in Marston). Similar to how many different women had supported the gay community during the AIDS epidemic, the HRCF came to support women in their own struggles for access to healthcare and equality. This helps to demonstrate the fourth point of this paper that as the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement transformed to include educational and coalition initiatives with non-LGB issues, so did the HRC. These types of efforts were necessary in order to maximize political rights and gain public recognition during the height of the AIDS epidemic.

Another transformation of the HRCF that occurred was the inclusion of grassroots work when Steve Endean’s Fairness Fund project (FF) formed in 1987. The FF project focused on mail outreach to people and politicians in the country to influence legislation. Though it began as Endean’s own separate project, it eventually merged with the HRCF and was renamed Speak Out (Marston). The Field Division soon formed as well, expanding the HRCF’s focus from federal politics to state and local politics too (Marston; Stein 70). This grassroots political lobbying work

had originated in the Equal Rights Amendment campaign for women in previous years and soon became a larger component of the HRCF moving forward (Marston). The addition of the Field Division was especially crucial for the HRCF's expansion as it allowed the organization to have deeper roots and grow the organization across the country into every state, community, and household. Moreover, the addition of the Field Division would have a lasting impact on the HRCF's work in the future of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement.

As more cases of AIDS occurred and more gay men and activist leaders died, including Steve Endean in 1993, new organizations were inspired to form to attend to the crisis (Faderman 440; Lambert). These new leaders contrasted with those of the HRCF over the tactics to advocate for federal action. The HRCF was more focused on working within the political system in a quiet, conservative, and more professional manner. However, such tactics were viewed to be too slow and ultimately ineffective in attaining immediate action. The gay community could not afford to wait, rather they needed action now. Due to these differences, greater tensions occurred, such as between solely bureaucratic versus grassroots tactics, quasi-ethnic whites versus people of color and other minorities affected by AIDS, and gay identity versus gay behavioral issues (Epstein 54). The tensions that already existed within the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement only worsened during the height of the AIDS crisis.

Organization's efforts to address AIDS subsequently varied. Some organizations called for the closing of gay bathhouses, promoted male monogamy, and advocated for safer sex education. Though safer sex education efforts were crucial to limiting the spread of AIDS, they were also seen to only blame the victims, not the government for lack of attention to the growing epidemic (Bausum 85; Epstein 54). Additionally, they helped to reaffirm, "re-stigmatize," and

weaken gay identity to merely the “diseased sexuality” that the public originally believed it to be (Epstein 55; Faderman 418). Due to AIDS, public opinion towards gay men was extremely low and these safe-sex education efforts were not seen to help (Yang 482). Consequently, different forms of activism occurred. For example, the attention-grabbing “zapping” form of activism that occurred in the 1970s gay liberation movement once again became popular (Faderman 426). One example of a “zapping” demonstration was wearing homemade concentration camp uniforms with a sewn on Pink Triangle badge to show how the government’s inaction was killing gay men just as the Nazis killed gay men during WWII (Faderman 426; History.com). Though the pink triangle had been reclaimed and used as a symbol of pride during the Christopher Street Liberation Day March in 1970, due to AIDS in the 1980s, this triangle once again became symbolic for death. By gaining the public’s attention in an attempt to gain sympathy towards AIDS victims, these “zaps” proved to be “a million times more effective than mere civil disobedience” that mainstream organizations participated in (Faderman 427). Examining this approach in comparison to the HRCF’s conventional style is key to understanding the 1980s and transformation of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement going forward.

Due to these “zap” tactics’ early success, even more radical organizations formed. The most famous was the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) that formed in 1987 by Larry Kramer (Bausum 86; Epstein 55; Escoffier 206-207; History.com). Breaking from the assimilationist, professionalized activism of the HRCF, ACT UP participated in radical, street-style, action-oriented strategies towards gaining societal awareness on AIDS. A list of examples of their radical activism include: “die-ins” at Catholic Churches and on the streets; lying next to cardboard tombstones outside the FDA office; flying a 35-foot homemade inflatable condom

down an anti-gay Senator's street; and later in 1992's Ashes Action protest when thousands of protesters gathered outside the White House and tossed ashes of people who had died of AIDS onto the lawn, chanting "History will recall, Reagan and Bush did nothing at all" (Bausum 87; Faderman 431-435). ACT UP's grassroots liberation tactics focused less on enacting political and institutional change like HRCF's bureaucratic assimilation efforts, but instead focused on breaking cultural norms, bridging the public versus private sexuality divide, and emphasized sexual freedom in society (Bernstein 558; Epstein 56-57). These tactics are attributed to helping get the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and National Institutes of Health to approve experimental AIDS medicine and clinical trials faster to ensure proper care was given to people in need (Bernstein 561-562; Epstein 57; Faderman 430-431, 439; History.com).

As a result of their radical efforts, ACT UP quickly gained membership and societal awareness. They soon became known in the public for their "Silence=Death" pink triangle logo (Bausum 87; pictured in Figure 2; Finkelstein). While ACT UP predominantly consisted of gay men, other people participated too, such as lesbians, heterosexual women, and people of color (Epstein 56). Though ACT UP was a liberationist-style, grassroots organization that succeeded in many ways by advocating for greater AIDS action, conflicts and tensions still existed. The 1990s began to see the organization's radical, confrontational form of activism diminish as the professionalized, mainstream activism of the HRCF once again gained traction (Bernstein 562). This split of ACT UP was aided further by ideological divisions of single-issue versus multi-issue focus of the organization, differences between gay men and lesbian women, white people and people of color, and between HIV-positive and HIV-negative people working for the group

(Epstein 57). Issues that had plagued the HRCF during their formative years also affected ACT UP.



Figure 2

Important to note is that while ACT UP struggled with identity and strategic differences, the organization did bring the AIDS crisis to the public's attention. Additionally, the organization was still a strong advocate for AIDS medical research, public awareness, and governmental action leading into the 1990s. Thereby, ACT UP helped provide the groundwork for queer identity and activism of the following 1990s (Epstein 57; Escoffier 208). Furthermore, due to the help of ACT UP's activism, AIDS research and funding was finally secured, which saved millions of lives in the United States (Faderman 440). Though the organization eventually waned in popularity, it would be remiss to not highlight their significance during the deadly AIDS time frame of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. Particularly when their efforts were so

drastically different than the mainstream, incremental, and politically oriented Human Rights Campaign Fund. Though the HRCF mirrored mainstream organizations in their approach to gaining rights, clearly mainstream organizations were not the only types of organizations in existence during this time. And while the HRCF did not seek to emulate these radical activists, the HRCF was inspired by other organization's educational efforts during the decade and inspired to work with these other organizations to address the growing AIDS crisis.

Section 4. 1980s Weren't Just the AIDS Decade

It is impossible to discuss the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement of the 1980s without discussing the AIDS epidemic. However, there existed other forms of successful gay and lesbian activism that was not entirely centered on AIDS. For example, in 1984 the largely gay and lesbian populated West Hollywood was officially added as a city to Los Angeles County, California. In addition, San Francisco witnessed a dramatic influx of gay and lesbian rights organizations, growing from 93 organizations in 1979 to 255 by 1983 (Epstein 58; Faderman 453). Increasing too was the emphasis that gay and lesbian rights organizations placed on people in the public and in politics. Public efforts included calls for gay and lesbian education programs in schools, gay and lesbian academic courses at universities, creation of new gay and lesbian professional groups, and the formation of new media focused organizations, such as Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) (Corber 47; Epstein 58). GLAAD was particularly effective in attaining more positive and realistic portrayals of gays and lesbians in Hollywood, which in turn helped to increase LGB's public visibility (Marston). On the political

end, efforts included gays and lesbians once again supporting the Democratic Party in numerous elections and pressuring the party to increase support of gays and lesbians at the 1984 Democratic National Convention (Epstein 58). Despite these public and political efforts, opposition was still strong in the 1980s.

Legal opposition occurred 1985's *Rowland v. Mad River Local School*, where a teacher was fired for disclosing her sexual orientation. This case eventually went to the U.S. Supreme Court where they supported the school district's dismissal of the teacher. While Justice William Brennan famously dissented that LGB people are "particularly powerless to pursue their rights openly in the political arena" and that their rights were "an issue that cannot any longer be ignored," his dissent did not stand with other Justices (quoted in Schraub 1447). For example, in 1982 Georgia's sodomy law was contested in *Bowers v. Hardwick* and went all the way to the Supreme Court in 1986, where a 5-4 vote ruled that sodomy laws were constitutional for states to uphold (Bernstein 560; Faderman 428; Schraub 1447-1448). Legal progress was denied yet again in this ruling. These two rulings inspired organizations like the NGLTF's Privacy Project to contest sodomy laws throughout the country on a state-by-state basis rather than rely upon the federal court system (Bernstein 563; Epstein 58). Grassroots activism once again prevailed.

Following these Supreme Court rulings was the second National March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights in 1987, hosting 600,000 people from across the United States (Bernstein 561; Faderman 428; Morris). This march gave many gay and lesbian organizations a greater voice on the national level, including the Human Rights Campaign Fund (Marston). The same week that this march was held, over 600 protestors were arrested outside the Supreme Court in opposition to the *Bowers v. Hardwick* ruling. Additionally, a large ceremony occurred

as the Names Project's AID Quilt was displayed of 1,920 panels, mourning the lives of people who had died from AIDS²² (Bausum 86; Epstein 59; Faderman 429). Though gays and lesbians came together for a rather depressing reason, the fact they were able to coalesce in such large numbers during this time of grief is rather astounding.

Additional unity occurred after the march when the NGLTF organized a large "War Conference" to host over 30 gay and lesbian activists from various different organizations (Shower in Marston). They mobilized together to address "a national administration hostile to the cause of lesbian and gay rights and cruelly indifferent to the catastrophe of AIDS" ("Final Statement of The War Conference," in Marston; Marston). From this conference came the "National Coming Out Day Project" on October 11th to celebrate gays and lesbians living openly in the United States. As previously stated, this initiative later merged with the HRCF in 1993 (Marston; Faderman 431). Though a complete and coherent unity of identities and strategies did not procure as a result of the AIDS epidemic, the crisis did bring moments of unity within the gay and lesbian community. Just as the DNC briefly brought gays and lesbians together in 1972 and the APA ruling brought gays and lesbians together in 1973, so did the AIDS crisis and their joint community protest in the 1980s.

Still though, issues existed on racial and cultural fronts. Racially, gays and lesbians of color struggled to combat both racism in gay and lesbian organizations and to combat homophobia in civil rights organizations. To address these conflicts, the National Association of Black and White Men Together (NABWMT) was founded in 1980 (Marston). What began as a

²² The number of panels increased to nearly 50,000 by the end of the AIDS crisis (Faderman 429).

small group of black and white gay men socializing expanded into the international realm by 1983 (D'Emilio "Black and White Men Together;" Marston). The NABWMT spread across the U.S. and adopted new names, such as Men of All Colors Together (MACT) or People of All Colors Together (PACT) (Marston). These chapters demonstrate that there were efforts at cooperation between white and black gay men to address racism and homophobia. Though other groups and identities may have been exclusionary intentionally or non-intentionally, the NABWMT showcases that not everyone in the gay community was this divisive. Rather, they were actively working together to address these different types of discrimination (D'Emilio "Black and White Men Together"). The NABWMT's important work continues to this day.

On the cultural level, there were several sex radicalized organizations that existed. Two examples were the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), who pushed to end age-of-consent laws and the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, who wore nuns' clothing with heavy makeup and participated in public "exorcisms." Additionally, there were radical lesbian organizations like the Lesbian Avengers that formed across the U.S. This group acted in unconventional ways, such as holding Dyke Marches to increase lesbian visibility in non-AIDS or abortion related fields ("An Incomplete History..."). Organizations such as these greatly worried mainstream gay and lesbian activists of ruining their image in the American public (Epstein 59-60; Faderman 458). Similar to how homophile organizations in the 1950s-1960s worried over the liberationists' tactics, these mainstream organizations of the 1980s worried about these radical groups diminishing gay and lesbian's steadily more positive presence in American society (Epstein 60). Altogether, even in moments of supposed unity, exclusion existed. For example, of all the activists that attended the 1988 "War Conference," not even a

third of the attendees were women (“Final Statement of The War Conference” in Marston). The conference leaders even note that “we do not consider ourselves fully representative of our diverse community, nor do we purport to speak for it” (“Final Statement of The War Conference” in Marston). So, though moments of unity existed in marches, conferences, and organizations like NABWMT, this unity did not always include everyone. Even the leaders of the War Conference and LGBTQ+ Rights Movement recognized this limitation.

It was during the 1980s that these mainstream organizations began cementing their “identities” as organizations. The “fairly monolithic” composition during the HRCF’s origin continued throughout the 1980s (Epstein 45). Due to existing as this type of organization, the HRCF gained the perception as a mainstream, elitist, wealthy, white gay men’s club (Marston; Stein 71). Particularly as a wealthy organization due to the HRCF’s many fundraisers. For instance, in 1987 the HRCF held another large National Dinner, which raised large sums of money for the HRCF to continue their political advocacy work. These National Dinners were the foundation of HRCF’s fundraising efforts in the 1980s and continue still today. Indeed, National Dinners now entertain over 3,500 guests and continue to host powerful political speakers such as Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and most recently, Joe Biden. These fundraisers currently raise millions of dollars for the organization (Marston; HRC.org). Beginning in the early 1980s, the HRCF realized the importance of fundraising in such a public manner to grow the organization’s financial power, national publicity, and political influence as an organization. Despite the reputation they gained from these financially focused efforts, this growth of wealth resulted in the HRCF’s growth of political power and ability to enact positive change.

The HRCF's reputation as a wealthy, white organization has become increasingly harder to shake off as the years progressed. As Gingrich notes, "it's easy to get perception and it's challenging to kind of erase perception that people already have" (Appendix 2). Though the 1980s were a time of somewhat unity as organizations focused on AIDS and equal rights, it was also a decade strife with conflict between gays and lesbians, people of color, different socio-economic classes, and mainstream and liberationist groups (Faderman 441). Even moments of unity were still marked with division. This division in the 1980s carried over from divisions that surfaced during the 1970s. The 1980s AIDS epidemic merely intensified them further. Together, these decades of divergence provide historical context for division and critique the HRCF faced leading into the 1990s and later in the 2000s portion of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement.

Section 5. The 1990's Addition of Queer Politics

With the emergence of the 1990s came the introduction of *Queerness*, adding *Q* onto the growing LGBTQ acronym. Queer formed as an identity of sorts that went against the fixed categories of gay and lesbian identity (Epstein 60; Stychin 94-95, 98). Queer is considered a fluid, umbrella term or social identity particularly popular among young people, people of color, bisexuals, and transgender folks who felt left out by the mainstream gay and lesbian identity and movement (Bernstein 563; Corber 48; Epstein 61). Queer identity and its ensuing queer politics grew in popularity in the 1990s, but also struggled with many of the same battles that liberationists did in the 1970s in trying to sustain and mobilize a "non-identarian" movement

(Epstein 60). It proved difficult to mobilize people around an identity that was both non-identity and anti-identity, while also being an identity of its own just in having a term to describe it.

Additionally, queerness did not account for those who felt comforted, safe, and even empowered by having a solid label in *gay* or *lesbian*. Therefore, *queerness* ran into opposition within the gay and lesbian community and mainstream organizations (Stychin 100-101). Furthermore, there were still people of color who felt that queerness did not account for race and socio-economic class differences, resulting in the formation of a *Quare* identity (Johnson 3-4). *Quareness* attempts to encompass LGBT people of color while not erasing their differences, but rather acknowledging, emphasizing, and celebrating these differences. Ultimately, Quare formed as an “interventionist disciplinary project to queer studies” that sought to address the exclusionary issues found within the queer community (Johnson 20). However, this Quare identity did not politically mobilize many people, rather just helped to educate the black queer community on the importance of their intersectionality.²³

Despite there still being a feeling of exclusion amongst many people of color, queer identification and queer organizations began to rise in popularity. The largest queer organization established in the 1990s was Queer Nation. By forming as an organization in 1990, Queer Nation helped to cement queer as an identity engaged in political activism (Bernstein 563; Corber 48; Epstein 62). The organization once again called for the personal to be political, just as lesbian

²³ Intersectionality is the “theory that the overlap of various social identities, as race, gender, sexuality, and class, contributes to the specific type of systemic oppression and discrimination experienced by an individual.” It is “the oppression and discrimination resulting from the overlap of an individual’s various social identities” (Dictionary.com). The theory of intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 and was soon incorporated into various movements and identities, such as queerness.

separatists has done in the 1970s. These revamped efforts of the 1990s were in direct contrast to the homophile organizations of the 1950s that sought to de-sexualize homosexuality. Therefore, Queer Nation offered a group for many people who did not fit into other groups and sought to build bridges across these marginalized communities. As a result, Queer Nation gained membership from many previous ACT UP activists, bisexuals, younger people, and transgender folks (Epstein 60-62; Escoffier 208). Pulling inspiration from the strategies of ACT UP, as well as containing many of these same ACT UP activists, Queer Nation participated in more radical forms of activism than the HRCF did during the 1990s.

Examples of Queer Nation's radical activism include: "counter-public" and "in-your-face" protests like "Queer Nights Out and Kiss Ins;" "outing" famous celebrities and politicians against their wishes to showcase their hypocrisy as being politically anti-gay and/or to allow them to serve as public role models for the community; and wearing "fabulous gay regalia" clothing that said "Promote Homosexuality, Generic Queer, Faggot, [and] Militant Dyke" in an attempt to reclaim words originally meant to harm and marginalize their status in society (Bernstein 563; Corber 48; Epstein 63). A rallying cry behind Queer Nation's attempt to gain visibility and proclaim their separatism from mainstream, heteronormative society was, "We're here; we're queer! Get used to it!" (Epstein 64). Queer Nation sought to transcend and transform the existing social order of the United States rather than assimilate into society like the HRCF continuously promoted (Corber 49).

While gaining the public's attention, tensions quickly emerged inside and outside of Queer Nation. An internal tension they faced was in attempting to transcend identity, while becoming an identity itself, albeit without a wholly unified age, gender, or race base. An external

tension was their controversial and radical activism strategies did not communicate well with other gay and lesbian groups to enact any real change. Nor did these strategies appeal to those in the American public. While this was their fundamental goal, it did not bode well for true societal and political success (Bernstein 563; Corber 48-49; Epstein 62-63). These tensions demonstrate that total group cohesion and collective identity within the LGBTQ+ community, if it could even be considered a community, still did not exist. Due to lack of group cohesion and support, Queer Nation soon disintegrated as an organization and LGBTQ+ people still lacked a strong public and political influence in the United States (Sherill and Wolinsky 116).

However, though gone as an organization, Queer Nation's legacy of queerness lived on. This is most notable in new forms of queer academic studies (Bernstein 568; Corber 49; Epstein 64; Escoffier 212; Stychin 95). Though still not within most high school education programs, many higher education institutions now offer Queer Theory courses, including DePauw University. Queer Nation additionally inspired different people in the early 1990s to participate in a cultural revolution of identities that often intertwined in the political realm. This resulted in increased opportunities for LGBTQ+ people to be involved in the movement who felt otherwise disenfranchised by mainstream organizations like the HRCF. Similar to how ACT UP energized and engaged with new and younger gay activists in the 1980s, so did Queer Nation in the 1990s. Ultimately, Queer Nation can be attributed to helping spark increased levels of political activism during the 1990s, even as they contrasted with mainstream efforts of the HRCF.

Section 6. 1990s Political Fights

With the addition of queer political identity, the 1990s were shaping into a highly political decade for the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. It was in the midst of many political struggles during the 1990s that the Human Rights Campaign Fund underwent a dramatic transformation. After becoming the 27th largest non-connecting PAC in the nation, the HRCF realized opportunities to expand their organization's reach even more (Sherrill and Wolinsky 107). Under the leadership of Executive Director, Elizabeth Birch, the HRCF dropped the "Fund" and became just the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). The HRC as a whole came to encompass two branches. The first is the HRC PAC, which handles the political aspect of the organization. The second branch is the HRC Foundation, which is the "educational arm" that emerged from the The Triangle Institute (TTI) (*Charity Navigator*; Marston; Stein 72). Though shortening the overarching name, these two branches of the organization came together and still kept the fundamental nature of their name: Human Rights Campaign. Though advocating for specifically gay and lesbian rights, these rights are still fundamentally human rights (Gingrich in Appendix 2). Overall, the HRC's name helped with the stigmatization of appearing as a purely gay and lesbian organization. The public can donate to the HRC, politicians can accept donations from the HRC, and people can even work or intern at the HRC without fear of being "outed" as LGBTQ+ or as allies. The stigma attached to a gay and/or lesbian named organization that may have lessened their public and political support was not an issue for the HRC (Sherrill and Wolinsky 116). The HRC was able to avoid this stigmatization and politically destabilizing effect by merely its innocuous name.

Not only was the transformation of the HRC's name important, but so was the incorporation of the HRC Foundation. In 1980, the HRCF was primarily geared towards electoral work with a small branch focused on education efforts. With the HRC Foundation's expansion in 1995, the organization now included different types of lobbying work, research and policy formation, workplace equality, greater outreach efforts on familial acceptance, hate crimes, job discrimination, and especially greater efforts on educating a more diverse public (Bernstein 564; Epstein 67; HRC.org; Stein 71-72). This education approach took the form of educating both voters and politicians on gay and lesbian issues, as well as educating voters on how different politicians viewed these issues. These endeavors occurred through sending questionnaires to voters and politicians to survey their stances on LGB issues, pamphlets informing the public on LGB issues, and compiling politicians' voting records on LGB issues in Congress (Marston). These congressional compilations have continued to this day, published each new session as the HRC's "Congressional Scorecard" (HRC.org). These efforts have kept the public informed on Congress and have kept Congress members accountable to the public.

Prior to this 1995 transformation, educating people on gay and lesbian issues was viewed as risky and not wholly worthwhile. The "Spiral of Silence" concept helps explain that this risk was due to people believing that supporting gay and lesbian issues led to societal isolation. With public isolation came further disempowerment and silencing of LGBTQ+ people in society (Sherrill and Wolinsky 92, 108-109). This fear of public isolation was apparent in both politics and the public. Politicians feared loss of votes for vocalizing support for LGB people, while American citizens feared being ostracized from their neighbors. Therefore, attempting to educate people that did not want to listen or could not socially or politically afford to listen seemed a

waste of time. However, by the mid-1990s public support had increased enough from the 1970s that this fear became less of an inhibitor for the HRC (Yang 481). In response to rising public opinion, the HRCF began researching and publishing studies that demonstrated politicians' support of LGB people did not doom their political careers ("Does Support for Gay Civil Rights Spell Political Suicide?" in Marston). By 1995, the "importance of education" was finally recognized and fully addressed by the HRC (Gingrich in Appendix 2). Ultimately, by 1995 the early critiques of the HRCF as being too singularly focused on politics and not dialed in to other approaches began to hit home and inspire efforts at change within the organization.

