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What you didn't know about the Human Rights Campaign

An inside look at the organization everyone knows, but not really

BY MATT COMER ON FEBRUARY 21, 2009

The Human Rights Campaign is known to almost every member of the LGBT community, even if only in the slightest of ways. It's branding and name recognition reach further than almost any other LGBT advocacy group. Its iconic blue and yellow equal sign logo has become one of the nation's most ubiquitous symbols of equality for LGBT people, seen everywhere from car bumpers, storefront windows, atop flagpoles in Manhattan or the front porches of the South, the tops of notebook computers and on high school and college students' three-ring binders.

But ask an average LGBT community member how HRC operates or who actually runs it and you're likely to get a blank stare and silence for a response. Ask someone if they know who Joe Solmonese is and some might might ask, "Who's that?" Board of Governors? Board of Directors? Steering Committee? What?

For those community members and leaders who've worked closely with HRC, all of this is a no brainer. You have permission to skip over this article. But, for all those folks whose knowledge of HRC stops at its name and logo, this is for you.

In the beginning...

Flashback to 1980: An Iowa-born, Minnesota-schooled gay activist living and working in the nation's capital collaborates with a small group of advocates to create the Human Rights

Campaign Fund. Its mission is simple: raise money for LGBT-friendly congressional candidates.

Within three months, founder Steve Endean has the group registered as an independent political action committee with the Federal Elections Commission and work begins to raise funds for progressive and LGBT-friendly candidates.

In 1983, the organization's first executive director, Vic Basile, is hired. After his departure in 1989 the group establishes the HRC Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit and begins a focus on lobbying and advocacy. By 1995, the word "Fund" is dropped from the organization's name, creating the Human Rights Campaign we all know today.

Tim McFeeley, founder of the Boston Lesbian and Gay Political Action Committee and a co-chair of HRC's New England committee followed Basile as the group's next executive director. Over the next nearly two decades HRC saw three more leaders: Elizabeth Birth, Cheryl Jacques and the current president, Joe Solmonese.

Quick Facts: The Human Rights Campaign

Structure

HRC is comprised of a 501(c)3 non-profit, the HRC Foundation, a 501(c)4 advocacy/social welfare organization and the HRC Political Action Committee.

Board of Directors

HRC is governed by two boards of directors. One board oversees the operation of HRC's 501(c)4 advocacy entity. Another oversees its 501(c)3 non-profit HRC Foundation. Two North Carolinians sit on the boards. Hillsborough's Joni Madison sits on the 501(c)4 board and Summerfield's Lee Carter sits on the foundation's board.

Board of Governors

A much larger board consisting of more than 150 community and business leaders from across the nation assists the national organization with managing local and state outreach. Members of the Board of Governors work to build membership and coordinate fundraising and volunteer activities in local communities. Board of Governors members also act as liaisons between HRC staff and local members.

Finances

According to 2006 IRS Form 990 filings, HRC had a total revenue of approximately \$36.4 million. Its total expenses were approximately \$34.5 million.

Membership

HRC membership stands at 750,000. That number includes all members who have contributed \$5 or more in the past 24 months and supporters who have responded to an action alert in the past 24 months.

HRC North Carolina

The HRC North Carolina Steering Committee is headed up by nine HRC Board of Governor

members: Scott Bishop, Rich Hurley, LaWana Slack-Mayfield and Robert Dogens in Charlotte; Madeline Goss, Thom Hutchens and Byron Brady in the Triangle; and Johnny McGee in the Triad. HRC does not have a South Carolina steering committee. A sub-committee of the larger statewide steering committee is responsible for planning each year's Gala dinner. Members of the Carolinas Gala Steering Committee aren't required to be members of the Board of Governors. In some local areas across the state, HRC North Carolina Steering Committee Board of Governors members have held local steering committee meetings inviting the participation of community members and leaders.

The equal sign marks the spot

In 1995, former Apple legal counsel Elizabeth Birch became HRC's executive director. Her skills in the corporate world prepared her to make vast improvements in HRC's structure, organizing, fundraising and branding. The creation of the blue and yellow equal sign HRC logo familiar to LGBT folks the world over is largely credited to Birch.

