

This is historical material "frozen in time". The website is no longer updated and links to external websites and some internal pages may not work.



# What You Missed: A Tumblr Q&A with Valerie Jarrett on Expanding Opportunity for the LGBT Community

JULY 25, 2014 AT 5:28 PM ET BY [KORI SCHULMAN](#)



Summary: Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to the President took to Tumblr to answer some of your questions on the President's newest Executive Order that prohibits federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.



This afternoon, Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to the President, took to Tumblr to answer some of your questions on the [President's newest Executive Order](#) that prohibits federal contractors from

discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. She also answered your questions on marriage equality, bullying prevention, Star Wars, and more.

If you missed the live event, you can check out a full recap right here:

**Q: Okay, so does this mean that someone cannot fire someone because of their sexuality?**

A: [This Executive Order does two things](#): First it formally protects federal employees from discrimination on the basis of gender identity (they're already protected on the basis of sexual orientation). Second, it also prohibits federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace. Roughly 1 in 5 Americans work for a federal contractor. We still need Congress to act to make sure all workers are protected.

**Q: Greetings Advisor Jarrett, I would like to know what specifically is this administration doing to ensure that competent, loyal, dedicated Federal workers of Transgender experience are not discriminated locally at their works sites on a day to day basis?**

A: Good question! Check out [Office of Personnel Management's guidance regarding the employment of transgender individuals](#) in the federal workplace.

As the [President said on Monday](#): "I've appointed a record number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender public servants to positions across my administration. They are ambassadors and federal judges, special assistants, senior advisors from the Pentagon to the Labor Department. Every day, their talent is put to work on behalf of the American people."

**Q: Does the president like Star Wars?**

A: [The Force is strong with this one. Hopefully this is the answer you're looking for.](#)

**Q: What effect do you expect or predict this Executive Order to have on employers who are not directly affected by said Order? Particularly in states where discrimination against LGBTQIA+ community members is not illegal? Will this set a precedent to move toward employment protection inclusion for our community in that regard?**

The vast majority of Fortune 500 companies and the top 5 federal contractors already prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity because they know it's good for business. We are confident that our actions will send a signal to employers all across the country. It's the right thing to do and it's [smart for business](#).

**Q: Do you have plans to improve education for LGBT students? Making sure schools are safe from bullying by teaching kids that there is nothing wrong with being gay. Possibly using a safe zone program of some sort, that allows youth to speak to a counselor and work through their feelings about their gender and sexuality. It could also be a safe place for children to come out**

**to their parents. So they are less likely to grow up with repressed feelings of inadequacy and self hatred.**

A: The President hosted the first-ever White House Summit on bullying prevention. The President, the First Lady and the entire Administration are committed to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to learn and thrive in the classroom. You can check out the President's It Gets Better video [here](#).

As a mom, I know what it's like to worry about whether my child was safe while she was at school. Sharing best practices helps ensure all children are protected.

Learn more at [StopBullying.gov](http://StopBullying.gov).

**Q: Do you like pizza? Does the president like pizza? who am I kidding, everyone likes pizza.**

A: Yes! Especially Chicago-style deep dish.

**Q: I recently saw an answer to a question stating that federal workers are protected from discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. Is there any prospect for such protection for non-federal employees?**

A: [As the President said on Monday](#): "Congress has spent 40 years — four decades — considering legislation that would help solve the problem. That's a long time. And yet they still haven't gotten it done...but I'm going to do what I can, with the authority I have, to act. The rest of you, of course, need to keep putting pressure on Congress to pass federal legislation that resolves this problem once and for all."

**Q: How is the president working towards marriage equality?**

A: The President [supports marriage equality](#). As you may know, the Supreme Court struck down Section 3 of the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act" last June. Since then, President Obama's administration [has extended federal benefits](#) wherever possible to legally-married same-sex couples. This is one way in which he has worked toward expanding equality for LGBT Americans.

**Q: A woman looking into going into media arts and commercial arts fields, I'm likely to be paid significantly less for my skills than a man with the same abilities. Will you continue to fight for equal gender pay?**

A: Yes! And here at the White House, the President has insisted on equal pay for equal work. The President [signed an Executive Order prohibiting federal contractors from discriminating against their employees](#) who share compensation information. The President has called on Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, and of course, the very first bill he [signed was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act](#).

**Q: I don't have a question, just a very humble thank you. I just saw your post explaining Obama's recent executive order prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the workplace, and immediately teared up. Hi, I'm Janessa. I'm 17, and I'm lesbian. Sometimes the way our society orients around the topic of homosexuality is a bit frightening. It feels like something a high schooler shouldn't have to deal with. But this order gives me strength. So thank you, for this huge leap.**

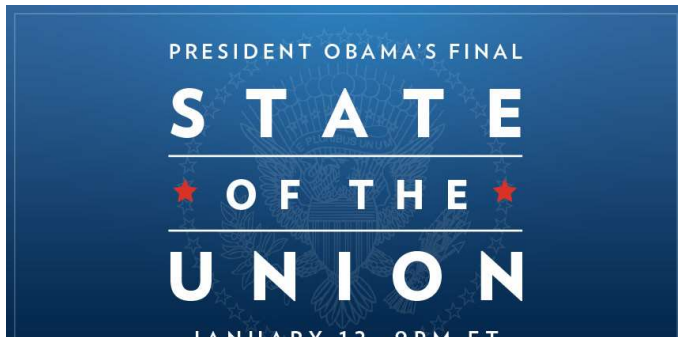
A: Thank you for having the courage to share your story! The President and everyone in his Administration is fighting for you every day. Stay strong!



**Kori Schulman**

Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Chief Digital Officer

 **Follow @KS44**



#### THE FINAL STATE OF THE UNION

Watch President Obama's final State of the Union address.



#### THE SUPREME COURT

Read what the President is looking for in his next Supreme Court nominee.



#### FIND YOUR PARK

Take a look at America's three newest national monuments.



**HOME**

**BRIEFING ROOM**

**ISSUES**

**THE ADMINISTRATION**

**PARTICIPATE**

**1600 PENN**

[En Español](#)

[Accessibility](#)

[Copyright Information](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[USA.gov](#)