1995 continued to be a year of political transformation for the HRC as they became "one of the largest and most effective mainstream advocacy organizations in the country" (HRC.org; Marston). In 1994, the "Republican Revolution" occurred in which Republicans won the House of Representatives for the first time in 40 years and Newt Gingrich took over as Speaker of the House (Ball; Gingrich in Appendix 2). With the majority of the public still feeling below 50% towards gays and lesbians and more conservatives in power, a greater need for the HRC's political activism and public education existed (Sherrill 470). Public education not just on political issues, but on who LGBTQ+ people were. Subsequently, the HRC "took advantage" of the situation and brought in Newt Gingrich's sibling, Candace Gingrich to help demonstrate to the public what a typical queer "American family looks like" (Gingrich in Appendix 2). It was the HRC's goal to show that LGBTQ+ people come from all "sorts of backgrounds" to help sway people's opinions towards greater affection of LGBTQ+ people (Gingrich in Appendix 2). The HRC invited Candace Gingrich to speak at the HRC's Equality Convention, lobby Capitol Hill, and travel to over 50 cities on an HRC Town Hall tour to speak to fellow Americans about

LGBTQ+ issues. This tour not only helped educate the American public, but it also garnered a lot of national media attention for the HRC.

This tour was a key example of the HRC's new education approach of bringing LGBTQ+ lives "into people's living rooms" (Gingrich in Appendix 2). Once this tour ended, Gingrich stayed on at the HRC and worked on their National Coming Out Project (NCOP) that had newly merged with the organization. As previously mentioned in this chapter, this project stemmed from the NGLTF's War Conference in 1988 and had the same goal as the national tour: educate Americans, show who LGBTQ+ people were, and change the public's hearts and minds. The HRC recognized that the more people realize they knew an LGBTQ+ person, the more likely they were to support LGBTQ+ issues (Flores). "Coming out" was a strategic call to action that had worked to secure LGBTQ+ people positive visibility in the 1970's Christopher Street Liberation Day March and among Harvey Milk's own calls for people to come out. The HRCF acknowledged the benefits of these efforts when incorporating the NCOP and having Candace Gingrich help to advance the project across the country. Overall, 1995 marked a year of transformation for the HRC as they began to increase their non-political efforts and attempt to appeal to the American public to amass societal visibility and support. Such were the strategies of grassroots, populist organizations that were gaining in popularity during this time and so too became the strategies of the HRC (Epstein 67). Just as the HRCF had mirrored the mainstream LGBTQ+ Rights Movement when it formed in 1980, the HRC began to take shape and mirror the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement as it progressed in the 1990s.

In the midst of the HRC's expansion were many political wins and losses for gays and lesbians in the U.S. These battles occurred on the local, city, and state-wide level against

initiatives that tried to make it illegal for gay rights laws and anti-discrimination laws to exist, such as Colorado's Amendment 2 (Bernstein 564; Epstein 68; Faderman 457). Only in 1996's *Romer v. Evans* did the U.S. Supreme Court rule these sorts of legislation illegal for states to pass, marking a historic win after years of lobbying on the issue (Faderman 466; Schraub 1449-1450). A major win for gay and lesbian groups occurred even earlier in 1990 when Congress passed and President George H.W. Bush signed the Hate Crimes Statistics Act that "mandated the collection and publication of data on bias-related violence based on religion, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation" (Bernstein 565; "2005 HRC Annual Report" in Marston). The HRCF was heavily engaged on this hate crimes statistics law, lobbying Congress, sending out Congressional action alerts to members, and even airing nationwide television commercials in support (Marston). Upon signing this act into law, President George H.W. Bush invited mainstream groups like the HRCF to the White House to recognize their efforts in getting this bill written and passed (Marston).

This Hate Crimes Statistics Act was crucial for future laws to pass as well. For example, in 1995 the Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act passed, which allowed judges to "impose harsher sentences if there was evidence a victim was selected because of the 'actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person'" (CNN; Marston). Though violent crimes were illegal against anyone, now sexual orientation was added to the list of identities legally protected for judges to consider when sentencing criminals (History.com; Marston). Furthermore, it was a win that symbolized many people understood sexual orientation as necessary to protect under law. This recognition did not exist prior to these laws, demonstrating a growth of LGB political power (Sherrill and Wolinsky

116). Important to note however is that gender identity was not yet included. Though different sexual orientation issues were more understood in the public, transgender issues were not.

Not only did these two key hate crime laws pass in the 1990s, but other forms of activism were prominent too. For example, two marches occurred: the third National March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, [and now] Bisexual Equal Rights and Liberation and the Stonewall 25 March in New York City on the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. Both marches reached nearly a million people, were broadcasted by the media, and attempted to include a diverse range of racial and sexual identities in the marches (Epstein 69). However, neither march ended in more powerful levels of group mobilization. This absence of ensuing action is due to lack of strong leaders bringing different groups and identities together and due to lack of alliances with other civil rights movements (Corber 48; Epstein 69). There was no Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for the LGBTQ+ community to rally behind and mobilize the community together. Furthermore, the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement was still too narrowly focused on gay and lesbian issues, not in coalition building with many other issues and organizations. Lack of leaders and allies resulted in lack of political power and influence in the public. The LGBTQ+ Rights Movement was definitely making progress, but it was small and slow compared to other social movements before them.

That being said, on the national level some changes were beginning to occur. While the 1992 Republican National Convention was adamantly anti-LGBTQ+, the Democratic National Convention appeared more accepting of gays and lesbians (Faderman 496-497). Democratic nominee and future U.S. President Bill Clinton actually mentioned gays and lesbian rights in his DNC nomination acceptance speech and promised profusely during his campaign to lift the ban

on gays and lesbians in the military. This campaign promise would have meant major victory for gays and lesbians after years of public, political, and legal battles to uplift the ban (Bernstein 566; Epstein 69; Escoffier 210; Faderman 471-494). Bill Clinton's rhetoric prompted gay and lesbian organizations to support and even donate to his campaign, such as the HRCF contributing over \$3 million (Marston; Stein 71). The HRC and LGBTQ+ people in general became some of Bill Clinton's and the DNC's staunchest supporters (Bishin and Smith 794). With little to no Republican support, the small support that the Democratic Party provided the LGBTQ+ community was enough to amass the HRC's organizational support and the LGBTQ+ vote.

Even with greater levels of national support, there were still strategic differences between organizations in the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. For example, organizations like ACT UP and Queer Nation were engaging in radical forms of activism against the government, while the HRCF was endorsing and helping to elect pro-LGB leaders into positions of power. Whereas these radical groups focused on gaining the public's attention, the HRCF used political campaign tactics to ensure pro-gay and lesbian measures and people were supported across the country. Each organization believed their approach to be more effective and both tactics operated simultaneously with one another, making it difficult to trace which tactic gained which socio-political right or if it was both tactics combined that advanced along the movement. Interestingly, while both tactics may have been effective, ACT UP and Queer Nation eventually declined as organizations. The HRCF on the other hand has continued to grow in membership, finances, and political power.

Though the HRCF was continuing to grow politically during this time, federal support was still not guaranteed. In many ways President Clinton and the Democratic Party appeared

more pro-LGB rights. For example, President Clinton's speech at the DNC convention mentioned gays and lesbians, Clinton appointed openly gay men and lesbians to his administration, his administration provided millions of federal dollars for AIDS research and medical care, and he even became the first President to speak at an HRC National Dinner in 1997 (Bausum 89; Epstein 69-72; Stein 71). However, despite this initial support, President Clinton ended up signing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" into law in 1993, effectively banning gays and lesbians from serving openly in the military. By signing this law, Clinton broke his campaign promise, disregarded the HRCF's massive political lobbying and educational campaign called "Operation: Lift the Ban," and ultimately proved that LGB people still did not have a friend in the federal government (CNN; Epstein 69-72; Escoffier 210; Faderman 500-501; Marston). What was claimed to be an "honorable compromise," still hurt LGB people from serving openly and resulted in more than 14,000 service members being discharged (Faderman 504; Morris). "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" constituted as a major, backstabbing defeat for the LGBTQ+ community and thus as a win for the conservative New Right.

Another major issue of contention between President Clinton and the gay and lesbian community concerned same-sex marriage (Epstein 70). During the 1980's AIDS crisis, gay rights organizations in many states were able to attain domestic partnership benefits, primarily out of healthcare necessity. Because of these benefits, full marriage equality did not seem imperative. However, when Hawaii's Supreme Court ruled in 1993 that a lower court had improperly dismissed a case concerning same-sex marriage licenses, the rest of the U.S. began to believe that same-sex marriage could be legalized (Bausum 94; Bernstein 567; Faderman 586; History.com). This belief worried many conservatives and led to 25 states by 1997 to oppose

same-sex marriage laws (Epstein 70; Faderman 587; Schraub 1449). On the federal level, Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which strictly defined marriage as between one man and one woman (Bausum 94; CNN; Epstein 70; Faderman 589). Despite the LGBTQ+ community supporting President Clinton, in 1996 he signed DOMA into law.

Reasons for why Clinton and many Democrats in Congress disregarded their loyal LGBTQ+ voter base are varied. Possible reasons were due to lack of majority American and party support, partisanship pressure in Washington, DC, or as (Bishin and Smith 799-800) argue, sub-constituency politics. Sub-constituency politics posits Democrats more likely to support pro-LGBT policies if their constituency base is primarily LGBT people and allies. If their constituency hosts two opposing groups, such as LGBT people and Evangelical Christians, they will be less likely to vote in favor of pro-equality measures. Due to these reasons, many Democrats in Congress as well as President Clinton supported DOMA. In spite of the support that LGBTQ+ people and the HRC showed the federal government, the federal government did not reciprocate this support.

Important to note however is that LGBTQ+ people were still not wholly united as a community during this time. For example, both the military and marriage debates that existed in the country's broader social-political realm also existed within the gay and lesbian community (Bernstein 566; Epstein 71; Faderman 589). On one end were gay and lesbian assimilationists such as the HRC that wished for inclusion and acceptance into institutions like the military and marriage. While this view was assimilationist, it was also somewhat radical since it demonstrated a desire to join institutions that were historically patriarchal, racist, and homophobic. This desire for assimilation into society was widely supported by mainstream gay and lesbian activists who

wished to “create the political conditions under which lesbians and gay men will be able to achieve social equality” (Escoffier 211). Equal civil and political rights with heterosexuals in American society was still the main goal of these groups.

On the other end were liberationists who wished to be completely separate from mainstream society. They viewed assimilating into institutions like the military and marriage as a betrayal to their gay and lesbian community (Bernstein 566-567; Epstein 71; Faderman 589). The internal debate over the military and marriage were debates similar to earlier years of the gay and lesbian movement: assimilation versus liberation. Or in a more detailed description, “gradualism versus provocation, assimilation versus separatism, single-issue groups versus coalitions, [and] centralization versus grassroots localism” (Epstein 74-75; Escoffier 211). Once again, the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement was rife with internal conflict, thus not fully coming together as a strong, united political force against external opposition like the New Right.

In addition, how gay and lesbian groups framed their argument for equal rights and societal acceptance affected the support they gained from the public. These framing differences often corresponded to identity differences as well. Assimilationists were often of quasi-ethnic identities that attempted to normalize gay and lesbian identity and gain social acceptance through “straight-passing” public appearances (Bernstein 565; Epstein 74-75; Escoffier 212). As such, these groups appealed to mainstream white, middle-class Americans. However, radical liberationists were often of multiracial and multi-gendered identities that did not amass this same level of support from mainstream society. Due to these differences in strategies and identities, it became increasingly clear that the LGBTQ+ community was not homogenous.

This lack of homogeneity resulted in the creation of many different identity-based groups. Examples of groups that formed were the Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization (LLEGO), Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum, and Trikone, a South Asian LGB group. Though these groups did not consist of every different type of race and ethnicity, the fact that these groups existed at all demonstrates that other LGBTQ+ organizations were lacking total inclusivity. Thereby, these groups formed to address issues and identities where other groups faltered. Additionally, these types of groups focused on eliminating homophobia within their respective communities and eliminating racism within the gay and lesbian community (Epstein 65-66). One notable supporter for both black and gay rights was MLK's wife, Coretta Scott King. In 1986 she spoke at the fifth HRC National Dinner to espouse a message of "solidarity with the gay and lesbian community." In 1998, she again asked the black civil rights community to help in efforts to eliminate homophobia (CNN; Stein 71). Overall, the 1990s consisted of multiple voices and identities expressing their opinions, which lead to multiple goals, strategies, and even sub-movements to form. Internally, the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement was still divided, which diminished their collective ability to gain political power. And if any political power was gained, it was often at the expense of other identities.

In addition to these internal conflicts were also external conflicts. These conflicts consisted of the scientific discovery of a "gay gene" and its' socio-political implications, capitalist marketing towards gays and lesbians with rainbow symbol products, continuation of the 1980's "sex wars," and the rise of a new gay conservatism with organizations like the Log Cabin Republican Club (Epstein 65, 67; Escoffier 209, 212-213). The "gay gene" debate was particularly troubling as it conflated with the nature versus nurture debate and once again worked

to stigmatize the gay and lesbian community into medical terminology (Liu 35). The gay and lesbian community had made great strides since the 1973 APA ruling to eliminate this pathological classification. However, the “gay gene” discovery and the overall AIDS epidemic of the 1980s brought this medicalization back into the center of the movement. Evidently, the stigma attached to being gay or lesbian had not waned with time.

Despite these internal and external conflicts, civil and political progress occurred. For example, 30 states and Washington, DC had repealed their sodomy laws, 11 states and many other cities had passed anti-discrimination laws on the basis of sexual orientation, 5 states offered domestic partnership benefits to gay and lesbian state employees, and an increased number of gay and lesbian politicians were in office (Epstein 72). Additionally, gay and lesbian visibility began to grow in representation on television and film. Celebrities such as Ellen DeGeneres publicly came out, gay professional sports players came out, and there were increased numbers of gay and lesbian religious ministers (CNN; Epstein 72-73; Faderman 546; Morris). Additionally, visibility grew for the trans and intersex community as more academic books were published. This new research helped shift “women’s and gender studies to become more inclusive of transgender and non-binary identities” (Morris).²⁴

By the end of the 1990s, public awareness and acceptance of LGBTQ+ identity was beginning to percolate in society. The HRC’s expanding educational efforts in their National Coming Out Day Project and nationwide tour to educate Americans on LGBTQ+ people assuredly helped gain LGB visibility, as did other organization’s public and political activism.

²⁴ Transgender rights and activism discussed more in depth in Chapter 3, Section 3: Transgender Rights, page 116.

And though President Bill Clinton proved to not be as pro-LGB as he promised, many politicians and legal courts were more receptive to the growing LBGTQ+ community. Furthermore, by the end of the 1990s, survey data showed that people's feelings and affections towards gays and lesbians was in fact warming (Sherrill and Yang 21). Even if people were not that affectionate towards LGB people, many people at least thought they deserved equal rights (Sherrill and Yang 21-22). This belief led to gays and lesbians affecting laws that would have been impossible to pass or even be discussed in the 1950s-1980s. By the 1990s, these laws were now on the political agenda, demonstrating that LGB people were a valid community worthy of recognition and protection in American society (Schraub 1458).

To be sure, many rights still did not exist and many setbacks occurred in the 1990s. Divisions were particularly evident among different assimilation and liberation groups and their respective identities. Despite these conflicts, there were still increased calls for change by activists, calls for civil and political rights by organizations, and many more people in society willing to heed these calls. This change in public opinion and growth of political power for the LBGTQ+ community would not have occurred without the political activism of LBGTQ+ people in society, nor without the combined educational and political efforts of organizations like the HRC. As the 21st century emerged, the progression of the HRC in relation to the progression of the LBGTQ+ Rights Movement became even more pronounced.

Chapter Three: Progress Picks Up

Section 1. 21st Century Progress

Though progress definitely occurred in the 1990s, the past two decades of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement have witnessed the most dramatic civil and political advancements for the LGBTQ+ community. Not only in acquiring greater LGBTQ+ rights and recognition, but also in the growth of the Human Rights Campaign. In the past twenty years the HRC has grown and transformed immensely as the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement has grown and transformed. During this time, the HRC has made a much bigger and broader name for themselves as they have advocated for the LGBTQ+ community. Though faltering at times and still finding critique today, this chapter will demonstrate ways in which the HRC has cemented their leading role in the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. Furthermore, how the HRC has worked to solidify their central place in the United States' socio-political arena.

A key year for the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement and the HRC was 2003. Beginning in June of 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court eliminated sodomy laws across the country in the case, *Lawrence v. Texas*, effectively striking down the 1986 case, *Bowers v. Hardwick* (CNN; Faderman 510, 592-593; History.com). Due to an increase in public opinion, finally the nationwide criminalization and presumed “moral criminalization” of gays and lesbians was outlawed (Faderman 546). This ruling was significant for two reasons. One reason is in its symbolism. Negative stereotypes and prejudice towards gays and lesbians often weaken the political impact they can have towards attaining equal rights (Sherrill and Wolinsky 84). Due to

Lawrence v. Texas, this negative stereotype of presumed criminality was diminished, freeing LGBTQ+ people to have greater agency in the public. Coinciding with this symbolism is its political impact. Not only were LGBTQ+ people legally decriminalized across the country, but pro-LGBTQ+ organizations could now focus their efforts and resources elsewhere, such as the military and marriage equality (Faderman 537, 547). Sodomy laws once caused severe public and political impacts on the LGBTQ+ community. However, *Lawrence v. Texas*' ruling helped to increase the LGBTQ+ community's positive visibility in the United States, which in turn allowed LGBTQ+ people to gain greater rights.

Visibility increased in 2003 as well for the Human Rights Campaign. Helping spread the HRC's mission and focus on full LGBTQ+ equality across the country was the organization's new logo: the blue and yellow equality sign (pictured in Figure 3, page 97) (HRC.org; Marston; Stein 72). The HRC's new "bold [and] simple" logo helped enact the HRC as a symbol "synonymous with the fight for equal rights for LGBTQ Americans" (HRC.org; Stein 72). The logo was "a piece of brilliance" that provided people a "way to show their own support or their own queerness without being too out" (Gingrich in Appendix 2). This symbol helps to combat the "Spiral of Silence" process that stems from people's fear of societal isolation if seen with a symbol that is associated with an identity not positively viewed by the public (see Noelle-Neumann in Sherill and Wolinsky 92). Previous popular symbols could be seen to escalate this "Spiral of Silence" for people. For example, the rainbow flag stitched in the 1970s immediately alludes to a more "flamboyant" form of the LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, the pink triangle used in the 1980s is immediately associated with WWII, ACT UP, and the deadly AIDS epidemic. However, the HRC's logo does not always register in people's minds as an LGBTQ+

related symbol. Rather just a symbol of equality. This logo has allowed the HRC to grow their symbolic visibility while also allowing people to wear the symbol without being exposed as either flamboyantly or deathly LGBTQ+. This in turn has lessened people's fear of societal isolation and diminished the possibility of the "social movement" to be "swept away" (Sherrill and Wolinsky 92).

Interestingly, this logo change came from the direction of HRC's Executive Director, Elizabeth Birch whose previous job had been at Apple Inc. As Gingrich described, Elizabeth Birch understood the "whole marketing thing" in growing visibility for the organization and providing the LGBTQ+ community a safe symbol to rally behind (Appendix 2). As (Sherrill 471) notes, safety is imperative to political growth. The new, stealth-like logo of the HRC provided safety in declaring oneself as LGBTQ+ or as an equal rights ally in the political realm. Resembling their name as "Human Rights Campaign," the new innocuous logo helped to grow the HRC's public visibility and political power in a safe manner. Similar to homophile organizations' non-gay and lesbian names in the 1950s, such as Mattachine Society or Daughters of Bilitis, the HRC's logo and name provided the organization the ability to be gay, but not "too gay" so as to warrant overt heterosexual acknowledgment and aversion. Whether the logo is exhibited on car's bumpers, computer cases, water bottles, t-shirts, or on tables at Pride events, the blue and yellow equality sign is everywhere across the United States. Even those who do not know who or what the Human Rights Campaign is often recognize the symbol (Meronek). From personal experience, when I told my parents I was interning at the HRC last year, they did not know exactly what the organization did, but they recognized their name and their blue and

yellow equality symbol. The significance of the HRC's name and particularly their symbol cannot be overstated.

Further solidifying the HRC's central place in the country and in the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement occurred yet again in 2003 when the HRC opened their headquarters in the heart of Washington, DC (pictured in Figure 4, page 97) (HRC.org; Marston). This building was significant not only for fiscal reasons, but also because its' physicality demonstrates the permanence of the organization and demonstrates that pro-LGBTQ+ work is central to the American political agenda. When questioned on the opening of the headquarters, Candace Gingrich discussed at length the importance of the building:

"And then there's the symbolism. You know, of permanence. HRC is not going anywhere until we achieve all the things that we're trying to achieve. It's become kind of a beacon. I think of myself growing up in Harrisburg, PA. I went on a field trip to Washington, DC when I was in middle school, and I can only imagine if little tiny baby dyke me had seen this new building that was full of people who are working for me, who cared about my existence. And how much of an impact that would have had on me. So, I think about, the kids who just aren't coming to the building but driving past and seeing and thinking, "All right, someone's on my side." And then the ability to use the building as a message around the elections, around events. And I think the best example of that is after the Pulse nightclub shootings and being able to lift up the lives of those people that were murdered, by telling their stories in the windows. It was just really, really smart for us to do" (Appendix 2).

Once gays and lesbians were picketing at the White House and throwing ashes upon its' lawn. Yet now the HRC headquarters represented a location dedicated to pro-LGBTQ+ work that is just within walking distance of the White House. With the HRC's new logo and building, the organization solidified their symbolic visibility and permanence. Furthermore, through these efforts, the HRC became a symbolic leader for the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement; a leader the movement had previously lacked. With the rise of the HRC during this time, they worked to strengthen their place in the political arena and their place in the American public as one of the

movement's strongest leaders. This was a historic growth for both the organization and the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement in general.



