

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer



LGBTQ in South Carolina

and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act. Gay and transgender children continue to be bullied at schools, and LGBTQ people are still being discriminated against in many social, economic and legal areas.

While public support for LGBTQ rights had been gaining ground this past decade, that support has faltered in recent years. In fact, some support organizations have been forced to cease operations for lack of monetary or volunteer help, partially due to Trump Administration orders and rhetoric, with the aid of numerous religiously affiliated organizations.

Despite these challenges, many support and advocacy communities are still active. According to the UCLA School of Law Williams Institute, 137,000 LGBT citizens were living in South Carolina in 2019. These citizens are doing what others are doing; raising families, serving their community, working at their jobs and making the state a better place to live.

Horry County Democrats fully support the Democratic Party vision that all minorities deserve an equal opportunity to live a dignified life in peace, with access to decent education, competent health care, meaningful employment at fair wages, and service in businesses that are open to the general public.

The Democratic Party stands with the LGBTQ community's fight for equality, and we are committed to ending bullying, violence and discrimination against LGBT citizens. All Americans, no matter their sexual orientation, or gender identity are to be treated with fairness and equality in their communities, workplaces and schools, and we must do everything that we can to support their efforts, most effectively by electing Democratic candidates to office.

Great strides have been made in the last decade regarding LGBTQ rights in South Carolina.

Same-sex couples now can marry and adopt, and they are eligible for most if not all of the same protections as opposite-sex married couples. Most recently (March 2020), the state's 1988 discriminatory anti-LGBTQ curriculum law was ruled unconstitutional.

Still, despite these successes, LGBTQ tax-paying, law-abiding citizens have yet to enjoy the full protection of the U.S. Constitution. LGBTQ citizens in South Carolina still face legal challenges not experienced by non-LGBTQ citizens.

For example, South Carolina does not ban discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Federal law now protects LGBTQ discrimination in the workplace in all 50 states, but only a few South Carolina counties and cities, including Myrtle Beach, have sexual orientation and/or gender identity anti-discrimination policies as they pertain to municipal employees, and there are only city/county-wide anti-discrimination Resolutions, which carry no real power of enforcement.

South Carolina also does not have any hate crime laws, although federal law does ban hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation and/or gender identity under the Matthew Shepard