The community

For many LGBT people, the Human Rights Campaign has come to symbolize our community's collective strength and political power. Although it isn't the only national LGBT advocacy group — in fact, the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force has been around longer — HRC has become the largest, wealthiest and most influential.

The Human Rights Campaign

Washington, D.C., headquarters. Photo Credit: AgnosticPreachersKid, Wikipedia.org

The Human Rights Campaign Washington, D.C., headquarters. Photo Credit: AgnosticPreachersKid, Wikipedia.org

Young queer folks first coming out of the closet quickly learn about HRC. Their presence is large enough to reach even the smallest hamlet, despite the lack of any sort of local gay advocacy there. There's no doubt HRC has earned its keep in national politics and a place in queer history.

"When you go to Capitol Hill and you mention HRC, the response is great. They have an amazing reputation," says Durham, N.C.-based activist Mandy Carter.

In 1990, Carter was among a handful of Triangle-area lesbians and gay men who created N.C. Senate Vote 90, a statewide political campaign independently supporting African-American, former Charlotte mayor Harvey Gantt and working to defeat virulently anti-gay Sen. Jesse Helms.

After the historic campaign, which solidified a statewide LGBT political movement despite Helms' eventual victory, Carter was brought on as a member of HRC's board of directors.

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"I told them, 'There's not a penny I can give to you or raise,'" she says. "My being on the board was completely about my perspective as a black lesbian from the South."

Carter says she'll never regret the experiences and opportunities she was given while on HRC's board and later as a staff member. Nonetheless, Carter says she's often been frustrated by the organization's attempts to reach out to people of color.

"My main frustration was hearing a continual commitment to diversity but then not seeing it happen," she says. "That not just true for HRC, but also for lots of other groups. HRC certainly isn't the only one, but when you hear it and don't start to actually see it, that's a concern."

HRC has worked for years to increase its diversity programs, including the operation of a program reaching out to historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Carter wishes there were more cross-communication and sharing of outreach between groups like HRC and the National Black Justice Coalition.

"I thank them for their effort, but there could be a lot more cooperative work," she says. "There might be more appropriate, more strategic ways to have this happen."

Trevor Thomas, HRC's deputy communications director, says the group has taken steps to support Carolinas communities of color.

"We have been sponsors of Charlotte Black Pride for about four or so years and South Carolina Black Pride for three years," he told *Q-Notes* via email. "HRC volunteers and staff set up a booth each year and talked to the African-American community about equal rights for LGBT people and the importance of becoming politically involved."

Further, Thomas says HRC's HBCU Program has worked closely with students at North Carolina Central University, UNC-Pembroke, N.C. A&T University and Winston-Salem State University.

Students from N.C. A&T were present at the HBCU national leadership summit. "Training from the summit helped their student group to secure a substantial grant that allowed the group to go on a planning retreat with a focus on how they can better educate and engage their campus community," he said.

HRC & Religion

Mitchell Gold (pictured right), who owns the North Carolina-based Mitchell Gold+Bob Williams furniture company, is a national HRC sponsor and former member of their board of directors. In simple terms, he says, HRC and its various entities can be described best as “an advocacy organization.”

“They lobby on Capitol Hill,” he explains. “The political action committee raises money to support politicians who support us, which means they raise the money to have access and influence. HRC’s non-profit wing is the group’s educational arm.”

Gold says he appreciates everything HRC does for the LGBT community at the national level and encourages the group to work more with local organizations.

“HRC does need to work effectively with North Carolina, as an example, to educate people and create a climate where the Kay Hagans of the world can get elected and reelected,” he says. “One of the things about understanding national legislation is that if you look back in history, at various civil rights legislation, it wasn’t passed nationally in one fell swoop.”

In the 2008 election, HRC endorsed Democrat Kay Hagan over incumbent Republican Elizabeth Dole. Come election day, Hagan easily defeated Dole — becoming the first Democrat to take over the infamous “Helms seat.”