Figure 3



Figure 4

At the same time that the HRC was increasing their visibility and permanence as an organization, they were also increasing their mobilization efforts around the military ban. It took years of advocacy work on the behalf of organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Lambda Legal, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, and Call to Duty to improve public opinion in favor of gays and lesbian serving openly in the U.S. military (Faderman 515). These organizations' efforts were mainstream in trying to demonstrate to Americans the normalcy of being gay and lesbian in the military, such as having high ranking, "straight-arrow-looking" gay and lesbian service members speak on their ability to serve (Faderman 520, 524). Public and political activities that the HRC engaged in was a Voice of Honor National Tour in partnership with Servicemembers United and with American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER). This tour spanned across 50 cities in the U.S. to support veterans in

their efforts to lobby Congress members for the repeal of the ban (HRC.org; Marston). Marty Rouse notes how the HRC ensured that the face of those calling for the bills' repeal were not "people wearing HRC pride shirts" (Appendix 1). Rather, "it was the face of veterans, family members, and other loved ones of veterans being visible and talking to their elected official about why they, from a great personal perspective, should be repealing 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'" (Appendix 1). Additionally, the HRC had members send over 625,000 emails to politicians, send 50,000 handwritten pro-repeal cards to Congress members, made 1,000 grassroots lobby visits to Congress in Washington, DC, and hosted more than 20,000 veterans to engage in national news media events (HRC.org). The HRC focused on the federal government to enact this change, but ultimately engaged on the grassroots level in order to achieve this change.

Due to these types of efforts, public opinion was eventually swayed. For example, a 2009 Gallup poll showed 69% of Americans were in favor of gays and lesbians serving openly in the military and a separate Pentagon study demonstrated that 70% of military respondents believed that repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" would have a "positive, mixed, or nonexistent" effect on the military (Faderman 515, 529). Clearly, the public and the military itself were increasing their support for the LGBTQ+ community to openly serve in the U.S. military. With these increased levels of public support came increased levels of political support, most evident in President Obama.

For example, President Obama was invited to speak at the HRC's National Dinner in 2009. His willingness to attend and address the LGBTQ+ community resulted in HRC President Joe Solmonese to declare, "We have never had a stronger ally in the White House. Never" (Faderman 517). It took years of President Obama's private wishes to lift the ban, years of

working with pro-LGBTQ+ organizations like the HRC, multiple coalition and bipartisan efforts in Congress, and direct support by the military to invoke change. Finally, in 2011 President Obama signed the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (CNN; Faderman 532, 573; History.com). Unlike President Clinton in the 1990s, President Obama proved to not be full of empty promises to the LGBTQ+ community. As Senator Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) asserted, “This historic day has been seventeen years in the making and would not have happened without the leadership of Joe Solmonese and the Human Rights Campaign” (Lieberman quoted on HRC.org). The HRC demonstrated to play a pivotal role in working with service members and other organizations to gain public and political support for the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” Thankfully, President Barack Obama publicly and politically expressed his support too.

While many Americans focused on lifting the military ban, there were also calls for same-sex marriage legalization. While the issue of marriage equality was not one of the original foci of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement, as the 2000s progressed, this attitude changed. Prior to discussing reasons for how and why marriage equality became a popular issue, I wish to outline that there were LGBTQ+ people that still did not understand or agree with the goal of lifting the military ban, attaining marriage equality, or even the notion of “equality” itself (Faderman 528, 533). Rather, they believed that assimilationists like the HRC had “hijacked” the LGBT movement and shifted its goals and strategies from the liberation goals of the 1960s-1970s. Furthermore, they argued that these mainstream groups’ efforts only promoted people that looked presentable to heterosexual society, not having a “more representative spectrum of gays and lesbians” included in their advocacy work (Faderman 524). One group that reformed in 2009 after a brief stint in the late 1990s was Fed UP Queers (FUQ) (Faderman 532-533). This anti-

assimilation, pro-liberation group drew members from “sex-positive queers, trans, and gender-nonconforming folks” that will “call you out on your shit” as their mission statement proclaims (fedupqueers.wordpress.com). It is not that groups like Fed UP Queers were opposed to LGBTQ+ people, rather they were opposed to LGBTQ+ people assimilating into a heteronormative society.

However, these anti-equality, anti-assimilationist groups were met with disdain from gays and lesbians who strongly desired equal rights as American citizens (Faderman 533). Additionally, these radical activists did not consist of the majority of the LGBTQ+ community. Moreover, even Fed Up Queers themselves had disintegrated as a group in the early 2000s and based off their current website, the group’s 2009 revival appears to be quite inactive today (fedupqueers.wordpress.com). Evidently these anti-assimilation groups have lacked the same stamina or strength as pro-assimilation and pro-equality organizations. Though this small level of dissent demonstrates that not everyone in the LGBTQ+ community desired “equality,” there was still enough support and unity to progress forward as a movement. It was by this time in the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement that there were sweeping demands for “the right to be recognized as equals” (Egan and Sherrill “Marriage and Shifting Priorities,” 230-231).

Furthermore, these calls for equal rights increasingly appealed to the public’s affection towards gays and lesbians. Ultimately, “Americans support equality of tangible benefits even while opposing symbolic equality” (Sherrill and Yang 22). Even if Americans did not morally support the LGBTQ+ community, many did support their attainment for equal rights as American citizens. Consequently, courts began to take up the issue of marriage equality yet again, which prompted both grassroots and mainstream organizations to work towards marriage

equality as well (Egan and Sherrill “Marriage and Shifting Priorities,” 229). Soon marriage equality, not just domestic partnership benefits, became the “surest shield against society’s contemptuous abuse of those in same-sex relationships” (Bishin and Smith 796; Faderman 590). Full marriage equality became the most politically salient issue of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement, especially for younger generations of gay and lesbian Americans (Egan and Sherrill “Marriage and Shifting Priorities,” 230-231).

Efforts to gain marriage equality varied in the LGBTQ+ community. On one end were people who favored radical forms of activism, not viewing political oriented “incrementalism” to be an effective and efficient approach (Faderman 526; Wesley et al. 157-158). Radical organizations like Get Equal formed and took inspiration from strategies used in the 1970s and 1980s by the GAA and ACT UP. These tactics engaged in civil disobedient “zap” efforts, marches, chaining themselves to the White House fence, and calling President Obama a “silent homophobe” (Faderman 527-528). Using similar “in-your-face” strategies of the 1970’s liberation movement and 1980’s AIDS activism, these types of organizations contrasted with the conservative, mainstream strategies of the Human Rights Campaign.

Mainstream efforts by organizations like the HRC framed marriage equality as a right all humans deserve (Sherrill and Yang 22). One early attempt to gain the public’s affection towards gay and lesbian couples occurred on the state level in Massachusetts in 2003. In Massachusetts, the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders law firm brought together different same-sex couples of different ages, races, socio-economic classes to “talk from [their] hearts” (Faderman 591-593). This “talk from your heart” method was geared towards garnering public opinion in favor of marriage equality. Marty Rouse participated in this “hearts and minds” approach in

Massachusetts prior to beginning work at the HRC. Therefore, when joining the HRC he was able to bring the “organizing work, state legislative election work, [and] changing hearts and minds” initiatives to the HRC to “increase [their] political power” on the local level (Appendix 1). This “hearts and minds” approach was effective in Massachusetts to increase public opinion towards passing marriage equality so it was hoped to work for the HRC too.

One venture the HRC used to grow public support for pro-LGBTQ+ issues was in field work. In their respective roles, both Candace Gingrich and Marty Rouse participated in increased levels of federal and grassroots field work. On Candace Gingrich’s end, as the new Director of the Youth & Campus Engagement department, Gingrich went on college tours to Get-Out-The-Vote and communicate pro-LGBTQ+ issues to people Gingrich coined as, “Generation Equality” (Appendix 2). Younger generations were more in support of LGBTQ+ issues even if not LGBTQ+ themselves, so channeling this support into votes became the goal of the HRC. On Marty Rouse’s end, as National Field Director of the HRC, he is charged with figuring out where to use HRC’s financial and staff resources, put political teams on the ground, and “make change” (Appendix 1). Because the HRC cannot be in every town in all 50 states, it is the National Field Director’s job to determine how to strategically mobilize members and supporters across the country to make the most effective change on the federal, state, and local level. Yet, how does the HRC make this effective change and garner this public support?

One way is through mobilizing support, getting involved in local elections, and being very visible as an organization. Prior to 2003, the HRC did not have much of an organizing presence. The HRC would endorse candidates and donate money to their campaigns, yet not do much of the actual field organizing work for the political campaign. Because mobilization is one

of the key mechanisms that brings people together, fashions group identities, and forms political blocs (Egan “Group Cohesion, 598), the HRC was missing out on these key benefits. Out of necessity to stay a publicly relevant and politically influential organization, the HRC began mobilizing members on the grassroots level; lobbying local, state, and federal political offices; forming coalitions with organizations; and empowering members to be involved in these organizing efforts as well. From these amplified efforts on the issue of marriage equality, the HRC has greatly expanded their reach over the last decade (Rouse in Appendix 1).

This expansion occurred especially after marriage equality passed in Massachusetts in 2003 and inspired other states to address the issue (Dazio). On the federal level, at the front of these marriage equality campaigns was the HRC in mobilizing members and supporters to send thousands of postcards to Congress, lobbying Congress members themselves, actively contributing financially to other organization’s lobbying efforts, and spending over \$1 million in 2004 and 2006 to fight against the Federal Marriage Amendment (HRC.org). It was on the federal level that the HRC was overwhelmingly engaged with Congressional lobby work. However, on a grassroots state level, these efforts were not as strictly confined to lobbying. As Marty Rouse outlines, there are no two states alike in how the HRC had to approach gaining marriage equality. One example is in New York where HRC lead “the largest field campaign ever in support of state LGBTQ rights legislation,” consisting of 30 full-time field organizers and over 150,000 members and supporters contacting state politicians (HRC.org). However, in other states the HRC had to work in a very different, strategic, and intentional manner.

An example of the HRC engaging in a different strategy occurred in Maryland. In the state of Maryland, government works differently and so it is much easier for issues to be brought

to the general ballot. Therefore, the HRC needed to amass state public support for marriage equality to ensure it would not be struck down on a general ballot measure. As discussed later in this section, this occurred in California's Proposition 8 ballot measure. While Prop 8 was eventually repealed, other states ran the risk of an anti-LGBTQ+ public halting marriage equality by a simple vote. Thus, growing public support for marriage equality became the HRC's central focus in Maryland. The HRC was able to accomplish this through partnering with the NAACP's headquarters in Baltimore to grow African-American support for marriage equality. While resistant at first, ultimately the HRC and the NAACP came together to educate voters, be visible partners, and mobilize public support. Although many people never predicted marriage equality to pass in Maryland, the 2012 general election proved these pessimists wrong (Appendix 1). Marriage equality passed by popular vote, resulting in large celebrations among the HRC and Maryland's LGBTQ+ community. This particular example showcases a successful change in HRC strategy from primarily political work to appealing to the public through coalition efforts.

This coalition effort was significant for the HRC for two reasons. For one, the HRC had once been criticized for not including African American or African American issues in their organization's original focus and demographics. By now partnering with the NAACP, the HRC demonstrated a positive change in their relationship with the African American community. A second significance of this partnership was that African Americans were now expressing their support for LGBTQ+ equality. Due to higher religiosity rates, African Americans have historically voted against pro-LGBTQ+ measures (Egan and Sherrill "California's Proposition 8," 9-11; Bishin and Smith 801). California's Proposition 8 is a key example of this opposition when 58% of African American voters supported this anti-marriage equality bill (Egan and

Sherrill “California's Proposition 8,” 1-2). Despite these previous group differences, in 2012 the HRC and NAACP came together to support marriage equality. Just as the HRC had previously partnered with service members in the fight to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the HRC now partnered with the NAACP to support marriage equality. As Marty Rouse notes, “it really varies issues by issues who your partners are” when deciding on how the HRC plans to act (Appendix 1). Ultimately, this specific coalition effort was crucial for the HRC to gain allies and advance their pro-equality agenda. As such, this example demonstrates this paper’s fourth key point that the HRC transformed to build coalitions with non-LGBTQ+ organizations in order to maximize political rights and gain public recognition in the U.S.’ LGBTQ+ Rights Movement.

Other efforts to gain marriage equality besides lobbying and coalition work were through legal means. While the HRC is not a legal organization and has no voice in the courtroom, they have still addressed legal issues in different ways. Two court cases were particularly significant in the fight for marriage equality. For example, California's state legislature legalized same-sex marriage in June of 2008, but in November Proposition 8 passed in the general election to repeal same-sex marriage (CNN). Prop 8 was upheld until 2013’s *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, when mobilization efforts led by the soon-to-be HRC President, Chad Griffin, resulted in its repeal (CNN; Faderman 526, 617-618; HRC.org). A second case occurred in 2013 with *U.S. v. Windsor*, which effectively struck down DOMA. On the political side of this case, the HRC worked to lobby Congress to repeal DOMA. The former HRC President, Joe Solmonese, was even called to testify in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2011 (HRC.org). In both *Hollingsworth v. Perry* and *U.S. v. Windsor*, the HRC engaged in federal and state testimony and lobbying efforts to grow public and political support necessary for these cases to succeed.

Not only did the HRC engage with these types of political efforts to gain public support for marriage equality on the federal level, but the HRC also heavily engaged with social media campaigns. This was particularly the case in *U.S. v. Windsor*. For example, in 2013 the HRC changed their blue-and-yellow equality logo to shades of pink and red to symbolize love and support for marriage equality. As a result, Facebook saw an unexpected 120% increase in profile picture changes, including popular celebrities such as George Takei, Beyoncé, and Martha Stewart (HRC.org). This social media campaign was significant as well for engaging with younger generations of Americans. As Gingrich asserts, this campaign allowed the HRC to use social media as an “organizing and an educational tool,” which helped to make a “big difference” in the fight for marriage equality (Appendix 2). With the American public increasingly showing support for marriage equality, on June 26th, 2013 the U.S. Supreme Court declared that DOMA was unconstitutional. This meant that married same-sex couples were granted the same federal tax rights, social security rights, veterans' benefits, green card benefits, etc. as married heterosexual couples (Faderman 627-629). Though full federal marriage equality still was not granted, the fall of DOMA resulted in celebration across the United States from the LGBTQ+ community and their allies.

Once DOMA fell, full marriage equality became the sole focus of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. The previous type of “changing hearts and minds” strategy used to strike down DOMA was employed once again. Specifically, the HRC began Project One America, which began in 2014 as a \$8.5 million effort to enact social, institutional, and legal change in the Deep South’s states of Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi (HRC.org; Underwood; Wong). For the first time the most conservative, religious states in the country were being specifically messaged

in order to change their beliefs to support the LGBTQ+ community. The HRC's Project One America and the HRC in general soon worked to compile a "People's Brief" of 207,551 signatures from U.S. citizens calling for nationwide marriage equality (HRC.org). The HRC even worked with the leading civil rights attorney from the *U.S. v. Windsor* 2013 case, Roberta Kaplan, to write this historic brief (HRC.org). The final 3,500-page version was made into 19 copies and delivered to Congress by the HRC prior to the amicus brief deadline on March 6th, 2015 (HRC.org). Ultimately, this "People's Brief" is significant because it represents the HRC's combined federal lobbying and state mobilization work.

Finally, on June 26th, 2015 in the case *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the Supreme Court legalized marriage equality across the U.S.²⁵ Through grassroots and federal lobbying efforts, coalition building, social media campaigns, and personal stories shared from members of the LGBTQ+ community, the American public came to support marriage equality. Public support of marriage equality was the primary reason it eventually became federal law (Faderman 613). This support would have been impossible to acquire if not for the HRC and many other organizations placing constant pressure on people in the public and in politics. Furthermore, this support would have been impossible if not for organizations like the HRC engaging in campaigns to change people's "hearts and minds" in the country's more conservative Deep South states. Support cannot solely stem just from more liberal coastal states like California and New York. Rather, support needs to span across the United States in every state, city, and community. With this increase in public

²⁵ Fun fact for the DePauw University reader, one of the main lawyers to successfully defend *Obergefell v. Hodges* was a 1989 DePauw University alum, Doug Hallward-Driemeier.

and political support came greater political power for the HRC, the LGBTQ+ community, and the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement in general.

On a completely separate note, an area of LGBTQ+ activism that was not as widely popular as marriage or the military during the 2000s was in regards to the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) (Faderman 565). Though the LGBTQ+ community was largely in favor of workplace protection laws, there was disagreement about how to gain this right. This disagreement centered on whether to include just sexual orientation or sexual orientation *and* gender identity. Workplace discrimination laws were introduced several times in the 1990s-2000s by the pro-equality politicians Barney Frank, Tammy Baldwin, and Ted Kennedy (Faderman 565-566). Each time these bills were introduced to Congress, they failed. As a result, dissention soon occurred between Frank and Baldwin over the inclusion of people with different gender identities. Frank believed ENDA had to be passed in increments, whereas Baldwin favored full LGBT workplace protection. Abiding by Barney Frank's approach, ENDA in its final 2007 form only included sexual orientation.

It was not that Barney Frank believed transgender people were not worthy of workplace equality. Rather, he was concerned that Congress would not support ENDA at all due to many members not viewing trans folk as "fellow human beings" (Faderman 568-570; Murray; Taylor and Lewis 121-122). Frank believed that greater transgender education and lobbying efforts needed to occur before transgender rights could be included. While this view was not wholeheartedly supported by the HRC, it was not fully opposed either. Rather, the HRC President, Joe Solmonese stated, "The speaker's [Nancy Pelosi] and Representative Frank's

legislative path for action on ENDA, while not our choice, follows the path of other civil rights and business regulatory legislation” (Solmonese quoted in Murray).

Essentially, Barney Frank and the Human Rights Campaign believed “progress would have to be incremental” (Faderman 568; Taylor and Lewis 121). For vocally and financially supporting this bill in 2007, Frank and the HRC received massive critique from other members and organizations in the LGBTQ+ community (HRC.org; Stein 71). In trying to enact progress in a moderate and incremental manner, the HRC ended up marginalizing transgender folks. And while Candace Gingrich asserts that the HRC has “definitely come a long way from 2007,” one pro-LGBTQ+ news reporter notes that “many in the trans community will never forget how, in 2007, the HRC supported an employment anti-discrimination bill that left out trans people” (Appendix 2; Meronek). This lack of transgender support by one of the leading organizations in the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement was particularly noticeable due to numerous other organizations not supporting ENDA.

For example, a coalition of over 300 LGBT organizations came together in 2007 to form a United ENDA Coalition in support of transgender inclusion (Murray). Led by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force,²⁶ it was the “first time mainstream organizations raised united voices for transgender rights” (Faderman 568-569). The HRC was notably not a part of this coalition. Due to varied levels of support and opposition to ENDA, many Democratic leaders not supporting ENDA with the inclusion of gender identity, Republicans not supporting any aspect

²⁶ The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) once was the NGLF. Over time they added the Q and the T to their acronym/name to be more inclusive of other identities. Currently, they are called the National LGBTQ Task Force (Faderman 568-569).

of ENDA, and groups like Freedom to Work, Americans for Workplace Opportunity, and Trans People of Color Coalition lobbying extensively against it, ENDA failed to pass in 2007 (Faderman 574-576; HRC.org; Murray). ENDA's political defeat and public disapproval demonstrated that the HRC's gradualism approach to gaining rights was not as effective as they believed it to be.

Though full LGBTQ+ workplace equality failed to pass in 2007, in 2008-2016 there was greater success under President Obama. Though taking his time to support to his LGBTQ+ voter base, Obama eventually addressed federal workplace discrepancies and inequalities (McThomas and Buchanan 442). For one, President Obama appointed over 170 openly LGBT officials to the executive branch (Wesley et al. 155). Additionally, President Obama joined forces with multiple organizations to sign two executive orders into law (Faderman 579-580).²⁷ One law amended Bill Clinton's 1998 Executive Order 11478 to include gender identity into workplace protection for people employed by the federal government. The second law amended Lyndon B. Johnson's 1965 Executive Order 11246 to no longer allow LGBT people to be discriminated against by federal contractors (Faderman 580). While these two executive orders only applied to protection in the federal government, they sent a message to the Religious Right that discrimination on the basis of religion would no longer be allowed in the federal government (Faderman 580). Under President Obama, the LGBTQ+ community's political muscle was flexing and actually achieving "far reaching and positive consequences" (Wesley et al. 156).

²⁷ These multiple organizations consist of the Human Rights Campaign, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Get Equal, Lambda Legal, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, Freedom to Work, Freedom to Marry, PFLAG, Family Equality Council, BiNet USA and even many religious leaders from Jewish, Catholic, Episcopal, Muslim faiths (Faderman 579-580).

In summation, the past twenty years of the 21st century have witnessed a dramatic period of progression for the Human Rights Campaign and the overall LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. This period of progression helps to demonstrate many key points of this paper. Prior to the 2000s, the HRC was primarily focused on federal political efforts for gay and lesbian rights. However, to lift the military ban and pass marriage equality, the HRC began engaging in grassroots field work, coalition efforts, and focusing more on educating the public on LGBTQ+ people. The LGBTQ+ Rights Movement was expanding to include these types of advocacy work, so the HRC did too to maximize political rights and public recognition for the LGBTQ+ community. Together these efforts help to demonstrate my paper's fourth key argument.

Interestingly, legislative work that the HRC believed to be effective at the time, but failed in the long run was ENDA. Though the HRC intended to work incrementally towards full LGBTQ+ equality as they had in the past, these efforts ended up marginalizing people of different gender identities and ultimately led to backlash. Furthermore, ENDA did not even pass so the HRC truly lost on all accounts. Due to this marginalization, my paper's third key point finds historical evidence. Although the HRC has come to address these critiques in later years, in 2007 the damage was done. In the end, there are many moments during the 2000's LGBTQ+ Rights Movement that demonstrate great socio-political progress has occurred. And while the HRC has played a major leading role in enacting this progress, the organization has not been immune from critique by members of the broader LGBTQ+ community.

Section 2. Violence Leads to Legislation

Unfortunately, the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement's progression has not always been for positive reasons. Similar to how the 1980s AIDS epidemic necessitated greater rights for the gay and lesbian community, violent acts against LGBTQ+ people in the 1990s-2000s has led to greater legal protections. To be sure, violence against LGBTQ+ people due to their perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity has been occurring for decades. However, only in the 1990s under the Hate Crimes Statistics Act were these attacks officially documented by the federal government. For example, near the end of the 1990's, the FBI reported that 1,488 hate crimes were committed against LGBTQ+ people in just 1998 alone (Fadermn 555). More recent numbers in 2017 are reported at 1,249 (HRC.org). While there have been fewer attacks in 2017, "fag bashing" is still commonplace in American society (Sherrill and Wolinsky 103).

Not only is this violence against the LGBTQ+ community physically harmful, but it also further disempowers LGBTQ+ people in the political realm (Sherrill and Wolinsky 103). Violence is politically disempowering because if it is not physically safe to be LGBTQ+, it can be perceived as politically unsafe to advocate for LGBTQ+ rights even if identifying as a heterosexual ally for the community (Sherrill 471). This is a key example of the dangerous "Spiral of Silence" at play. As seen in coalition efforts and political representation, allies are crucial for the LGBTQ+ community to prevail (Sherrill and Wolinsky 105). Thereby, this lack of allies has led to additional disempowerment. Indeed, this violence becomes particularly harmful if not publicly acknowledged as a serious threat by the American public or addressed by LGBTQ+ people's supposed allies.

Only with the increase of the media in the late 20th to early 21st century was this violence more widely known across the United States. Two murders in particular were popularly known: Brandon Teena in 1993 and Matthew Shepard in 1998. Brandon Teena was a transgender male who was raped and killed execution style by two cis-gender men in Nebraska (Faderman 552-555). His death became the subject of the 1999 Academy Award-winning film, *Boys Don't Cry*, bringing the dangers of transphobia to the forefront of the public's eye (Faderman 555). Even more well-known was the murder of the young gay male, Matthew Shepard, in Laramie, Wyoming (CNN; Faderman 556). Similar to cases in the 1970s, Matthew Shepard's murderers claimed the defense of "gay panic," claiming Shepard had "come on to them." Shepard's brutal murder demonstrated to the country the rampant homophobia that existed, which heightened many people's fear of future attacks. Vigils were held across the country and LGBT groups, as well as President Bill Clinton, called on Congress to pass a federal hate crimes protection act (Faderman 556). As more FBI crime statistics conveyed that crimes against a victim's sexual orientation were at the third highest rate after race and religion, public outrage grew (Marzullo and Libman). Due to growing media attention on this violence, public opinion polls exhibited that a majority of Americans were in favor of a hate crime bill for gay and lesbian Americans (Sherrill and Yang 23). While public opinion was rising and LGBT groups were lobbying the federal government to act, there was still pushback from conservatives in power (Faderman 558-560; HRC.org).

In the meantime, new organizations were forming to advocate for protections, such as the National Center for Transgender Equality in 2003²⁸ (Faderman 560). Though hate crimes measures were gaining greater political traction in the 2000s, they were often withdrawn from Congress due to the threat of presidential veto by America's "most evangelical leader:" George W. Bush (Faderman 559-561). Only in 2009, with a Democratic controlled House of Representatives, Senate, and White House, did the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act pass²⁹ (CNN; Faderman 562; HRC.org; Wesley et al. 164). The HRC's own efforts for this bill spanned over a decade and consisted of publishing hate crime advocacy videos, tracking hate crimes on their own website, providing extensive resources for people if they experienced a hate crime, mobilized people to make over one million emails and phone calls to Congress members, coalition work with other organizations, and public calls and speeches on leaders to support this federal hate crime law (HRC.org; Marzullo and Libman). The HRC viewed this law to be crucial towards "improving our legislative, prosecutorial, training and reporting efforts," and ultimately "sending a strong message that our society will not tolerate such attacks" (Marzullo and Libman). Passing this law was only the first step, but a highly necessary one. Since this law passed, the HRC has maintained a strong relationship with Matthew Shepard's parents and their organization, the Matthew Shepard Foundation (HRC.org). Matthew Shepard's parents have continuously attended the HRC's National Dinners and spoken

²⁸ Transgender rights discussed more in the next section: Chapter 3, Section 3. Transgender Rights, page 116.

²⁹ James Byrd Jr. was a young African American man brutally murdered in Texas by white supremacists (Wesley et al. 164).

out about the horrible dangers of homophobia. Together these two groups continue to work to raise awareness on violence against LGBTQ+ people.

Though the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act was seemingly a law the LGBTQ+ community would wholly support, there was still dissension. Conflict once occurred between LGBTQ radicals and the “Gay, Inc.” types of groups like the HRC (Faderman 562). Radical activists claimed these hate crime laws did not seek to educate the public or change their hearts and minds towards LGBTQ+ folks. Rather the laws were a waste of time, only hurt poor people and people of color, and that it is ultimately useless to focus on single acts of violence when systemic violence is the larger issue at hand (Faderman 562). However, as mainstream LGBT groups and politicians asserted, laws are necessary to influence attitudes and behavior within the American public and provide legal framework for which civil rights groups can act (Faderman 562-563; Marzullo and Libman). Though laws may not be the end-all-be-all solution to stopping hate against the LGBTQ+ community, they are a step in the right direction. Moreover, the alternative to no laws has historically proven to be much worse.

The eventual passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act demonstrates that with enough visibility on the violent dangers of homophobia, then perhaps legislative changes will procure. Public and political support are still necessary, but visibility is crucial to gaining this support. This was specifically true in the “coming out” period of the 1970s at procuring greater levels of support for gays and lesbians. While that was just visibility that gays and lesbian existed, now the visibility has been turned towards the violence committed against the LGBTQ+ community. Visibility has historically proven to be fundamental

to LGBTQ+ progress. As discussed in the following section, this visibility must now be geared towards the transgender community and the violence they continue to experience today.

Section 3. Transgender Rights

Though transgender people have existed long before the 1990-2000s, transgender rights or rather lack-there-of have only entered into the mainstream discourse the past few decades. And though the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement has recently included the *T* for transgender in the acronym, many transgender people still feel left out of the movement (Taylor and Haider-Markel 1, 10). This was especially apparent in the 1950s-1980s when gay and lesbian groups called for unity, or rather conformity, at the expense of transgender people (Tadlock 28). This is exemplified clearly in the silencing of Sylvia Rivera during future Pride Parades, despite her being one of the leading activists of the 1969 Stonewall riots (Duberman 235). Furthermore, popular narrative has all but forgotten the transgender led 1966 Compton Cafeteria riots, focusing instead on a white, cisgender narrative of Stonewall Inn. Even in times of death during the 1980's AIDS epidemic there were calls for unity, conformity, and safety amongst many mainstream gay and lesbian groups, yet still at the expense of trans folk's healthcare (Tadlock 28). So while there was a plethora of LGB groups leading into the 1990's, only two transgender specific interest groups existed. Over the years, transgender people have been continuously left out of the movement and thus forgotten in the mainstream narrative.

Fortunately, this has begun to change. From the mid-1980s to 2005, the number of transgender groups has grown from only 2 to 19, hovering around this number for the last decade

(Nownes 85-86). Due to the advent of the Internet in the 1990s, transgender people entered into the “public’s consciousness” and began to gain greater societal recognition (Tadlock 28). This increase in public visibility led to an increase in political focus. Starting in 1995, many LGB organizations “added the ‘T’” to include transgender people in their advocacy work, now becoming *LGBT* organizations. One reason for this addition was that the movement recognized where they had erred, where they could improve, and where they could grow and reach a larger membership and donor base (Nownes 93). As for the HRC, they added transgender people to their pro-LGB mission in 2001. This change occurred around the same time as many other organizations, though notably 3 years after PFLAG and 5 years after the NGLTF (Nownes 94). Not every organization “added the ‘T’” overnight, as there was still controversy and debate over gender inclusivity. Furthermore, there was critique that organizations were only “adding the ‘T’” due to public pressure by members of the LGBTQ+ community (Marston). Unsurprisingly, the only organization that has yet to “add the ‘T’” to their pro-LGB platform is the Log Cabin Republicans (Nownes 94).

Although many organizations added transgender people to their pro-LGB platforms, this did not necessarily mean transgender issues became a central focus of their organization. Rather, many groups continued to take a “pragmatic” or “incremental” approach to attaining rights, focusing on gay and lesbian issues while still leaving out transgender people (Taylor and Lewis 121). This lack of focus on transgender rights has been most notable in the HRC (Nownes 101). As previously discussed in this chapter, the HRC lost favor from many LGBTQ+ people for prioritizing gay and lesbian rights over transgender rights in ENDA (Murray; Taylor and Lewis 121). Due to the American public “lacking education on around transgender issues,” the HRC

choose to partake in an incremental approach to gaining workplace equality. Not only did this approach ultimately fail to pass ENDA, the HRC failed to receive broader LGBTQ+ support. The HRC may have “added the ‘T’” to their mission statement in 2001, however they did not include transgender people in their advocacy work in 2007.

By 2007 gradualism was no longer successful in gaining political rights or public approval for the HRC. Thereby in 2014 this was no longer the HRC’s approach (Gingrich in Appendix 2). A change in rhetoric is most notable to have occurred in 2014 at the Southern Comfort Conference. At this pro-transgender conference, HRC President Chad Griffin issued a formal apology to the trans community on behalf of the HRC’s past mistreatment (Becker). Griffin asserted, “I am sorry for the times when we stood apart when we should have been standing together. Even more than that, I am sorry for the times you have been underrepresented or unrepresented by this organization” (Griffin quoted in Becker). He continued to state that, “We’re an organization that is evolving. We may make mistakes. We may stumble. But what we do promise is to work with you sincerely, diligently, with a grand sense of urgency, listening and learning every step of the way” (Griffin quoted in Becker). Whether this speech was genuine or just empty words was up for debate amongst members of the LGBTQ+ community. However, it does demonstrate a change in rhetoric from years past and commitment to change moving forward. Words matter and are a way to hold the HRC accountable should they fall short on transgender inclusivity again.

Furthermore, not only has a change in speech occurred, but so has a change in political action and coalition work to focus more on transgender rights. As for political action, one notable effort that the HRC engaged with occurred in 2017 in Virginia’s State Legislature.

Through coalition efforts with Equality Virginia, the HRC helped mobilize voters to elect the first transgender state representative in U.S. history, Danica Roem (Peters “Danica Roem Makes History”). This grassroots effort occurred through “social media posts, emails, text alerts, direct mail, phone calls, and door-to-door canvassing” as part of a new strategic HRC Rising program (Peters “Danica Roem Makes History”). After the HRC endorsed Danica Roem in 2017, she stated, “I’m honored to earn the support of an organization dedicated to building people up instead of tearing each other down,” (Roem quoted in Lavers). Since Roem was elected in 2017, she and the HRC have shared a long-lasting relationship. Danica Roem even spoke at the HRC’s National Dinner in 2018. Once dedicated to solely helping elect gay and lesbian politicians in the 1980s-2000s, the HRC has recently demonstrated commitment to helping elect transgender candidates too.

Additionally, there has been coalition work for transgender people. Coalition work is important for trans issues because through coalition building, fully LGBT inclusive laws, such as non-discrimination laws, are more likely to pass (Taylor and Lewis 128). Ways these coalition efforts have appeared are: lobbying Capitol Hill, electoral campaign work, testifying before committees, aid and support on court cases, and changing the public’s attitudes towards transgender people (Taylor and Haider-Markel 9). It is particularly lobbying that is crucial to changing the opinions of people in the public and in politics to support transgender rights (Nownes 99). These lobbying efforts are a part of the “equality framework” that are organizations like the HRC, NGLTF, and PFLAG have recently participated in together (Tadlock 32). This equality, political rights-oriented work has been a focus of the HRC since they formed

in 1980 with LGB people in mind. With the addition of coalition efforts, it continues to be an effective approach for tackling transgender issues today.

Though these efforts have recently become more common and successful for the HRC, division has existed. For example, coalition work has been a previous contentious issue due to smaller organizations fearing the HRC will overshadow their work. Rouse acknowledges this fear and notes that “I think the arc of HRC has been doing a much better job of truly partnering with coalition partners across the country, intentionally creating partnerships and making them be true partnerships” (Appendix 1). For example, in New York the HRC partnered with different local transgender organizations and the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) to “lift them up and lift their voices up strategically and effectively across New York State to finally pass on gender identity protections” (Appendix 1; HRC.org; Morrow “NY Leg Passes GENDA”).³⁰ Though the HRC struggled with coalition work in the past, Rouse notes how the HRC has now effectively expanded their coalition efforts on the military ban, marriage equality, and now transgender rights (Appendix 1). With greater levels of coalition building, the HRC has been better able to advance trans rights forward, grow trans visibility, and increase the public’s opinion to support trans rights.

Another crucial way to achieve these goals has been through positive media representation. This representation can and has occurred in both real and fictional accounts to highlight transgender people as normal and ordinary people worthy of equal rights and recognition (Nownes 100-101). This type of advocacy work falls in line with the more recent

³⁰ GENDA just recently passed in New York in January of 2019 (HRC.org).

“education frame” of the HRC. Just as the HRC used education efforts to teach Americans on the everyday, normal lives of LGB people in the 1990s, education is key to demonstrating that transgender people are American citizens too (Tadlock 32). These equality and education approaches for attaining transgender rights have gone hand-in-hand recently at the HRC. For example, the HRC website highlights:

“As more and more transgender people share their stories, the public’s understanding of gender identity and expression builds. HRC works to educate the public and provide a range of resources on issues that transgender and gender nonconforming people face—from workplace discrimination, to securing identity documents, to finding culturally competent health care, to family and parenting issues, to combating violence—and to advocate for full inclusion and equality” (HRC.org).

This mission demonstrates the HRC’s commitment to education efforts and appealing to people’s hearts and minds to support trans folk. Another example is with Trump’s recent ban on trans people serving in the U.S. military. Just as gays and lesbians had testified before Congress and toured across the United States to show the normalcy of gay and lesbian service members when working to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” this same tactic is currently being used by trans people today. Transgender service members have continuously testified in front of Congress for why they ought to be allowed to serve in the military, stating that their identity as transgender does not affect their ability to serve, nor does it affect the abilities of others to serve (HRC.org). These testimonies have been documented by the HRC and uploaded to their website, live-streamed on their various social media platforms, and continuously shared via email.

Additionally, the HRC has made powerful videos of their own sharing personal stories from transgender service members (HRC.org). Current HRC staff members, such as Veteran trans woman Charlotte Clymer, have even testified and gone on multiple national news stations

to voice their adamant frustration with the trans military ban (HRC.org; Twitter).³¹ The HRC has also participated in the legal realm by going to court as “organizational co-plaintiffs in a case led by attorneys at Lambda Legal and OutServe-SLDN” (HRC Path to Victory in 2018 Guide). The HRC among other LGBTQ+ organizations have been extremely active in helping lift up transgender people to educate politicians and the public on their identities, while also advocating for their equal rights. Education and equality efforts necessitate a joint approach to attaining equal rights and recognition in society. Unfortunately, though HRC members, many politicians in Congress, U.S. military members, and people in the public support transgender troops, the current Trump-Pence Administration is still in opposition. Given the House of Representatives recent vote to condemn the ban, its’ ensuing lawsuits, and the public outcry as the ban recently went into effect, it will be interesting to see how this trans military ban unfolds in the courts in the months to come (Brufke and Kheel).

Beyond the military, there are many other areas in which the current White House Administration has targeted the country’s estimated 1.4 million transgender community and 10-11 million LGB community. These opposition measures extend from erasing transgender people from the White House website, refusing to include LGBTQ+ identities in the 2020 Census, pressuring 4-H agricultural programs to refuse LGBTQ+ youth participants, making it more difficult for LGBTQ+ immigrants to seek asylum in the U.S., and long-lasting efforts to limit HIV/AIDS medication through not supporting accessible healthcare policies (Green et al.; HRC.org). Furthermore, the Trump-Pence Administration has not publicly addressed the

³¹ The transgender military ban recently went into effect Friday, April 12th, 2019. The HRC rose a transgender pride flag on their building and spoke on Capitol Hill in opposition to this ban and in support of trans troops (HRC.org; Instagram).

growing epidemic of violence against transgender people, particularly trans women of color (HRC.org). This silence around trans violence is perhaps the most troubling. As the Legal Director of the HRC, Sarah Warbelow, proclaimed, “Transgender people are frightened,” (Warbelow quoted in Green et al.). It is not only the direct action of the Trump-Pence Administration that is frightening to the LGBTQ+ community, but it is also their alarming rates of inaction.

The number of transgender rights that still need to be addressed is vast. Just a few of these rights include the inclusion of gender identity and gender expression into the 1964 Civil Rights Act, federal protection for transgender people in hate crime laws, the permanent lift of the transgender military ban, include bathroom protection laws statewide and federally, include the healthcare coverage of gender confirmation surgery and other transgender healthcare concerns, ease the process of federally and statewide changing one’s name and gender to match that they identify with, and better treatment of transgender people in prison (ACLU.org; Taylor and Haider-Markel 10). Though in some areas these protections and rights may exist, it is still very limited and circumstantial to the state or district one is living in (LambdaLegal.org). Even so, most of these protections do not yet exist federally or have been subject to recent repeal.

Furthermore, this lack of rights often effects different transgender people at disproportionate rates depending's on their race and socioeconomic status. People most negatively impacted by transphobic legislation, media representation, and physical and verbal violence are low-income trans women of color (Mock 119, 214). Of the LGBTQ+ community, trans women of color contain the highest rates of hate crimes and violence committed against them (HRC.org). Many Americans know of Matthew Shepard’s death in 1998, but not that many

Americans know about the countless murders of trans women of color today. This is because violence against trans folk rarely enters into mainstream media or popular news sources. However, it is a growing issue that cannot afford to be silenced. These lost lives must be continuously highlighted and addressed by prominent organizations like the HRC in order to bring the epidemic to the forefront of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. The more the mainstream LGBTQ+ Rights Movement highlights these deaths, the greater chance they will be addressed in the American public and political realm. Though LGB people once received the most public opposition with the rise of the New Right in the 1970s, it is now trans folk that appear to face the brunt of anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and discriminatory laws (Tadlock 31). Accordingly, trans folk need to receive the bulk of LGBTQ+ visibility and activism moving forward.

Despite the White House's opposition to the transgender community, progress has occurred. As of 2019, 18 states and Washington, DC have laws that prohibit discrimination against transgender people, over 200 cities and counties have banned gender identity discrimination, and 5 state governors have issued executive orders to ban discrimination against transgender state workers (ACLU.org). Additionally, 16 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico have now banned conversion therapy against LGBTQ+ youth, including both same-sex attraction and gender identity in this therapy ban (de León; HRC.org). Furthermore, 28 states now have hate crime laws that protect on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, when in the 1980s there were zero (HRC.org; Taylor and Haider-Markel 1). Over the years, there have been increased efforts to include transgender people in the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. However, these efforts are still recent and lagging behind most LGB rights. Furthermore, it is clear from the current White House Administration that there is still much opposition to

overcome before transgender rights are effectively secured. Organizations like the HRC must continue to be vigilant and call on the American public and political system to address these concerns. The HRC may have faltered in the past when it came to advocating for trans rights, but the organization cannot afford to falter again.

Section 4. Additional Areas of HRC Growth

Besides adding transgender rights to their pro-LGB mission, the Human Rights Campaign has grown significantly in other ways over the past two decades. Explained in detail throughout this section, this growth has worked in four main areas to increase the HRC's public and political influence. One example has been through acquiring more financial resources, which in turn helps the HRC's ability to contribute to elections. A second area of growth has been through expanding their social media presence, which helps to grow the HRC's overall audience across the United States. Third, the HRC has further broadened their singular LGBTQ+ focus to include coalition efforts with different organizations and issues. And fourth, all these efforts combined have greatly increased the HRC's membership and voter base, which helps to grow the HRC and to increase public and political support for LGBTQ+ people. These four areas help showcase ways in which the HRC has worked diligently to continue to grow and transform as the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement has progressed.

The first area of growth discussed is in regards to finances. One way to combat opposition to LGBTQ+ people and grow the HRC's social and political influence is through gaining wealth and contributing this money to electoral campaigns. Through small donations

from members, large donations from Federal Club donors, and larger fundraisers like their National Dinners, gala events, golf events, music concerts, and drag balls, the HRC has been able to grow their wealth and subsequently grow their political influence (HRC.org; Marston; Sherrill 471). The most recent financial report from the 2018 fiscal year shows that the HRC acquired \$18,427,683 in total revenue (*Charity Navigator*). Such a large financial acquirement has led to increases in their campaign contributions, resulting in more political allies elected into power. Shown in Table 1 on the following page, the HRC has demonstrated an increase in campaign donations during the last 28 years (OpenSecrets.org).³² Any of the remaining total revenue not spent on political campaigns is then able to go towards the HRC's Foundation's outreach programs, membership services, fundraising expenses, and administrative expenses necessary to keep the HRC functioning (*Charity Navigator*).

³² Three notes necessary to mention. One, these campaign contributions would likely higher given the HRC's high annual revenue, however, the HRC Federal PAC must abide by campaign finance laws. Two, 2004 was the year President George W. Bush was up for reelection, resulting in a larger spending year by the HRC. Nearly \$2 million in campaign contributions and around \$3.5 million in lobbying efforts was spent when the HRC usually only averages \$1,250,210 in lobbying amounts. These records date from 1998 to 2018, with this average excluding 2004's contributions. And three, this table originated on OpenSecrets.org and then was structurally adjusted by me to fit on this page. No numbers were researched and compiled independently by myself, nor altered in this table. Each number and column comes solely from OpenSecrets.org.

Table 1: HRC Campaign Contributions, 1990-2018

Electio n Cycle	Total	Democrats (D)	Republican s(R)	% to D	% to R
2018	\$1,066,115	\$802,387	\$2,389	75%	0%
2016	\$1,002,852	\$828,143	\$28,253	83%	3%
2014	\$1,156,885	\$1,033,906	\$66,203	89%	6%
2012	\$1,309,128	\$888,138	\$40,500	68%	3%
2010	\$1,087,209	\$935,071	\$20,388	86%	2%
2008	\$1,557,928	\$1,257,891	\$54,182	81%	4%
2006	\$1,228,745	\$1,020,004	\$90,813	83%	7%
2004	\$1,883,956	\$1,269,506	\$106,825	67%	6%
2002	\$1,238,361	\$1,042,976	\$192,835	84%	16%
2000	\$1,128,927	\$978,677	\$148,750	87%	13%
1998	\$946,380	\$834,955	\$109,425	88%	12%
1996	\$813,687	\$725,310	\$78,377	89%	10%
1994	\$753,906	\$717,406	\$36,500	95%	5%
1992	\$773,764	\$722,265	\$45,499	93%	6%
1990	\$517,871	\$437,373	\$80,498	85%	16%

Interestingly, it is quite apparent that most of these listed campaign contributions have gone towards Democratic candidates. In 1980, the HRC’s founding mission was as a bi-partisan organization “to provide financial support on behalf of the gay and lesbian community to candidates of both parties, Republicans and Democrats, who pledge their support of gay civil rights legislation” (HRC brochure in Marston). While the HRC is bipartisan on paper, in practice they function as an organization primarily supportive of Democratic candidates that encourages their members to vote for primarily pro-equality Democrats. Even in the past when the HRC endorsed pro-equality Republican candidates, they received backlash from the LGBTQ+ community. For example, in 1998 the HRC endorsed the Republican incumbent, Al D’Amato, over his Democratic challenger, Chuck Schumer, for the New York Senate seat (Marston). In response to public backlash, the HRC reaffirmed their bipartisan nature and clarified their

endorsement process that favors viable pro-equality incumbents and rarely partakes in dual endorsements (“The D’Amato Endorsement Flyer” in Marston). Through endorsing D’Amato and maintaining their endorsement despite opposition, the HRC argued they were maintaining their legitimacy as a bipartisan PAC. Revoking their endorsement mid-election would have made the HRC seem like an illegitimate political organization, resulting in a loss of influence and power in federal politics (McCarthy and Zald 1220). Ironically, after this election the HRC changed their endorsement process to include greater membership input and has since not endorsed many Republican candidates. Since the late 1990s, this continual encouragement to vote for pro-equality Democrats has been largely followed by LGBTQ+ people (Egan “Group Cohesion,” 599-600; Sherrill and Wolinsky 112). So while still technically bipartisan, the HRC effectively acts as a Democrat leaning organization and encourages LGBTQ+ people and allies to vote along these same Democratic lines.

Reasons for why LGBTQ+ people are more likely to vote Democrat is a contested issue among political scientists. The most common reason people vote in favor of a certain political party is due to intergenerational transmission.³³ However, this factor does not seem to apply to LGBTQ+ people (Egan “Group Cohesion 603; Lewis et al. 655). Beliefs for why this intergenerational transmission does not apply to LGBTQ+ people range among scholars. Scholars prescribe that it is because of “group consciousness” of LGB people formulating this voting bloc, the formation of an LGB “subculture” that created a cohesive voting bloc, shared

³³ Intergenerational transmission of political parties means that if your parents identify with a certain political party, you also identify with this political party. This trait/identification is passed down from parents to children. This has been found as one of the strongest factors for why people identify and vote for their respective political parties (Lewis et al. 655; Egan “Group Cohesion,” 603).

grievances and concerns of concentrated LGB people in U.S. cities, or that stronger involvement with the gay community leads to stronger political involvement. However, (Egan “Group Cohesion,” 603-604) argue that it is due to the “selective choice” of people with same-sex attraction that choose to form into a gay group identity. So even when organizations like the HRC do not mobilize LGB people to vote a certain way, LGB people still tend to select their group identity and form a cohesive voting bloc around their identity (Egan “Group Cohesion,” 615). And because the Democratic Party now supports LGB issues more than the Republican Party, LGB people are more likely to choose to vote Democrat (Lewis et al. 655).

Not only do LGBTQ+ people vote Democrat more often, but Democrats tend to identify as LGBTQ+ more often as well. In additional research, (Egan “Identity as Dependent Variable,” 2-3, 24-25) purport a “self-categorization” process that finds liberal-leaning Democrats to be more likely to identify as LGB rather than LGB people more likely to identify as Democrats (Bacon). Though (Bacon) is cautious of overemphasizing Egan’s findings and asserts that LGB people are still more likely to change party affiliation due to their sexual orientation than vice versa, the fact that any “vice versa” exists at all is interesting. It begs the question, do HRC members merely vote Democrat because the HRC tells them to or are they Democrats already due to their identity? Other than the obvious answer that Democrats support LGBTQ+ civil and political rights more often than Republicans (Bishin and Smith 794), an in-depth examination of HRC members’ voting records would be fascinating to compare with the HRC’s own campaign contribution records. Particularly as the 2020 presidential election comes closer. Not too surprisingly, the HRC has already begun to lean into this election by announcing a co-hosted forum for Democratic candidates to discuss LGBTQ+ issues (Morrow “HRC and UCLA”).

Unless the Republican Party alters their demonizing, anti-LGBTQ+ views (Bishin and Smith 796), bipartisanship does not seem to be in the future for the HRC. Furthermore, LGBTQ+ people will still likely vote for Democrats more often than Republicans.

A second area of growth that is unique to the 21st century is the HRC's large social media presence. Numerically, the HRC's Instagram page currently holds 540,000 followers, their Twitter account has 811,700 followers, and their Facebook page has 2,671,414 likes/followers (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter). Interesting to compare, the HRC has almost 100,000 more followers on Instagram than Planned Parenthood and only 5,000 less followers than the ACLU (Instagram). Furthermore, though having 500,000 less followers on Instagram, the HRC has nearly 70,000 more followers on Twitter than the NRA (Twitter). As for other LGBTQ+ organizations, GLAAD, GLAD, GLSEN, PFLAG, NGLTF, and Lambda Legal are all under 175,000 followers (Instagram). Overall, the HRC's vast social media presence has been crucial for the organization to gain media attention, which increases their ability to gain allies in the American public (Sherill and Wolinsky 90). Using social media to change the "hearts and minds" of Americans, advocate for equal rights, and voice their opposition against discrimination has all resulted in greater public visibility and political power for the HRC. Though a thorough examination of social media is beyond the scope of this paper, it is interesting to note the large presence the HRC has on social media platforms in comparison to other organizations. Further research ought to be conducted to examine how social media has impacted the LGBTQ+ community and what the implications of this effect have been and will be on the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement moving forward.

A third area of growth, or rather sheer transformation, has been the expansion of the HRC's focus. In 1980, the HRC was singularly focused on political gay and lesbian issues. Though in the late 1980s-1990s, the HRC began to slowly expand on education efforts among different identities, the HRC was still narrowly focused as an organization. Yet in come the late 1990s and early 2000s and the HRC began to transform. The power of coalition building to "attain and maintain power and influence" was realized by the HRC, helping to transform the HRC's singular LGBTQ+ focus (Spangler). Recent coalition efforts have occurred with African American rights groups, women's rights groups, immigration rights groups, gun rights groups, "and even labor rights groups" (Appendix 1; Fantz, Karimi, & McLaughlin).³⁴ These coalition efforts have taken forms such as public rhetoric, marches, phone banks, joint resolutions, etc.

From personal intern experience, I can attest to the HRC's increased coalition efforts with non-LGBTQ+ organizations. For example, last summer I participated in a phone bank with NARAL Prochoice America³⁵ in an effort to stop Brett Kavanaugh's SCOTUS appointment. Though NARAL is not focused on LGBTQ+ rights, the HRC works closely with them so they have an ally to rely upon when necessary. Other coalition building efforts I attended on behalf of the HRC were rallies against President Trump's Muslim travel ban and rallies against children separation policies at the Mexican-American border. Additional coalition efforts the HRC does in general is working with corporate businesses to help improve their records on LGBTQ+

³⁴ The HRC's focus on gun rights began immediately after the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida in which a LGBTQ+ nightclub was targeted and 49 people lost their lives (Fantz, Karimi, & McLaughlin). Following this nightclub shooting, the HRC's Board of Directors adopted a resolution in support of common-sense gun violence prevention policies. Since the 2016 shooting, the HRC has continued to mobilize members and the LGBTQ community to act out against gun violence. In addition, in 2018 the HRC hosted the friends, families, and survivors of the Pulse Nightclub shooting to speak at the HRC's Spring Equality Convention prior to marching in the 2018 #MarchForOurLives in Washington, DC (Peters "Pulse Shooting").

³⁵ NARAL Prochoice America is an organization that supports women's reproductive rights (prochoiceamerica.org).

workplace inclusivity (HRC Corporate Equality Index; HRC.org)³⁶ Ultimately, while Marty Rouse notes that the HRC’s singular LGBTQ+ strategy was once was effective, he also asserts that as times changed and the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement progressed, the HRC realized they needed to change too. For example, Rouse asserted:

“We used to be so completely focused on LGBT issues and that was to our benefit. We were so laser focused, we would ask people to be with us. We would just be so singular focus, we can be much more effective and efficient by just focusing on LGBT legislation, pro or con, just really being direct and focused on that. It's only recently that we realized, okay, there's so many other attacks. We've been so successful over the past decade or so, really moving equality forward so fast. But other organizations, other groups of people are being attacked. And we realized that there's LGBT people everywhere, every LGBT people everywhere, and so if there's an attack on a certain group and that includes LGBT people, we need to support them. And so that's been the biggest change, I think, that I've seen” (Rouse in Appendix 1).

Though the Human Rights Campaign began as an organization focused solely on gay and lesbian rights, this focus has expanded to include the rights of many other groups. This expansion of the HRC’s focus as the movement has expanded helps to demonstrate this paper’s fourth key point. The HRC realized coalition work’s potential to bring organizations together and “combine their resources and become more powerful than when they each acted alone” (Spangler). The single issue versus multi-issue debate that had divided the LGBTQ+ Rights

³⁶ The HRC publishes an “annual survey and report benchmarking best practices in LGBTQ diversity and inclusion among the nation’s largest corporations and law firms,” called the Corporate Equality Index (CEI). The report also contains an HRC Buyer’s Guide and an HRC Best Places to Work Guide for consumers and potential employees to use when shopping and looking for work (HRC.org). Of the 1,026 businesses surveyed in 2019, a few key businesses that earned perfect scores are Adidas North America Inc., American Airlines, The Coca-Cola Co., Eli Lilly & Co., Facebook Inc., IKEA Holding US Inc., KeyBank, LinkedIn, Microsoft Corp., Nike Inc., Procter & Gamble Co., Rolls-Royce North America (USA) Holdings Co., Tiffany & Co., United Airlines, Walmart Inc., Yelp Inc., etc. (HRC “Corporate Equality Index”). Though this is not the full list of companies ranked in 2019, nor a full list of the companies that received perfect scores, this list does convey the large range in types of companies that are surveyed and benchmarked by the HRC each year.

Movement for years is no longer an issue of debate in the HRC. Coalition work and multi-issue activism has become a necessity for both the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement and the HRC.

A fourth area of the HRC's growth since its formation has been with membership and supporters. In the 1980s-1990s, the HRCF did not boast any large membership, only citing their 14 Board of Directors members and 15 staff members (HRC.org; "Article of Incorporation HRCF" in Marston). The earliest membership record I could find was in 2006, in which the HRC only had 600,000 members recorded ("About the Human Rights Campaign" in Marston). However, by 2019, the HRC has recorded over 3 million members and a staff of over 150 members (HRC.org). This is a dramatic increase in membership in the last ten years. Such large numbers are crucial for the HRC's public and political power. With more identified members, the HRC has formed a collective HRC identity, which can be used in multiple ways to grow the HRC's power (Sherrill and Wolinsky 90). These ways include the HRC asking members to contribute money to the organization and the pro-equality candidates they endorse; volunteering time at HRC and LGBTQ+ events; writing letters, emails, postcards, and telephone calls to anti-LGBTQ+ representatives; attending Pride rallies and rallies of other organizations the HRC partners with; educating the public by speaking about LGBTQ+ people; mobilizing members to volunteer time on political campaigns; and overall mobilizing members to get out and vote in elections (HRC.org; Marston; Sherrill and Wolinsky 90). The list of how the HRC works to engage members and supporters is rather extensive.

In addition to this membership growth, the HRC has identified an even larger voting base. In 2016 the HRC partnered with an outside data and analytics firm, Catalist, to create an Equality Voter Model. By 2018, their combined work identified over 10 million LGBTQ+ voters

and over 52 million “Equality Voters” in the U.S. (HRC Path to Victory in 2018 Guide). “Equality Voters” are “voters who support LGBTQ-inclusive policies including marriage equality, equitable family law, and laws that would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity” (Green et al.; Peters). Through identifying these Equality Voters, the HRC has been able to mobilize an even larger collective identity in favor of LGBTQ+ rights, which has been crucial to growing LGBTQ+ people’s influence in politics (Sherrill and Wolinsky 90, 109). An example of these Equality Voters in political action is in the 2016 presidential election, where an estimated 70% of LGBTQ+ voters cast their ballot, making up 5% of the total electorate. In comparison to this 70%, only 61.4% of the general electorate voted (HRC Path to Victory Guide). These numbers support the suggestion that without LGBTQ+ voters, certain politicians and political parties would not win electoral office. This is particularly true for the Democratic Party since they gain the vast majority of LGBTQ+ votes (McThomas and Buchanan 447). Ultimately, not only are LGBTQ+ people and their allies a large voting bloc that work to enact progressive change, but politicians rely upon this voting base to win.

Through amassing more wealth, expanding their social media avenues, and participating in greater levels of coalition work, the HRC has been able to amass a larger membership, support, and voter base. This growing membership and support in turn helps the HRC grow even more wealth, social media followers, and provide the HRC with more people to mobilize for coalition efforts. By continuously operating in this cycle, the HRC has been able to grow as an organization, expand their public and political power, and help the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement progress forward. Through these four areas of growth, the HRC has become the nation’s largest

LGBTQ+ civil rights organization and earned their place as a leading force in the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement.

Section 5. HRC Controversy

Over the years, the HRC has clearly grown immensely as the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement has progressed. However, this growth has resulted in many compromises and controversies for the organization. Conflict that has surrounded the HRC from its formation has been their lack of diversity and inclusion (Crockett). For clarification, diversity and inclusion are different, despite the *and* that often conflates the two words. Diversity means “the who and the what: who’s sitting around that table, who’s being recruited, who’s being promoted, who we’re tracking from the traditional characteristics and identities” (Brown quoted in Arruda). Diversity includes, but is not limited to “the full spectrum of human demographic differences—race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status or physical disability” (Gallup). Inclusion on the other hand is “the how.” It is “the behaviors that welcome and embrace diversity” (Brown quoted in Arruda). Ultimately, inclusion refers to “a cultural and environmental feeling of belonging” (Gallup). An organization can lack both diversity and inclusion or contain diversity, but still lack an inclusive environment. Diversity then becomes a mere number or statistic, not the actual feeling of belonging.

From 1980 to present-day 2019, the HRC has been accused of lacking diversity and inclusion within their organization and in the work the organization does. These accusations consist of being mainstream in strategies for attaining rights, which has often resulted in the

centering of wealthy, white, cis-gender gay and lesbian rights over the rights and identities of different races, gender identities, and socioeconomic statuses. In regards to socioeconomic status, the HRC has historically received large donations from wealthy donors and has continuously praised large businesses such as Wells Fargo, Goldman Sachs, and many others listed in their Corporate Equality Index (HRC.org; HRC “Corporate Equality Index;” Stein 71-72). Though the HRC ranks and praises these businesses for their workplace LGBTQ+ equality efforts, many people view these rankings to be too singular focused on LGBTQ+ issues and not on the capitalistic wrongdoings these companies commit against low income communities of color (Epstein 67; Meronek). The HRC, like many other “big league” LGBTQ+ groups, has been cited to focus more on issues that affect “affluent, white, gay men,” rather than on intersectional issues and identities of race and gender (Nownes 102; Strolovitch). Wealthy, white gay men and lesbian women were once deemed more acceptable in the mainstream public, more likely to garner heterosexual public and political support, and therefore were previously made the focus. As a result, the lives, experiences, and rights of people of color, transgender folks, and LGBTQ+ people of lower socioeconomic status were marginalized.

Though these concerns were raised in the 1980s-1990s and again in 2007, they have also arisen in more recent years. 2016 and 2020 presidential candidate, Bernie Sanders even claimed in an interview with Rachel Maddow that the HRC, alongside Planned Parenthood, were a part of “the political establishment,” that he was taking on in his “anti-establishment” 2016 campaign (Crockett). According to Sanders, while the HRC formed as an organization that was vying for rights the political establishment adamantly opposed, by 2016 the HRC had joined their ranks. Both Planned Parenthood and the HRC tweeted their “disappointment” in Sanders’ comment,

with the HRC account tweeting, “We share @PPact’s [Planned Parenthood] disappointment in Sanders’ attacks. @HRC has proudly taken on the establishment & fought for LGBT people for over 30 years” (tweet quoted in Crockett). Whether or not Bernie Sanders’ attack is warranted, (Crockett) highlights that perhaps one reason for his contention towards these two politically influential organizations was that neither organization endorsed him in his 2016 campaign. Rather, they both endorsed Hillary Clinton instead.

Prior to Bernie Sanders’ interview, popular news sources highlighted the HRC's lack of diversity and inclusion (Geidner; Villarreal). In 2015, *Buzzfeed News* disclosed a report by the outside consultant group, The Pipeline Project, that found critical issues within the organization’s diversity and inclusion efforts (Geidner). This report is highly significant since it reveals the anonymous opinions of current staff members.³⁷ This anonymity is significant because these staff members’ excruciatingly critical opinions would likely not be given in personal interviews with myself. With this anonymity promised, the Pipeline Project began by surveying staff members' feelings on working in the organization. Many employees revealed they felt the HRC’s leadership was “homogenous- gay, white, male;” a “White Men’s Club;” and that “exclusion was broad-based and hit all identity groups within the HRC,” particularly transgender folks (comments quoted in Pipeline Project report; Geidner). Not only transgender employees, but also females, people with feminine qualities, people of color, and younger aged interns and workers (Geidner). Examples of complaints on the treatment of women in the HRC include: “straight women and lesbians get sexist treatment from gay men at HRC;” “sexism is rampant at HRC. It

³⁷ Current staff members as of 2015. A more recent report has not yet been conducted.

seems as subtle as men over run women in meetings;” “the organization is dominated by white, gay men;” and overall that “there is visible misogyny” (comments quoted in Pipeline Project report; Geidner). The gender divide that existed among mainstream organizations during previous years of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement evidently still existed in the HRC as of 2015.

The report also demonstrates lack of inclusivity for people of color and transgender folks. The Pipeline Project reported staff members who claimed, “it’s not often that we have discussion about racial justice or interpersonally how are you feeling as a white person at HRC;” “not that many diversity conversations happen at HRC;” “people of color generally work in ‘staff support;” and “people of color, transgender people, lower socio-economic people face institutionalized discrimination” (comments quoted in Pipeline Project report; Geidner). These complaints are by no means every comment listed in the extensive Pipeline Project report, but just a few of the most critical quotes worth highlighting. One staff member’s comment summarizes the report’s disconcerting findings, “We are supposed to be fighting for people who are being discriminated against and marginalized, however we at HRC are discriminating against people and marginalizing people in the workplace” (comment quoted in Pipeline Project report; Geidner). Ultimately, this report demonstrates that the HRC is not as committed to racial, sex, gender, and socioeconomic diversity and inclusion as their mission statement purports (Marks; Villarreal). Nor as diverse and inclusive as they ought to be for a pro-equality organization existing in the 21st century.

Section 6. HRC Response

Clearly this report's rather scathing findings were not good publicity for the Human Rights Campaign. In response to the published report, the HRC spokesman, Fred Sainz stated that they had originally commissioned the Pipeline Project to conduct this internal review "as part of its own self-reflection and is a concrete sign that HRC is committed to doing better both by our employees and the communities we serve" (Sainz quoted in Geidner). Furthermore, the HRC President, Chad Griffin, responded that the HRC, like many organizations and companies in the country, is dedicated to improving diversity and inclusionary efforts, has taken 18 steps already to improve their organization's culture, and has identified 3 more steps that are "in the works" as of 2015 (Griffin quoted in Geidner). Rather than cause further damage by hiding from the report's findings, the HRC publicly addressed the issues brought forward (Villarreal).

Prior to even knowing of this report's existence, I personally witnessed many of these improvement steps occur while interning at the HRC this past summer. One area of improvement was the creation of employee resource groups (ERGs). As Candace Gingrich asserted, these ERGs had been initiatives the HRC had been pushing for Corporate America to enact for decades, however the HRC had not even established them (Appendix 2). After this report, these ERGs were formed and currently consist of: Feminists Uniting Now (FUN) ERG; People of Color + Allies (POC+A) ERG; Transgender, Ally, & Gender-Expansive Staff (TAGS) ERG; Remote Employees ERG; and a Bi/Queer/Pan/Fluid ERG (HRC.org). These ERGs are found within the HRC's new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Department and open for all employees to join (HRC.org).

Candace Gingrich notes that this new department demonstrates a commitment of the HRC to diversity and inclusion to work with those “inside the building, but also outside the building,” such as with volunteers and steering committee members (Appendix 2). While interning, I attended the People of Color + Allies (POC+A) ERG and listened as different staff members (and interns) of color talked about their experiences working at the HRC. Many staff members commented on the HRC’s “whiteness,” and felt like they are often tokenized for their color, especially when it comes to the HRC’s social media posts. Such comments are not demonstrative of much positive change. However, there was consensus in the room that prior to these ERG meetings, these types of discussions would only occur in online group chats or after work at local gay bars in Dupont Circle. Not as part of the regular work week hours. Though still lacking in true diversity *and* inclusion, with the incorporation of these ERGs, the HRC has made an attempt at progressive change.

Another step the HRC promised to make were increased scholarships for interns with an added diversity statement in the application process. After the 2008 economic recession, the HRC stopped paying interns, which negatively impacted the ability of lower socio-economic status people to intern at the organization. The old critique that the HRC was a “Champagne Fund,” only for the wealthy appeared to still hold true (Stein 71). However, the organization now offers scholarships to applicants who demonstrate both a financial need and provide real-life examples of their commitment to diversity and inclusion (Appendix 2). I can personally affirm that this diversity and inclusion essay is a part of the internship application process.

Additional steps the HRC has taken since this report is in regards to greater gender inclusivity. These steps include increased levels of pronoun usage in emails, personal pronoun

nametags/pins, and an updated dress code to be more casual and gender-inclusive through eliminating the previous “male” and “female” professional dress attire requirement (Villarreal). Whereas the HRC was once classified as a mainstream “Suit” type of organization, now staff members can attend work dressed in shorts and a t-shirt. An interesting change that is stated to be “in the works” in this Pipeline Project report that I witnessed occur was the addition of gender-neutral bathrooms (Pipeline Project in Geidner). Other than two bathrooms in the first floor’s “Equality Forum” for non-HRC visitors, every single bathroom on each of the eight floors (and basement) are fully gender-neutral. Though this was merely “in the works” in 2015, by 2018 this step had been completed. As Griffin stated after this report was published, “diversity and inclusion is never an end, it’s always a journey” (Griffin quoted in Geidner). While the HRC and overall LGBTQ+ Rights Movement has not yet completed this journey, the HRC has voiced their commitment to positive change as they progress into the future. Furthermore, from my own internship experiences, the organization has shown levels of improvement since this report’s findings in 2015. If another internal report were to be conducted in 2019, the results would be rather interesting to compare.

External changes the HRC has made in recent years is in their focus on communities of color and transgender folks. An examination of the HRC’s website reveals many resources and tools exclusively for these different identities. This extensive list ranges from resource pages on “Communities of Color,” “Transgender,” “Transgender Children & Youth,” “Black and African American LGBTQ Youth Report,” “HBCU Diversity and Inclusion Training,” “HIV & HBCUs,” “HBCU Project,” and a “HRC Brief Guide to Getting Transgender Coverage Right” (HRC.org). Apart from each of these different resource pages, the HRC has posted numerous

on these topics. For instance, the HRC published 1,251 blog posts dedicated solely to “Transgender” issues from 2010 to 2019 and 543 blog posts on “Communities of Color” from 2013 to 2019. Even on the HRC’s homepage, both “Transgender” and “Communities of Color” are two of the five main tabs readily available for visitors to access (HRC.org). Clearly the HRC is attempting to highlight transgender and people of color on their website. Whether these respective communities perceive these attempts as genuine may take time, but the attempts are visibly apparent.

Just as an interesting aside for the DePauw reader, the HRC seems to have similar diversity and inclusion problems as the higher education institution of DePauw University. The Human Rights Campaign’s numbers reflect a diverse working environment in 2015: 48% female, 52% male, 13% African-American, 7% Hispanic, 7% Asian, 3% Two Races or More, 70% Caucasian, and 4.7% Trans/Gender Expansive (Geidner). These numbers are comparable or even greater than the national averages of diverse racial and gender identities. However, the “feel” of the organization does not reflect inclusion (Pipeline Project report in Geidner). Similarly, DePauw University appears numerically diverse in race, ethnicity, and gender by the numbers our Admissions Department advertises. For example, in the 2018-2019 school year, DePauw University reported our student body as 32.3% minority students, including 5.4% African American, 3.5% Asian American, 8.1% Hispanic, 11.6% International, 3.6% Multiracial, and 0.2% Native American (Tobin). Of the entire student body, 53% are female and 47% are male (Tobin). Quite unsurprisingly, DePauw University has no numbers reported on how many students identify as LGBTQ+. Despite this diverse student body, many minority students have continuously reported feeling unsafe and unwelcomed on DePauw’s campus. Though the HRC

and DePauw University are different institutions with different goals, they both seem to have lacked or are still lacking in a true commitment to diversity *and* inclusion. Or at the very least lack in the public's perception of caring for diversity and inclusion.

The Pipeline Project report clearly outlines issues within the Human Rights Campaign and their commitment to diversity and inclusion, particularly among transgender staff members, women, and people of color. However, the report also outlines the potential for the organization to improve and a commitment from the organization to improve. Additionally, the report found that despite these issues, staff members still believed strongly in the HRC's mission. For example, nearly 75% of workers would still "recommend the organization to a friend or colleague as a good place to work" (comment quoted in Geidner). The report even notes that the high participation rate of employees involved in this survey is promising that the HRC staff and organization as a whole are truly dedicated to enacting progressive change.

As one critical commentator of the HRC asserted, "By analyzing the flaws in such an organization or movement, I am not dismissing it as horrible or something that you shouldn't participate in. I am thinking critically about its flaws and how it could be improved moving forward" (Marks). It is correct to suggest that the HRC ought to be examined critically, praised for the good work they have participated in and critiqued for where they have failed. Though scathing in its findings, the report does demonstrate the potential for progress. Progress I have personally witnessed to occur. Ultimately, in response to this report's critiques, the HRC has worked diligently to improve its record on diversity, inclusion, and to become a more welcoming organization to people of all backgrounds. As such, this section helps to reveal this paper's fifth

key point. That all being said, another internal report needs to be conducted to see whether the HRC's improvements have actually persisted over time.

Section 7. Where is the HRC and LGBTQ+ Rights Movement Going Next?

From the end of WWII to present day 2019, LGBTQ+ people and the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement have made immense social and political progress. Once classified as a “mental disorder,” same-sex attraction is currently described by the APA as a “normal and positive variation of human sexuality” (Anton; HRC.org). Once imprisoned for acts of “sodomy,” LGBTQ+ people now have the freedom to marry. Once never publicly out, the LGBTQ+ community now has greater levels of positive representation in popular culture and in politics. Political rights and public recognition of LGBTQ+ people have definitely grown in the past 70+ years and the LGBTQ+ community has proved to be powerful political force in advancing forward their message of equality (Sherrill and Yang 20; Wesley et al. 155). However, the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement is nowhere near completed, nor is the HRC's role in the movement.

When asked where the Human Rights Campaign and LGBTQ+ Rights Movement were going next, both Marty Rouse and Candace Gingrich gave similar answers. First on the pro-LGBTQ+ agenda is the passage of the Equality Act (Appendix 1 and 2). This bill would “amend existing civil rights law—including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Housing Act, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Jury Selection and Services Act, and several laws regarding employment with the federal government—to explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected characteristics” (HRC.org). This bill is important because areas that do not

have these non-discrimination protections can fire, evict, and refuse to serve LGBTQ+ people without redress. Such actions help to keep LGBTQ+ people from gaining greater power in society (Sherrill 471). While the Equality Act has been introduced and failed multiple times since the 1970s (Sherrill and Wolinsky 114-115), the current 116th Congress appears the most supportive due to containing many openly LGB politicians and LGBTQ+ allies (Byrne). These representatives have already demonstrated their promotion and active representation of pro-LGBTQ+ issues (Byrne; Haider-Markel et al. 570). Furthermore, in a recent op-ed, Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi and Representative David Cicilline, cite that the American public are 71% in support of the Equality Act, which they assert helps to pressure other politicians to support the bill too (Pelosi and Cicilline). Politicians continuously promise that the Equality Act will pass within the year. Whether President Trump vetoes the bill is another matter altogether.

Work that the HRC has done to ensure the Congressional success of the Equality Act is extensive. The House of Representatives is already in majority support of the Equality Act, so it is now up to the Senate. On the Senator side, Marty Rouse is currently working on how to best lobby different Senators, such as Senator Thomas Tillis of North Carolina, to support the legislation (Appendix 2). If GOP Senators like Tillis do not politically support this bill despite these lobbying efforts, the HRC's next step is to publicly shame him, call on North Carolinian HRC members to voice their support of the bill, and ultimately mobilize members to vote him out of office if he still opposes the bill. This strategy worked in North Carolina to oppose Governor Pat McCrory's reelection after he signed the anti-transgender bill, HB2, into law (Shapiro). Therefore, this strategy is hoped to work again for the Equality Act. Although the

Equality Act has yet to be voted on in Congress, following this interview with Marty Rouse, on March 13th, 2019, the bill was reintroduced on the HRC's National Lobby Day (HRC.org).

Following this National Lobby Day, the HRC laid out future steps they are taking to grow more support for the bill, as well as action HRC members and supporters can take too (Winterhof). Specifically, the HRC launched an "Equality Act Action Center," containing resources and action plans that people can use to help gain traction for the Equality Act in their own local communities (Winterhof). These actions consist of becoming a community co-sponsor on the Equality Act; attending local rallies, trainings, and phone banks; sharing your personal story on discrimination; participating in grassroots lobby work in your own community; and emailing and/or calling your Congress members to support the bill (HRC.org). In just one week since the Equality Act was reintroduced to Congress, the HRC documented that 170+ companies, 310+ national and local organizations, more than 280 members of Congress, and over 52,000 people have signed on as co-sponsors for this bill (HRC).³⁸

The HRC has increasingly engaged with companies and celebrities in support of this law. For example, they recently launched an *Americans for the Equality Act* video campaign of companies and celebrities vocalizing their support for the Equality Act (Griffin "Leading the Charge for Equality"). Such a strategy not only demonstrates a larger and wider range of supporters, but also helps mobilize these famous companies and celebrities' fan bases to support the law too. This "hearts and minds" strategy has been used through media and grassroots mobilization to grow support. As demonstrated with past laws like the repeal of "Don't Ask,

³⁸ As of March 31, 2019, there were over 100,000 co-sponsors documented for the Equality Act (HRC.org). The number is rising daily as more people sign on to the bill.

Don't Tell," implementation of hate crimes laws, and passage of marriage equality, the greater the public support, the greater chance these laws have at passing. Ultimately, Marty Rouse and the HRC's various emails, action alerts, blog posts, videos, and social media posts demonstrate that lobbying is only the first step in gaining support for pro-LGBTQ+ rights. Grassroots activism by HRC members and supporters must occur and has occurred already to help enact this law and bring the U.S. one step closer to reaching full LGBTQ+ equality.

Interestingly, both Marty Rouse and Candace Gingrich assert that even if the United States were to reach a state of full LGBTQ+ equality, there would still be a need for the HRC (Appendix 1 and 2). This shared belief somewhat challenges the "political opportunity structure" theory, which asserts that "external conditions determine when and which interest groups form, survive, and die" (Nownes 86, see Jenkins, Jacobs, and Agnone 277-303; Meyer and Minkoff 1457-1492). Further associated to this theory is that when "political opportunities expand, 'new groups form and existing groups flourish,'" (Nownes 86, see Meyer and Imig 262). On one hand, U.S. LGBTQ+ history has shown that as social revolutions occur, such as during the gay liberation movement of the 1970s, political opportunities expand and more groups form. The amount of political activism that occurred during the 1970s was vast. However, the notion that as "political opportunities wane, fewer groups form and extant groups languish" is not entirely accurate (Nownes 86). While many of the organizations that formed in the 1970s did not persist over time, many did. Furthermore, numerous other LGBTQ+ groups have formed since the 1970s. Moreover, this theory would posit that if a country were to reach full LGBTQ+ equality, there would be little political opportunity or need to have a pro-LGBTQ+ organization advocating for civil and political rights. Thereby pro-LGBTQ+ organizations would wane in

necessity, membership, and ultimately die out. Candace Gingrich and Marty Rouse both doubt this to be the case for the HRC.

For organizational comparison, they both cite the NAACP. The NAACP still exists today despite the 1964 Civil Rights Act, due to the persistence of ignorance, hatred, and misinformation around African Americans (Gingrich in Appendix 2). As their mission statement asserts, the NAACP has to be constantly working to “secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and well-being of all persons” (NAACP.org). Just because there are civil rights laws in place does not mean racism is dead and organizations such as the NAACP are no longer needed. Racism needs to be continually combatted regardless of what laws are in place for people of color. Similarly, homophobia is a widespread and damaging belief that organizations like the HRC will need to continuously combat even if legislation like the Equality Act passes. The HRC is nowhere near “working themselves out of a job,” since much of the work they will continue to do will be “reactive” to LGBTQ+ opponents (Gingrich in Appendix 2). This need to be reactive is demonstrated in President Trump’s numerous rollbacks, most notably the transgender military ban. The HRC will require “constant vigilance” to figure out what opponents’ strategies are and figuring out ways to combat these strategies (Rouse in Appendix 1). The LGBTQ+ Rights Movement has made significant progress over the past 70+ years so will need organizations like the HRC to ensure this progress does not become total regression.

Furthermore, the work the HRC participates in will be also be “proactive.” Work such as continuing to help elect openly LGBTQ+ officials and allies; maintaining the activity of the HRC's Transgender Equality Council; lobbying Congress to pass equal same-sex adoption and

foster care policies, ban conversion therapy nationwide, address discriminatory Housing and Urban Development (HUD) policies, continue healthcare efforts on combatting HIV and AIDS; and continuing to educate future generations of children on LGBTQ+ people, such as the HRC's recent school readings of the book on trans kids, "Jazz and Friends" (Gingrich in Appendix 2; Instagram; Twitter; Wesley et al. 150-168). External factors may lessen the need for large levels of reactive mobilization and advocacy work, but proactive efforts will still need to occur. Until LGBTQ+ opponents stop teaching and preaching hatred against LGBTQ+ Americans, then the HRC's work will never end. Furthermore, the most recent world news of Brunei now condemning gay people to death demonstrates a need for the HRC to address worldwide homophobia (Magra). The HRC already has an HRC Global Team so clearly even if full equality is attained in the U.S., there is still much global work for the HRC to do (HRC.org). Whereas political work and gaining civil and political rights was the sole focus of the HRC in 1980, the current and future focus needs to continue to be on education. Political work helps to gain pro-LGBTQ+ political representation (Haider-Markel et al. 576), but education helps to attain and maintain support in the public.

As previously mentioned, challenges that continue to persist within the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement is homophobia. The challenge with homophobia is figuring out how political and educational strategies can address it. With other issues you can more easily lobby for a specific policy, such as higher taxes to fix street potholes, cleaner air, or stricter gun regulations. However, it is much more personal when it comes to LGBTQ+ issues. As Marty Rouse contends, "You're talking about the people's lives in a very intimate way. And so that is different organizing, and especially when there are people and organizations that are opposing you. It's

very, very personal. And so, it's one thing to work on issue politically and try to strategize about how we're going to do this. It's a different thing when the issue is extremely personal for people and we forget about that" (Appendix 1). It is particularly difficult and frustrating when a Republican politician personally supports LGBTQ+ measures, but cannot voice this support due to their anti-LGBTQ+ party and constituency (Appendix 1; Sherrill and Wolinsky 113-114). Party affiliation is the main factor for how a politician votes in Congress so until the GOP changes their platform on LGBTQ+ issues, GOP support seems unlikely to aid the HRC in combatting homophobia (Bishin and Smith 796). On the political side, the HRC can work to elect pro-LGBTQ+ candidates and enact pro-LGBTQ+ laws in the hopes they will trickle down to address the public's homophobia. This worked for the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement in the 1970s when addressing the APA ruling so perhaps it can continue to work today too.

On the education side, the HRC and LGBTQ+ Rights Movement's most effective approach is through increased visibility and showing the public who LGBTQ+ people are. One of the most effective ways of acquiring this visibility is through more and more people coming out. "Coming out" first became popular in the Christopher Liberation Day March in 1970. Harvey Milk recognized the significance of people coming out in the 1970s, as did the HRC when incorporating the National Coming Out Day Project in the 1990s. One of the main reasons the movement has been so successful has been through people coming out, gaining widespread visibility, and challenging societal misconceptions about LGBTQ+ people (Mock 257). Besides just coming out, visibility has been growing in the public due to television shows, movies, and music showcasing LGBTQ+ positivity. Prime examples of this visibility are with popular music stars like Adam Lambert, Frank Ocean, and Lady Gaga; movies like *Carol* and *Love Simon*; and

television shows like Glee, Modern Family, RuPaul's Drag Race, and Queer Eye. Though many of these examples are still largely white and cis-gender, not all are. Representation is still lacking, but it is slowly getting better. Yet even with this increased visibility and representation, homophobia and especially transphobia are still rampant across communities in the U.S. (Flores; Rimmerman 3-5). Homophobia has caused the LGBTQ+ community many, if not every, challenge throughout U.S. history and continues to challenge the community and the HRC today. The HRC and the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement must continue to employ these political and educational efforts in order for homophobia to eventually diminish in society.

On one final note pertaining to the future of the HRC, it will be interesting to witness how the organization proceeds once they experience a change in leadership. This past September of 2018, the HRC's President, Chad Griffin, announced that he would be stepping down sometime in the next year (see Figure 5 on the following page, Griffin "Thank You," Page).

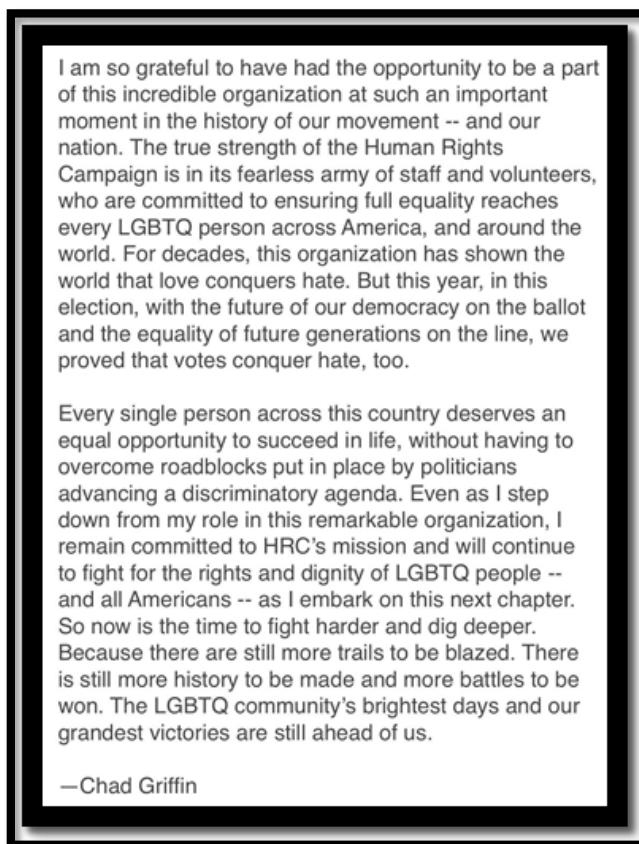


Figure 5

In response to his announcement, news media reported that, “Chad Griffin, the influential LGBTQ activist who helped turn the Human Rights Campaign into a powerful political force” for the past seven years has been “at the helm of HRC, steering the organization through the landmark Supreme Court ruling in favor of gay marriage nationwide and the repeal of a North Carolina law that required transgender people to use restrooms matching their birth certificates” (Pace). Furthermore, many politicians voiced their support and gratitude to him for his pro-equality work at the HRC, such as Hillary Clinton and Kamala Harris (Twitter). Kamala Harris has been a particular strong, vocal advocate for Chad Griffin and the HRC. She was even

recently a key speaker at the HRC's Los Angeles Dinner (Peters "HRC Announces U.S. Senator"). This is rather significant for the HRC and the LGBTQ+ community given her current presidential campaign.

Perhaps Chad Griffin stepping down will provide the HRC the opportunity to hire someone who is neither white or cis-gender to assuage some of the critiques the organization has received since 1980. I do not wish to project into the future at what a person of color or transgender President of the HRC would mean for the organization or the LGBTQ+ community in general. However, the HRC clearly knows from history and from their own work that representation and public perception matter. If they are truly committed to diversity and inclusion like they proclaim then having another white, cisgender, gay man or lesbian woman could very possibly nullify and derail this commitment. Ultimately, I look forward to seeing who takes over the HRC's leadership and seeing what Chad Griffin does next career wise as many Democratic presidential candidates are predicted to request his help on their campaigns (Pace). Perhaps Kamala Harris will hire him, or maybe "Mayor Pete" Buttigieg. If Pete Buttigieg won the DNC nomination, he would be the first openly gay presidential candidate in U.S. history. Furthermore, should he beat Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election, he would be the first openly gay President of the United States. Such a historic feat could potentially skyrocket LGBTQ+ rights and recognition in this country. The year 2020 will most certainly be an interesting time for the Human Rights Campaign and the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement.

Section 8. Limitations and Areas of Further Research

This paper has demonstrated where the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement has been in the United States, where it is going next, and where the HRC fits into this progression. While I believe this paper successfully completes this goal in the preceding 150+ pages, limitations do exist and additional areas of research still ought to be conducted. Prior to this paper's conclusion, I wish to detail a couple of these limitations and areas of additional research.

One limitation I came across when conducting this research project was the extensiveness of LGBTQ+ history. In weaving together different connecting points of the movement's history in relation to the HRC, this paper has lengthened dramatically. While 150-160 pages is longer than the recommended page amount for an Honor Scholar thesis, it feels quite short for all the information that I know could be and should be included. This thesis paper has developed into a short book in itself. If this project extended beyond two semesters, I truly believe that this paper could transform further into a much longer, more extensive book. Perhaps if I continue on to graduate school in the next couple of years, this is where my research would focus.

A second limitation that I ran into when conducting this project was interviews with current HRC staff members. While I had originally set out to interview several HRC staff members, due to the 2018 midterm elections, HRC Equality Convention, Time to Thrive Conference, and National Winter Gala, the response rates from the HRC were less than ideal. While I believe the two interviews I conducted were essential to developing my paper's argument, particularly since both Gingrich and Rouse have been working at the HRC for so long, I would have liked to have more. Or at least have interviewed additional areas of the HRC, such

as their Pride Team to learn more about the HRC's public visibility. However, while lacking additional interviews, I did benefit greatly from having personal experiences at the HRC as an intern. These internship experiences helped provide important context for information I did acquire either via interviews or from online resources. Additionally, the 2015 Pipeline Project report helped immensely in learning internal critiques of the HRC. Even with more interviews, such critiques would very likely not have procured due to lack of anonymity on the telephone. While I wish I could have had more interviews, I believe the many different types of information I did gather and analyze was more than enough to successfully complete this project.

From these limitations comes additional areas of research that ought to be explored. One area of research is in regards to the social media aspect of the HRC. I detail aspects of the HRC's immense social media presence in chapter three when discussing marriage equality and again as part of their additional period of growth, however this was only a short mention in comparison to the rest of the paper. Researching in depth on the impacts that social media has had on the HRC and LGBTQ+ Rights Movement was far beyond the scope of this paper. However, it does warrant for further research. How has social media impacted the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement? How has social media impacted the LGBTQ+ community? What are the differences between in-person LGBTQ+ communities and virtual LGBTQ+ communities? How has social media overall shaped the public's perception of different LGBTQ+ identities? What help and/or harm has been done due to social media? These are important questions I wish to investigate further.

A second area that warrants additional research is another internal report conducted on the HRC. While the 2015 Pipeline Report was truly enlightening on the inner workings of the organization, this report was conducted in 2015. It is now 2019 and while 4 years may not seem

like a long time, if the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement is any evidence, a lot can change in just 4 years. I would be deeply interested to see how HRC staff members perceive working at the HRC now in comparison to how HRC staff members felt working in 2015. Particularly after the 18-21 step improvements that the HRC initiated following this report. Does the HRC lack as much diversity *and* inclusion as they did in 2015? This I would like to know.

Overall, I greatly enjoyed researching and writing on the HRC and LGBTQ+ Rights Movement. I learned a vast amount on the history, the organization, and myself in general. While this paper is quite long, reaching 150+ pages after the following conclusion, I firmly believe that I could write another 150+ pages on this topic. This paper consists of an extensive historical analysis of the movement and the organization, but it is not a complete analysis. Such a project would be well over the Honor Scholar Program's already limited 60-80 page goal and take well over two semesters to complete. There is much more information that could be added and should be added should this project continue. I look forward to continuing my own research on this topic as I progress in my academic career.

Conclusion

For the majority of the 20th century in the United States, LGBTQ+ people have had very little political power or positive public recognition. Reasons for this lack of power and equal rights were due to being a small number of people spread far and wide across the country, their identity was stigmatized in multiple ways, violence was rampant against the community, they lacked wealth and heterosexual allies in politics, and overall, the LGBTQ+ community lacked strong group cohesion (Sherrill and Wolinsky 116-118). These factors kept the LGBTQ+ community socially and politically oppressed for decades. However, as LGBTQ+ people began coming out and gained greater visibility through different moments in U.S. history, many of these factors have lessened and equal rights have slowly been gained.

Beginning after WWII, different decades have demonstrated different approaches in the struggle for equal rights. The 1950's homophile movement primarily promoted love and acceptance into heterosexual society, not trying to make waves or appear different, but rather promoted normalcy. This promotion of what was considered normal appealed to white, middle-class cisgender gays and lesbians who could better assimilate into a white, middle-class cisgender American society. However, as different identities and different generations of gays and lesbians realized that total assimilation was a slow, stagnant strategy that was not gaining much traction, this assimilation approach splintered. More radical, political protests occurred during the sexual revolution of the 1960s, coming to a head in 1969 at the Stonewall Inn raid and riots. Following this event, the fight for equality became increasingly focused on social and political liberation. As a result, the 1970s witnessed conflict between mainstream assimilationist organizations and people who favored greater levels of radical, militant, "in-your-face" activism.

Even when moments of unity occurred in marches, DNC conventions, APA rulings, and electoral wins of openly gay and lesbian politicians, there was still lack of cohesion in the movement (Sherrill and Wolinsky 89). Disenfranchised by a growing opposition in the New Right, the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement still hadn't made extensive civil or political progress by the end of the 1970s.

The LGBTQ+ community's lack of strong political power heightened during the 1980's AIDS epidemic. The 1980s were a decimating time for the LGBTQ+ community, but also helped bring together different identities in a fight for both their lives and their rights. The 1980s also saw the advent of the Human Rights Campaign. Forming as a small PAC, the HRC mirrored the mainstream organizations of the time in their white, middle-class demographics and attempt to assimilate into society through political means. While this strategy eventually worked to grow the organization in membership, wealth, and political influence, it marginalized the experiences of people in the LGBTQ+ community that did not fit this cookie-cutter mold. Though the HRC grew as an organization and even outlived radical organizations such as ACT UP and Queer Nation, this growth resulted in major critiques from the people they had marginalized.

As the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement began to transform in the 1990s, so did the HRC. Addressing some of their shortcomings in the mid-1990s, the HRC began to broaden their focus to include education efforts alongside their political approach. Changing the "hearts and minds" of Americans was viewed to be crucial in combatting negative views of the community and increasing public opinion to be in favor of LGBTQ+ rights. Whereas the HRC was able to grow financially and politically in the years before, now they focused on growing publicly. With a new name, education arm, symbol, and building by the early 2000s, the HRC attempted new types of

activism on the grassroots level in coalition with other organizations and issues. The fight to repeal the LGB military ban and fight for marriage equality saw this new approach come to a successful fruition. Arising from these fights for equal rights came the HRC as a leading force that the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement needed. However, while the HRC was successful in lobbying the federal government, participating in grassroots work, gaining their wealth, and increasing their political influence through elections, the HRC still faltered to address the growing racial, gender, and socioeconomic divide in the LGBTQ+ community. Their incremental approach to gaining rights proved to be the least successful in 2007 when ENDA failed to garner full LGBTQ+ support and ultimately failed to pass in Congress. 2007 and the later 2015 Pipeline Project report demonstrate areas in which the HRC has failed to address major issues of diversity and inclusion within their organization and in the advocacy work they do across the United States.

Following these two exhibited failures, the HRC has attempted to address these major criticisms. Through initiating an 18-21 step improvement plan, changing their rhetoric to be fully inclusive, and not supporting gender exclusive legislation any longer, the HRC has attempted to change. Whether this change proves to be effective, perceived as effective, or persistent over time is yet to be seen. However, the HRC alongside the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement is attempting at resolving the many divides that have plagued the movement since the 1950s. Great strides towards equality have been made since the 1950s, particularly in the last 20 years, yet progress is nowhere near completion. But as both Marty Rouse and Candace Gingrich asserted, the HRC is not going anywhere. As the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement continues to grow, evolve, and progress, so will the Human Rights Campaign. The need for full LGBTQ+ equality still

exists, therefore, the fight for equal rights and increased societal recognition will continue. Particularly as the 2020 presidential election looms closer.

There is still much progress to be made, many rights to be gained, many different intersectional identities to highlight, but if the last 70+ years are any evidence, this progress will eventually occur. It may be slow, incremental, waiver at times, and warrant critiques, however the future of the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement has never looked brighter. So long as organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign continue to be politically engaged and educate the public on the LGBTQ+ community, then progress will occur. Furthermore, so long as LGBTQ+ people continue to vocalize where mainstream organizations like the HRC have faltered, then the HRC will hopefully continue to address these issues.

The HRC has gotten to where they are today by growing their wealth, membership, altering their approaches, and overall by transforming as the times and movement has transformed. LGBTQ+ supporters in the American public must be diligent to ensure that progress is not deterred by those in political office and that old, exclusive, singular focused strategies of attaining rights are not again the norm. The HRC has at least demonstrated the awareness that change is needed and has attempted to address these issues head on. This paper demonstrates where the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement has been and how and where the HRC fits into the movement's progression. In doing so, this paper has provided ample evidence to support the five key arguments that the introduction laid out. As for where the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement and the HRC need to go next is evident in the rights and intersectional identities of LGBTQ+ people that have previously been left behind. Strategies that once worked for some must now be made to work for all. 70+ years have passed and enormous progress has been made.

It will be interesting to see where the next 70+ years takes the LGBTQ+ community. Indeed, I look forward to learning of and living this future.

Appendix 1: Transcribed Interview with Marty Rouse

January 17th, 2019 *Interview Recording Starts at 19:06. First 19 minutes were spent on hold, waiting for Marty Rouse to pick up his conference call*

Tabitha Adams: 19:06 -

Okay, cool. Um, so I guess first begin on a more personal note, and then I'll ask like, broader questions about HRC in general. So when and why did you first begin working at the HRC?

Marty Rouse: 19:19 -

I saw the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of LGBTQ people. And because of the size and effectiveness of the Human Rights Campaign, I saw that that was a good organization to work for, and a great platform to help bring change to a larger amount of people in a faster way.

Tabitha Adams:

Gotcha. Okay. Cool. Yeah. And then so I understand that your position is the National Field Director of the HRC. So can you tell me more about what that entails?

Marty Rouse:

Yeah, generally my job is to look at how we want to make change in the country and to figure out how to utilize HRC's resources some of them financial but also staff resources and our political team to put bodies on the ground to make change. So it's really trying to figure out strategically looking across the country, where can we sort of do surgical strikes, where do we go to mobilize our membership and others that can bring the greater change. So because we can't be in all 50 states at the same time, we can't be in all the cities, can't be in the small towns, where do

we go? And like literally like right now you know it's Richmond Virginia, earlier this week it was you know Albany, New York. Like you figure I go and that's what my job is National Field Director, how do you be surgically strategic and that's my job.

Tabitha Adams:

So it's like a national level moving but then incorporating grassroots stuff?

Marty Rouse:

Yes and to take if we want let's just say we want to pass federal legislation well we have a lot of support already from members of Congress, but some members of Congress aren't supportive yet. We look to see where we where do we need to mobilize to be most effective and that's my job is to figure out where we need to be to make the greatest change at the federal level or a state or local level.

Tabitha Adams: 21:34 -

Okay great so then with your people...

Marty Rouse: 21:36 -

Like for example, we have a lobby team let's just say senator, I'm just going to pick a name out of a hat, Senator Tillis from North Carolina is not supportive the Equality Act right now. Yes, we go into the halls of the of the Senate and we lobby him, we educate him on our issues. My job is field director would be okay, how do we supplement that work in North Carolina? And then we would try to build a program in North Carolina, mobilize support to the Equality Act of having people who live in North Carolina contact the United States Senator, that would be my job. And

I'm just giving an example. That's not we don't know if that's what we're doing. But that's the example.

Tabitha Adams: 22:12 -

What do you do with like that Senator, regardless of how much work because he puts into mobilization of members and supporters and the state, he still does not go for it, he's not going to support it?

Marty Rouse: 22:24 -

Well, then we would ultimately shame him and call him out to let our members know we ended up not voting for the bill. We would have our members communicate with him by email or phone and express dissatisfaction. We would make it public that he said no, and then if we think that he could be defeated in the election, we would then try to mobilize the members in opposition to him come Election Day.

Tabitha Adams: 22:50 -

Gotcha. OK, cool. So then what's your position in time at HRC...

Marty Rouse: 22:54 -

I've been in I've been the National Field Director at HRC. This is my 14th year

Tabitha Adams: 23:03 -

Okay. So then from that time, how have you seen the organization change?

Marty Rouse:

And I'm so yeah, so I was brought on board at the HRC. Right before HRC, I was the campaign director for the campaign in Massachusetts to protect the marriage equality decision. And so I was doing organizing work, state legislative election work, we're changing hearts and minds related to marriage in Massachusetts. At that same time, around that same time, HRC's Field Department back then was much more about just being visible as HRC around the country, being visible, usually a pride celebrations. That's what HRC was doing before I got hired. Around the time that I got hired on, the reason I got hired was to increase the political power of HRC locally in it, you know on the ground make sure that membership to the HRC actually meant something. So my job was to increase the political muscle of the Human Rights Campaign to sort of build and flex our organization's political muscle and so the work we did in Massachusetts I was brought on to try to help you know, do that type of work across the country. So how do we build political power in certain states, how do we would matter for marriage equality of the states? What do we do? We have to mobilize support, get involved in local elections and be very visible in the states. And the HRC never really was like that, HRC really didn't have an organizing presence in the states as much as I did. When I got hired so that was my job was to sort of build this infrastructure to make sure that HRC was seen as a powerful player at the local level. That doesn't mean involves only in local issues, but at the local level. So like I said, yes lobbying United States Senator on Capitol Hill, but my job was to build that lobbying support and grassroots lobbying in that person's home district, so just because it's a local doesn't mean you're not doing federal work. It could be federal work but done at the local level. So I was really I've seen the larger impact and the growth of grassroots organizing at HRC, not just mobilizing our members and supporters, but also working coalition with other groups, you bringing everybody

together to work for the same cause of the same issue. So that's what I've seen really changed over the years at the HRC, much more of an increased focus on building political power at the local level and empowering our membership to actually get involved and do organizing work and get involved in elections as well.

Tabitha Adams: 25:43 -

You kind of mentioned it in your answer the coalition building aspect, so where do you find those coalition building most effective? Most beneficial with organizations and those organizations' focus as a whole?

Marty Rouse: 25:57 -

It's hard to say because it's not cookie cutter at all, so I'll just focus on a couple of things. So in Maryland, when we were working on marriage equality and trying to pass marriage equality there, people were saying, "Well, you're not going to be able to win marriage in Maryland because if you pass it in the legislature, they have... it's easy in the state of Maryland for the legislature to put something up onto the ballot for public vote." So we knew that if we were going to pass marriage equality in the legislature in Maryland, it was likely to go to the ballot and then have the public vote yes or no to marriage equality. And people thought that this was a difficult thing, especially in a state with a high percentage of African American voters because at that time, a majority of African Americans voters were not supportive of marriage equality. So it was seen as a risky venture. What we did from a very early moment in Maryland is we partnered strategically with the NAACP in Maryland at the national level, their national headquarters is in Baltimore, and their state affiliate is in Prince George's County. So we partner with the NAACP

intentionally and we work with them to be visible and to mobilize. And that was not an easy thing to do. There was a lot of dissension within the NAACP, but ultimately they were supportive. But it was, it was a learning curve for them to to take this take this bold step in 2010, 2011. And then we work very closely with them and coalition to educate voters. And so they had their messaging, we had our messaging, but we work very, very closely together. In fact, our field organizers in Maryland actually worked out of the north of the NAACP offices. So we really intensely partner truly with the NAACP, and then of course, we ultimately did end up winning at the ballot box when no one thought we can do it. So that was very significant in 2012.

In Nebraska, when we're trying to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," we partnered with organizations that were doing military issues and working closely with the military so that the face of HRC, the face of repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was not the face of people wearing HRC pride shirts. It was the face of veterans, family members, and other loved ones of veterans being visible and talking to their elected official about why they from a great personal perspective we should be repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." So it really varies issue by issue who your partners are.

In New York, trying to pass gender identity protections we partnered very intensely with transgender organizations working together to lift them up and lift their voices up strategically and effectively all across New York State to finally pass on gender identity protections in New York State.

Tabitha Adams:

Gotcha. So has there ever been like pushback from those outside of the LGBTQ community or within that doesn't see coalition building as necessary or is effective because it's not the exact focus of LGBTQ rights?

Marty Rouse: 29:00 -

No, I would say the pushback that we get some times.. Again, coalition work, whenever you talk about what's called coalition work, is never easy, ever, ever easy and so we get pushback from the organizations themselves or other organizations or people within those organizations such as, "Why are you little organization x, partnering with this large, large organization? Aren't they going to overshadow our work?" So that's one of the issues that we face a lot. You know, how does, how do we partner with local organizations without overshadowing them and making sure we lift them up properly. So that's really a very unique, it requires a lot of energy to figure out how to do this properly, and to HRC's credit, I believe we do a very, very good job of it. Sometimes it's difficult. Sometimes there's problems. But overall, I think the arc of HRC has been doing a much better job of truly partnering with coalition partners across the country, intentionally creating partnerships and making them be true partnerships.

Tabitha Adams: 30:22 -

Gotcha. Okay. I think that was perfectly answers question number three. So then going on to number four, from your knowledge since its formation 1980, how has the HRC... or what challenges has the HRC faced?

Marty Rouse: 30:38 -

I think one of the issues, well a lot of issues, but I think one of the very large issues we face is homophobia. And you know, it's very difficult to do this work and you know, most organizations you can lobby for something or you know, you want lower taxes, higher taxes you want your roads fixed, you want your potholes covered, you want the air to be cleaner, you know, you want gun policies changed. And whatever position you're in, you want to bend policy change. But for LGBTQ issues, you're talking about something very personal. You're talking about the people's lives in a very intimate way. And so that is different organizing, and especially when there are people and organizations that are opposing you. It's very, very personal. And so it's one thing to work on issue politically and try to strategize about how we're going to do this. It's a different thing when the issue is extremely personal for people and we forget about that. And so there's ongoing discrimination in the LGBT community. And what's different I find is there's a lot of internalized homophobia and there's not familial support. So sometimes there is personal attacks on people because of who they are. Rarely is that personal attack coming and people in within your own family are hostile. So a lot of times you walk out of your house and you have a really bad day, for some reason, you go home and get comfort from your family. A lot of LGBT people cannot get that comfort from their family. And that just adds to the difficulty of moving forward. Yeah, I think that's really a challenge that people don't appreciate as much.

I think politically, the challenges are for whatever reason, there's increased political polarization our country and so while individual politicians might be supportive of our issues, the dynamics politically make it difficult for them to support us. So in New York State, we've been trying for over 10 years to add gender identity and gender expression protections to the civil rights law. And because the New York State Senate was controlled by Republicans, they refuse

to let the bill come out of committee. But there were individual Republicans who would be more than happy to vote for the bill, but leadership has bottled it up. Same thing is happening in Virginia, the non-discrimination in public employment bill keeps getting bottled up by the Republican Speaker of the House won't let it come at a committee. So you see politics getting in the way, where the substance bill there's enough Republicans that will be supportive.

Tabitha Adams:

So then for the societal opposition, not just as those homophobic, but where has the biggest portion, I guess, of homophobia come from? Is there a specific community or location or beliefs that is promoting such opposition?

Marty Rouse:

I'm sorry, say that again?

Tabitha Adams:

So for the societal, the homophobia aspect, is there a specific community or location the United States that's most adamantly against?

Marty Rouse:

Yeah generally speaking, the South, the Deep South is where generally speaking it's harder. And that's also no surprise where there's also significant religiosity in our country. And so a lot of the opposition that we face is based on religious objections or the mixture of politics and religion together because you just notice it. You notice that there's much more opposition coming from a religious perspective. But there's not that much religious objections to other things that are also,

objectionable from a religious point of view. But for whatever reason, and I think that as politics, there's only certain issues where people object to because of the religiosity. And so it's just interesting how the religious hierarchy has picked and chosen certain issues to fight on and this is one of them consistently.

Tabitha Adams:

Since it is a different level of opposition, it's not just against like a corporate tax policy or whatever. It's deep within their faith or something their faith opposes? How do you combat that

Marty Rouse:

That's a really good question. You combat it by finding people, including legislators, who are also deeply religious and still speak out in support of our issues. And sometimes people can talk about it from their own faith angle. So sometimes you see someone else say, I'm a Catholic, and even though I'm a Catholic, I still support this issue. It's rare to find a politician that says, I am a Catholic, and I know that the Catholic Church opposes this issue. But I am a person of faith and because I am Catholic, because I believe so strongly in my faith, my faith is dictating me to support this issue. And they use their faith as a reason to support LGBT issues. And that's rare to find but that's very, very, very helpful when you can find it.

Tabitha Adams: 36:03 -

So then with that, with the public support of the HRC, where has the most support come from? Not just within those from within the LGBT community, but as a nation as a whole?

Marty Rouse: 36:17 -

We have. Well, of course, we get our support from LGBT people and people who love them. But we're seeing increased support from corporate America. We're seeing increased support from straight allies all across the country. And I believe I've seen data that people that feel strongly about women's rights are much likelier to support LGBT rights. When you see people who are strongly support environmental protections, they also are more likely to support LGBT rights. So there is some cross polymerization on certain issues. So it's interesting.

Tabitha Adams:

Yeah, so how has that even just within the past 20 years, how important grown I guess?

Marty Rouse:

Well let's pick the corporate side. In corporate America you see much more public support from Corporate America either contributing directly to us or speaking out against anti LGBT legislation in the states, organization speaking out and companies speaking out when he when North Carolina legislature passed anti-Transgender Law, HB-2. Corporate America spoke out against that. When the Texas legislature was thinking of mirroring what happened in North Carolina and passing HB-2 in North Carolina, businesses in Texas said we don't want this year and they organized against that possibility in Texas and ultimately, Texas did not pass anti-transgender into legislation. Although the Attorney General Lieutenant Governor said, "Look what North Carolina at HB-2. We can't wait to pass something like that here in Texas." But then the business can be worked with us. And they were able to stop that from passing in Texas two years ago. You see increased support from non-LGBT people. A significant percentage of HRC

donors do not identify themselves as LGBT. So any increase support from non-LGBT people contributing and being members of our organization.

Tabitha Adams:

Yeah, that's interesting. Women's rights and environmental rights. I didn't know that there was a correlation between the two. That's interesting. So then going to the next question, since with all these challenges, and then changes of the organization, how has the HRC changed to address these certain challenges that they face? Whether they be political or societal?

Marty Rouse:

Well, I would say that as there's been more attention drawn to women's rights, as there's been more attacks on a woman's right to determine her own health care, as there has been more attacks on immigrants and immigrant families, as there's been... so we have seen HRC link arms and support those communities as well. So we frequently speak out on issues that may be years ago, we wouldn't necessarily not necessarily speak out about. When there's a women's march, HRC supports the Women's March, when there's an Immigration Rights March we're out there in support of immigration rights and being vocal and supporting those issues. When you see that there is attacks on the labor community HRC expresses our support but it's mainly around women's issues. I know the other one's going to say, on gun control, on fair, on common-sense gun reform, after the Pulse shooting, within 48 hours, HRC changed our board policy and we came out in support of fair minded gun control. That was brand new, that was because of Pulse. So the circumstances of our countries do impact our policies and how we move forward.

Tabitha Adams:

Okay so then in terms of back in 1980 and then today, and you kind of answered that with it, but how has the HRC changed in terms of the strategy for attaining rights? Whether those be more assimilating into society, or liberation focused?

Marty Rouse: 40:47 -

I wouldn't say it's more liberation focus, I would say we understand the value of coalition building and partnership and the intersectionality of our work and our mission. So that, to me has been one of the most dramatic things. So especially with this President, our President, when our President attacks a group, we realized he could easily be attacking our group. So if you're going to attack immigration reform, if he's going to attack the Dreamers, and not support the DREAM Act, we will highlight Dreamers and say, "You know what, there are a lot of LGBT Dreamers and so we support Dreamers." Immigrants that are coming in migrants to our country, a lot of those people are persecuted that are LGBT so we must support them, so there's a way for us to find intersectionality you know in our work and I think that's been one of the biggest changes in HRC.

Tabitha Adams:

And so you think that that has been like an effective...?

Marty Rouse: 41:50 -

Absolutely, absolutely because we used to be so completely focused on LGBT issues and that was to our benefit. We were so laser focused, we would ask people to be with us. We would just be so singular focus, we can be much more effective and efficient by just focusing on LGBT

legislation, pro or con, just really being direct and focused on that. It's only recently that we realized, okay, there's so many other attacks. We've been so successful over the past decade or so, really moving equality forward so fast. But other organizations, other groups of people are being attacked. And we realized that there's LGBT people everywhere, every LGBT people everywhere, and so if there's an attack on a certain group and that includes LGBT people, we need to support them. And so that's been the biggest change, I think, that I've seen.

Tabitha Adams: 42:43 -

So what do you see the HRC then going next. As an organization?

Marty Rouse: 42:49 -

I see us continuing to grow globally. Because the world is shrinking, we need to be protective of LGBT people around the world and are much more engaged here in DC with all the embassies around the country and focusing much more on international work and the treatment of LGBT people all around the world. That's been a big change. I also think that there's been a larger change and focusing on the needs of LGBT youth and family. There's so much more visible parenting going on in the LGBT community that we now need to focus on helping school systems, even at the elementary school level deal with LGBT issues in elementary school, for example. And so we've been National Education Association about how to address that and that's been something we would never have thought to do 20 or 30 years ago.

Tabitha Adams: 43:55 -

So then with like the policy areas that are incorporated into that growth? I mean there's still the Equality Act advocating for, for then what other policy areas do you see needs to be addressed in the future?

Marty Rouse: 44:11 -

That's a good question. I'm so focused on the Equality Act. That's really interesting. I think that attack on our health care system, a lot of LGBT people, especially transgender people, really rely upon the healthcare system to save their lives. Also, people with HIV. And so I think there's been renewed attention to efforts to dismantle Obamacare and making sure that the health care system is as robust as it could be, and protecting people and access to quality healthcare is really important.

Tabitha Adams: 44:55 -

How would the HRC address those policy areas? Would it be the same way that they've been doing as immigrants rights and gun control?

Marty Rouse:

Yeah and taking a stand and being much more public when when some ministries and tries to dismantle our health care system we speak out much more than we would have.

Tabitha Adams:

Part of that question is after the 2018 midterm election, there's obviously a lot more LGBTQ and pro-equality candidates elected, even just the two weeks that the new Congress has been an

office, have you seen any changes occur or future changes that are going to occur in the next two years?

Marty Rouse:

Well, right away, the house adopted a non-discrimination policy. You see they already announced support they want to pass the Equality Act this year. So those changes were immediate. And I think there's going to be continued support and recognition of LGBT people in different ways. So bullying in schools, for example, I think could be addressed at the federal level. Especially being some bullying, anti-bullying laws do not explicitly name the types of anti-bullying that is not acceptable. So we feel the need to make sure that LGBT is specifically mentioned as what is unacceptable bullying, you know, LGBT people. So there's ways in which we fight for that and I think that that's going to continue in Congress. I think that you saw the current White House try to basically be erase LGBT people from federal you know federal all parts of the administration. Right, you took off mention of sexual orientation on the White House website. There's no data collection going on in the US census regarding sexual orientation. So there we see that as a negative and we hope that eventually these things will be changed and addressed again.

Tabitha Adams:

And so this question, but it's interesting. Do you think with President Trump now in Office and obviously greater levels of opposition with him, so do you see that there's been more public support of the HRC?

Marty Rouse:

Similarly, after Trump was elected, you saw an increase in support for HRC, from a membership perspective, donations to HRC, as well as other advocacy organizations as well that are considered progressive or on the left. So Planned Parenthood, environmental groups, gun control organizations all saw an increase in funding as they saw that they were real attacks going up.

Tabitha Adams:

That's interesting just because obviously you want an Office that's going to promote your policies so when you don't have someone in Office that is supporting your policies and whatnot, but then having that public support and get backlash against him. I think it's interesting. I guess the last question is kind of broad, but in an ideal world where full LGBTQ equality exists, do you think that the HRC would no longer need to exist as an organization?

Marty Rouse: 48:17 -

Well, I don't think that there'll be full LGBT equality. I think that we will have our rights enacted by law and by statute, but to have them implemented and lived to the full extent they should be takes societal change and constant vigilance. So for example, we've had so much civil rights legislation in our country and I don't think anyone thinks we have full racial equality in our country. So I think there will be a need for the Human Rights Campaign for a very long time, in different ways.

Tabitha Adams: 49:20 -

I think that's the end of my interview questions.

Marty Rouse: 49:25 -

Okay.

Tabitha Adams: 49:27 -

But I think it's extremely helpful moving forward with my project and focusing on the HRC and aspects of the LGBTQ rights movement. So thank you so much for taking the time to speak with you

Marty Rouse: 49:40 -

And yeah if you need to follow up, no problem, okay?

Tabitha Adams:

Okay. Perfect. Yeah, no, that's great.

Marty Rouse:

All right. Thank you.

Tabitha Adams:

Okay. Thank you. Have a good day. Goodbye.

Marty Rouse:

Yep. Thank you.

**Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>

Appendix 2: Transcribed Interview with Candace Gingrich

March 1st, 2019

Tabitha Adams: 0:07 -

Okay, I think that's working now. Okay. Okay, perfect. So, I guess just to begin, when and why did you first begin working at the Human Rights Campaign?

Candace Gingrich: 0:21 -

Well, so my, my route to becoming a professional queer is slightly different than a lot of other people. So, so in 1994 the Republican Revolution happened and it was the Republicans took the house for the first time in 40 years. And being that they had the House they got to name and elect a new speaker and the new speaker that they named it elected was Newt Gingrich and he really kind of came out of nowhere like this whole thing kind of came out of nowhere and so once this all happened people are very much interested in who this guy was and where he came from and his background and his politics. And well, all of this interest led them to reporters interviewed everybody in the family I had an Associated Press reporter interview me. I was you know, I was me then. And she asked me at one point towards the end of the interview if, whether or not I was gay, and I didn't have any reason to not tell her the truth. And so, I did. I said yes, I am. And then everyone knew that the new republican conservative Speaker of the House had a sister who is a lesbian.

You know, in 1994, that was still kind of like one of those things that people are like, how is that possible? So, the fairly new president at HRC, Elizabeth Burch and the

Communications Director were like, you know, this person has a really good story to tell. I mean, this is kind of the, the, this is what the American family looks like. I mean, it's, it's, you know, queer people come from all sorts of backgrounds, right? You know, and so here we have the you know, new republican speaker the house and he's got a sister, you know, who's, who's queer.

So, they contacted me and asked if I would come down, it was right when the Equality Convention was happening. So, in March, we have like all the volunteers and everybody comes to DC and so they asked me to come down for that it was living in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. So I came down for it and I went to went to some, you know, some workshops and panel discussions and I lobbied on Capitol Hill and I got to speak to the to the people at the Equality Conference and it garnered a lot of, a lot of media attention and you know HRC thought you know here is a really good opportunity to kind of get this truth of, you know, of queer people's lives like into I guess essentially into people's living rooms. You know so what how can we take you know for lack of a better word take advantage of this this opportunity and so they asked me to join them and go on a Town Hall meeting tour and just really go across the country talk about you know, LGBTQ issues. Talk about the reality of life for a lot of LGBTQ people you know discrimination, hatred, you know, workplace hindrances, the climate in school on campus and in schools, you know, those kinds of things. And so that's what I did.

I went to 52 cities in six months. And each place we did town hall meetings, we did general HRC membership meetings, and I did media because that was really you know, LGBTQ stuff was not very much talked about and usually you read about it or heard about it or watch it on the news it wasn't a good thing and so here was a chance to kind of really put queer people in

front of America essentially. So, after that I, they offered me the opportunity to stay and continue working with the National Coming Out Project and I did and then and here I am still.

Tabitha Adams:

You know as well it's extremely interesting. And so, then I understand your positions now are as the Associate Director of Youth and Campus Engagement, as well as the HRC U Internship Coordinator, so can you just tell me a little bit more about what those two positions entail?

Candace Gingrich:

Youth and Campus Engagement is, it's more I would say reactive than proactive and that it's learning about and discovering, you know, needs that queer, you know, folks have on campus and ways to help, to help them like, you know. One example is, you know, probably eight or nine years ago we were getting emails from folks who had you know, they started their freshman year of college, you know, they came out to themselves, they came home for the summer they came out to their families and then you know, their families like kick them out. And then they were writing us saying, "How am I going to pay for college?" like what "Well, what am I supposed to do? Are there any scholarships?" And, you know, we knew, we knew that there was scholarships out there. But there was no one like centralized place for queer and allies to find them. And so that kind of gave birth to creating the scholarship database. You know, we're now we have, like, I think it's like 450 scholarships for LGBTQ and allied students.

Kind of the same as a guide to entering the workforce, you know, we're seeing emails, you know, I'm about to graduate from college and start applying for jobs. You know, "Do I put on my application that I was the president of the gender sexuality alliance?" You know, if I, if I

do put it on my app, how do I talk about it in the interview?” You know, those kinds of things. And so that kind of gave birth to creating the guide to entering the workforce, you know, just in that sense. And then a lot of other things like just general outreach, going to college conferences, speaking to, you know, college groups that are visiting DC like that kind of thing. And then the internship program, which you are probably somewhat familiar with, it is really about, you know, helping to kind of soup to nuts, you know, recruit on board and kind of over over-oversee the, the internship program and HRC which is about probably about 100, 100 folks every year total that we have at the headquarter’s offices.

Tabitha Adams: 7:39 -

Gotcha. Okay.

Candace Gingrich: 7:41 -

And then you know, the you know, putting on the brown bags and like, right, right bring up mentors and mentees and that kind of thing right now.

Tabitha Adams: 7:50 -

I got you, and so do you know when exactly or why exactly those two positions started at HRC?

Candace Gingrich: 7:57 -

Well the Youth and Campus Engagement started because it you know, it was another one of that kind of, you know, reactionary things. It was 2000, you know, the dates are hard, but it was, I think it was 2006. So, we saw in the 2004 election, you know, the, the, you know, W is in the White House, but in the 2004, and I’m getting these things on anyhow. So there was there

was an election of 2004, I think it was and the results were that like, more people under the age of 24, something voted. Then since 18-year olds got the right to vote, just a huge like outpouring was like No, and people were really surprised because, you know, know people still don't think that young people you know, care or vote. I was like, hmm.. You know, we didn't really have any programs for young people that HRC we didn't really have anything. And, you know, with the young people, I mean, like college aged folks, you and then, you know, as the 2008 elections were rolling around, you were starting to come out. I was like, I propose to our Communications Program like, you know, why don't I do Get-Out-The-Vote college tour, you know, we'll look at the states that have, you know, that are usually like important swing states and presidential elections, you know, looking at and so I went on this college tour and I visited I don't remember it was like 14 campuses and just talked about the importance of voting and all of that. The engagement and the number of folks that were really you know, participated in that and then the results of the election kind of made helped me make other people will wear that, like young people are important young people matter. There was this whole, you know, I started calling, you know, then I came up with "Generation Equality," you know, because not only were folks voting more but like the, the support of, you know, non-queer young people for queer issues was huge.

And so, it was in our best interest to like, you know, even if we weren't able to communicate which candidate they should vote for just because of election laws, just encouraging younger people to vote kind of by default meant that the good, they're going to get elected. And so, after that election we decided to kind of continue that and so you can campus essentially started in the Field Program so you know, where you interned was where I was working and doing campus organizing. Kind of "Hey! We're trying to pass this or do that. And

we need your help, please do this!” And then and I'm getting the years a little off a little bit Tabitha, though, just to be completely honest then. So that might have been 2006 that that happened.

And then 2008. Wow, this is such a long so I haven't told the story in a really long time. And in 2008 happened, and it was the huge economic downturn, right. And we unfortunately had stopped. This wasn't my decision, but you stopped paying interns like we used to pay interns and so there became a need for us to create a more robust like actual educational component to our internship program in order to abide by National Labor Relations Board. And so, we, the decision was made to move the internship programs from the HR Team to the Foundation, you know, thinking about public, you know, education outreach kind of stuff. And then at the same time, move Youth and Campus Engagement from Field to the Foundation as well. So, so rather than kind of campus organizing, and me saying, this is what we're trying to do, and this is how you can help us it kind of switch to what are you trying to accomplish and how can we help you, you know, kind of switch on that and then the internship program just kind of blossomed from there and, you know, started out with the Brown Bags and instituted a mentorship program and all those kinds of things and so that's how.

Tabitha Adams: 13:00 -

Yeah, no I didn't you know that's really interesting. So, it kind of going off that is for like periods of growth. Just based on research it seems as if 1995 and 2003 were transformational years who the HRC so then from your knowledge and/or your experience, can you just tell me like a little bit more about those two periods of growth, like what happened and why?

Candace Gingrich: 13:18 -

Well you know the first one was no more than a thing, I think was the result of, you know, not the result of but like it was recognizing the importance of education. That that idea that that there are people out there who don't support don't actively support LGBTQ equality not because they don't like or fear or hate LGBTQ people, but rather they just don't know that there's, you know, a need to be supported you know, the idea.

You know, it's particularly 1995 like, you know, we had hardly any protections even in the good states and there are no federal laws that covered anything and but, you know, there was this belief that they did. You know that there are that, you know, it's you know it's America. Of course, you can't be fired because you're gay you know like it's America. Of course, a judge won't you know give custody to one parent over the other just because one is gay. And so part of 1995 I think was just getting that information out there like you know if you can't if you can't sue your employer for discrimination because they fired you for being gay you're not. Nobody's going to know about it, like you can't, you're not going to write about it in the paper because that's just how it is and so I think part of that was kind of really lifting up the experiences and lives of people to folks that had otherwise not ever thought about it, you know like and so that I think and also the ability to really you know legit “take advantage of” the interest in you know and my brother and the whole dichotomy between the two of us. You know, really taking advantage of that as a platform to talk to, you know, to get this information out there and you get like it not just, you know, the town halls but hold the media coverage and the, you know, the newspapers and the interviews and just really places it wasn't before.

And then I think in 2003 I think that your what happened was you know, 2000 2000 happens and that presidential election. And darn, darn you Florida, and you're Chad, you know, we saw in 2002 the, you know, the usual kind of backlash in the sense of that, you know, the Dems, you know, really were much more successful in the midterm elections and that really strengthened you know, our ability to engage people. It was kind of like, you know, see what we can do you know, when we work together, and it was also and I again, I could be misremembering Tabitha but I think that, I think that was also when we were very engaged in trying to defeat the federal marriage amendment and that was something to that that really struck a chord with people you know, the this idea that that there are people who wanted to amend the constitution to codify discrimination, you know, like that that didn't sit well with people. So you had both those instances, I think it was taking advantage of, of the media as, as a way to, to educate people.

Tabitha Adams: 17:15 -

And yeah with those like, two periods, like the HRC's headquarter building and then the logo change so how do you think that those like have helped grown or transform the organization?

Candace Gingrich: 17:31 -

Well the logo was, I mean the logo change was I think was a piece of brilliance and something that that, I don't know how marketing is, you know, you don't necessarily think of that you know, when you think about, you know, working towards LGBTQ equality, but it's, you know, it's helpful to have something that is recognizable and that people can kind of rally around and you know Elizabeth Birch coming from the corporate world it was it was well aware there.

Thank you. Sorry about that UPS delivery.

She came from Apple like, and she so she was like, “Hey, you know, they understand this whole marketing thing, why not apply it?” And so, you know, that created and it was still a time again, you know, the mid 90s that a lot of people still weren't out, you know, and so, you know, there are people who saw that symbol as a way to show their own support or their own queerness without being too out. You know, it wasn't a rainbow You know, it wasn't Something so there's two kind of like a stealth symbol and you know even today Tabitha like there are people who will come up to us that pride tables to be like “Oh yeah I've seen that what does that mean?”

Tabitha Adams:

Yeah like even when I told my parents that I was interning at the HRC, they didn't really know the organization but they knew the symbol.

Candace Gingrich:

So yeah, yeah, yeah. So, and that's just, you know, when it also gave us an opportunity to talk about you know, what it is and you know, that we were working for which is you know, the Equality. You know, it's an equality because that's what we want, you know, nothing more, nothing less equal. And so, it was it was for queer people themselves and our supporters but also as a reminder to people who thought that you know, we wanted you know that who thought we were trying to get something more that know just is “equal.” And then and also, you know, keeping the name of the Human Rights Campaign to you know just as a reminder that you know these things that we are working for they're not gay rights, you know, any more than they're straight rights but you know they're basic human rights.

And the building I just you know it was a really first as a person who is you know not great with finances myself you know the smartness behind doing the capital campaign and buying a building it was just it was just the timing was perfect the need was perfect you know it was it made a lot of fiscal sense. Not only for you know thoughts about like paying rent or not paying rent and you know but then the also you know the ability to know rent out the space that we had other people for extra income and then. And then there's the symbolism, Tabitha. You know, of permanence of, you know, we're HRC is not going anywhere until you know, we achieve all the things that we, you know, that we're trying to achieve. It's become, you know, it's kind of a beacon. It's you know, I think of myself you know growing up in Harrisburg, PA like I went to I went on a field trip to Washington, DC when I was in middle school like, and I can only imagine if, you know, little tiny baby dyke me had you know, seeing this this new building that was full of people who are working for me. Like and, you know, who cared about my existence like how much of an impact that would have had on me. So I think about, you know, the kids who were who just aren't coming to the building but driving past and seeing and, and thinking you know, all right, you know, someone's on my side and then the ability to use the building as a message. You know around the elections around events, you know, and I think the most you know the best example of that is after the Pulse nightclub shootings and being able to you know to lift up the lives of those you know people that were murdered, you know, by you know telling their stories in the windows it was just that's another thing that I think is really was really, really smart for us to do.

Tabitha Adams:

Gotcha okay so then going on to the next question from your knowledge works like challenges has the HRC has faced since its formation in 1980, whether those be like economic political or societal?

Candace Gingrich:

Um, you know, I can't I can't really speak to economic and you know, separate in the sense that that you know, that you're, it's well, I will actually And, trying to speak to I just said, I can't speak to it, and I'm trying to speak to it. So, I'll leave that part be.

You know, I think the challenges have been that, you know, HRC it took a while, I think, to recognize that, you know, we needed to be growing and, and expanding in ways that that that we weren't ready to get, but, you know, what needed to be. You know, for example with, you know, with regard to and I think I mean that politically rather than kind of. So it's, so basically, you know, for example, thinking about the issues around gender identity and expression and that, you know, he was, you know, kind of on the same parallel with society at large, you know, as an organization where you're very comfortable talking about gay and lesbian, and, you know, to some extent, you know, bisexual issues, but still, you know, lacking education around, you know, transgender issues.

And, you know, you recognizing that, you know, this was, this was something that we needed to be engaged in and doing so kind of, at the USA foundation level, with, with our resources with our Workplace Equality Program, you know, with all those kinds of things, but not recognizing that there needed to be the same kind of commitment and muscle on the political side of things as far as legislation and that kind of thing. So, but you know, that that has there has

been growth there. I think that has we've come a very, very long way from that time and we definitely have come a long way from 2007. And then you know the other thing is you know it took a little while to recognize and embrace the importance of recognizing intersectionality. And you know HRC started as literally you know probably 95% you know white game in and you know even though that we have not been 95% white gay men since probably you know 1982 that's still the image. And so, you know we've had to I think it took a while to recognize that we needed to actively be taking steps to like correct you know the perception and that's always a challenge I mean people right it's easy to get perception and it's challenging to kind of erase perception that people already have. And so, you know, I think that that, you know, we have been doing a lot of very strong, very important work that, you know, hasn't always necessarily been lifted up, you know, for people to see. Right. But the commitment is there now, you know.

We know we the I don't notice it, but we had, because you were here last summer right here. So, Nicole Closure was the head of our Diversity Inclusion Program. And they last year turned it into its own division now. So, there's absolutely a whole division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and that's working within HRC, and also with all of our volunteers and our steering committees and stuff too. So, it's kind of, it's working inside the building, but also outside the building, you know.

And then are the employee resource groups. I think this opportunity to kind of model what we've been asking, you know, Corporate America to do for the past 20 years. "Really? Yeah. Yeah. Hey, those are good idea to do that." And it's really, since Trump has come, since Trump on the face and strong. You know, we've really got a lot deeper and gotten more engaged with our coalition work and now you know, it's you know, while before if there was a piece of

legislation or something you know, we would engage with our partners with you know, with the NAACP or with LuLack or, you know, some of our other orgs you know, now we do it all the time, you know, lifting up each other's at LuLack, which is the Latino national organization, they just for the first time have a trans woman on their board. And this is kind of, you know, they reached out to us, they're like, "How can we, you know, educate our membership about this, how can we educate the other board members?" And so, you know, we're seeing work kind of in ways that we hadn't before and that can only you know, strengthen I think our ability to keep you know, keep things moving forward and continuing to do the work that needs to happen.

Tabitha Adams:

Okay, well, you literally just answered like three of my questions in the same answer.

Candace Gingrich:

Yeah, I'm that good. What can I say?

Tabitha Adams:

Haha no, that was okay. Then where do you see the HRC going next as an organization and doing that in relation to the LGBTQ rights movement in general?

Candace Gingrich: 29:05 -

Well, I I've, I've long said that, that I think that, you know, when we do achieve full equality know, with the, under the law, you know, the we pass the Equality Act, we, you know, are able to get, you know, the funding that's needed for HIV and for lesbian health and for trans health. And, you know, when we're able to, excuse me, truly, you know, address the issue of

homelessness, you know, we've done all that I think those there's still there's still be a need for HRC. You know, look at the NAACP and, you know, founded at a time where, you know, African Americans were, well, we're not treated as you know, as American citizens, right. In the Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed and the laws were in place but you know it's you know however many decades later and you know NAACP is still around because there's still ignorance and there's still hatred and there's still misinformation. And you know I'm just I'm just guessing that that'll probably be the situation for HRC. You know the idea that you know we're we think we're working ourselves out of a job but really ignorance is pretty pervasive doing that.

And I think you know politically it's a lot of it is going to be reactive, Tabitha, the sense that like you know, right now it's our opponents find what they think is a niche and then they stick with it, you know. So, when we were talking about workplace equality in the early 2000s, you know, we had support of the American public, like, you know, it's like 80% of Americans were like, you know, yeah, of course, they should be protected from discrimination in the workplace. And so, what the right did was, then they found this obscure marriage case issue that was happening somewhere and jumped on it, because there wasn't the same support publicly. And so that brought up whole, you know, whole marriage fight that was kind of brought to us.

And then kind of, similarly, you know, we've seen the, you know, reference the religious freedom bills in states that we've had to battle back, you know, they, they found a foothold in that and then all of the issues with trans youth and the schools and bathrooms and locker rooms and that's now Big thing you know, and so we've not that we were weren't before aware of a working on these things, they're not actively bringing them to us. And so, it's really, you know, a

lot of it is really figuring out what their, what their strategy is and then figuring out a way to combat it.

At the same time being proactive when we can. So, like our players for Transgender Equality Council, you know, is you know, not just you know, it's not just a support group like it's these active you know, group of, of, you know, mama and papa bear who are very fiercely committed to know caring for their children. Right. And so, you know, going to Capitol Hill having roundtable discussions getting you know. Yesterday, or was it yesterday was Jazz and Friends? You know? Yeah. That and also that's kind of part of that, too is, you know, evolved evolving and recognizing non binary youth. And, you know, that, that, that, you know, that, that constituency and that, you know, we've, we've, you know, we've got people in the workplace, you know, to the point not all of them, but, you know, we've moved them so that, you know, like, they now understand the importance of, you know, when, you know, you have a trans person that you work with, you know, make sure you're using the right pronouns and whatnot. And now to introduce the idea of a no- binary person, you know, there's another layer of education that needs to happen. So, I think as long as we continue to kind of grow and expand in relation to the community's growth you know an expansion that you know will be able to continue to making positive strides forward.

Tabitha Adams: 34:15 -

Okay yeah once again you just answered like three of my questions. I guess I'll just ask one more question and I'll pretty much be it so how was the HRC's role in attaining marriage equality?

Candace Gingrich: 34:27 -

Um. You know, what I saw with marriage equality was are we know working in tandem and in cooperative tandem with other orgs that, you know, in ways that we hadn't done much before. You know, so, I saw a lot of, you know, like, like synchronicity and in the work that we were doing. I think that we really took advantage of social media in a way that we hadn't really utilized before you know. We had had some really great National Coming Out days where, you know, when you're we had a Facebook app and we didn't other things and we're really, you know, I think it's somewhat successful but when Anastasia made the decision to change the logo to pink and red and that just exploded. You know, it, you know, I don't think anybody expected that kind of reaction that right happened after that. So, you know, seeing social medias and of course you know this was before you know before we knew that you know Russia was running social media but you've seen this opportunity and again to really you know engage people more to. On the younger end of the spectrum, who, you know, we're the ones, you know, using social media and, you know, using it as an organizing and an educational tool. That was, I think, something that we were, were really successful at. And that made a big that made a big difference.

Tabitha Adams: 36:29 -

Okay, no, that's extremely helpful. So, I think you pretty much answered every single of my questions that I had and more depth and detail than I could ever imagine.

Candace Gingrich: 36:38 -

Good luck transcribing!

Tabitha Adams: 36:42 -

Yeah, I know like it'll be, it'll be fun but no, thank you so much. This is absolutely amazing. I really, really appreciate that.

Candace Gingrich:

I somehow made my phone go on speakerphone I'm not sure how this but if you, you know, after you go back through and you know, you're writing, writing things up. If you remember something, or you're confused, or for you think of something else, just email me. And if you and if it's like time, time conscious or whatever, say that, like in the subject line, just be like, "Urgent." Okay, you know, like I yeah. And then I will be likely to be more responsive.

Tabitha Adams:

No, you're fine. I really appreciate everything.

Candace Gingrich:

Yeah, no, absolutely. That was good to talk with you. And good luck writing and all those things.

Tabitha Adams:

Yeah, no, thank you so much.

Candace Gingrich:

All right. I'll talk to you later. Great. Sounds good.

Tabitha Adams:

All right. Bye.

Candace Gingrich:

Bye.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>

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