Gold has also encouraged the group to dig into the “religion issue.” Gold, founder of the group Faith in America, is also the editor of “Crisis: 40 Stories Revealing the Personal, Social, and Religious Pain and Trauma of Growing Up Gay In America.” *[Ed. Note — This writer is a contributor to “Crisis.”]*

“You don’t have to discuss ‘religion,’ ” Gold says to HRC, “but you can discuss the history of religion-based bigotry. That’s what we should be talking to politicians about. HRC doesn’t have to go on and quote Leviticus and Romans but they have not yet found an effective way to counter the religious argument.”

HRC’s national Religion and Faith Program in recent years has reached out to various faith communities and religious leaders. In May, the organization will host its second Clergy Call for Justice and Equality as dozens of gay and gay-friendly pastors and other faith leaders converge on Washington, D.C., to speak to lawmakers. Before they head to the Hill, the clergy will discuss strategies for “building a progress faith movement for equality” in a plenary headed up by New Hampshire Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson.

The Carolinas are no stranger to HRC’s Religion and Faith Program. In February 2008, just days before last year’s HRC Carolinas Gala, the group’s Religion and Faith director, Rev. Harry Knox, stood up as a strong, affirming voice in a public debate with one of the Charlotte area’s most outspoken anti-gay religious leaders, Dr. Michael Brown. When he was first hired, Knox appeared as the speaker at a dinner meeting of the Triad Business & Professional Guild in Greensboro. In 2008, HRC sponsored a screening of “For the Bible Tells Me So” on the campus of the University of South Carolina in Columbia

"The religion program does good work," Gold says. "But ultimately, it doesn't have a prominence in HRC's organization, that really says 'We understand that the majority of people against LGBT people having equal rights use their religious beliefs.'"

Thirteen religious leaders and scholars, including Harry Knox, currently sit on HRC's Religion Council. The council helps HRC speak on issues of faith and spirituality and represents a broad range of diversity and several Christian denominations. A Jewish rabbi, Denise L. Eger of Los Angeles' Congregation Beth Chayim Chashadim, also serves on the council. The council also collaborates with the National Lesbian & Gay Task Force's religion outreach programs; the Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, program director for The Task Force's Institute for Welcoming Resources, is a council member.

Local presence

Ryan Wilson, president of the South Carolina Pride Movement, interned with HRC in the summer of 2007. Working in Washington, D.C., he had the opportunity to work on several projects that benefit local LGBT communities and those that effect change on a national level.

"It was a great opportunity for me to see the GLBT rights movement as a functioning entity," he said. "Coming from South Carolina where all of our non-profits have no paid staffers or just one paid staffer, to have a whole building full of gay activists was an experience."

Wilson said he appreciates the hard work of HRC's staff in D.C. and around the nation. While interning there he said he "got to see the depths of experience and knowledge the staff had."

But like many others, Wilson says he sees room for improvement — changes that could bring the group more support from local communities. In South Carolina, Wilson says he'd love to see more national support for on-the-ground work with U.S. House of Representatives Majority Whip, Rep. James Clyburn.

"His district is Columbia," Wilson says. "There should be a group organizing in Columbia that gets Clyburn on board when the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and hate crimes legislation comes back up."

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While there are already local leaders on the ground, Wilson says, many of them are deficient in the knowledge or experience to effectively move members of Congress.

"We lack some of that training," he said, "and when we see people going to California or Florida we feel, 'Well, what about us?'"

Thomas says HRC has worked with local advocates to help pass LGBT-friendly policies and legislation. State legislative teams have assisted SC Equality president Ray Drew in Columbia and a lesbian couple seeking to adopt in Greenville, S.C. He says technical support is available to local leaders.

In addition, the HRC Political Action Committee often endorses LGBT-friendly candidates. In 2008 they doled out more than \$22,000 supporting U.S. Senate and House candidates in the Carolinas. Those endorsements included openly gay Linda Ketner (\$5,000) and Clyburn (\$5,025) in South Carolina; and Kay Hagan (\$5,000), G.K. Butterfield (\$1,025), David Price (\$2,025.00), Melvin Watt (\$2,025.00) and Brad Miller (\$2,025.00) in North Carolina.

Wilson says he'd like to see some of HRC's funds benefit other local projects. "Here in South Carolina, something as little as \$100 will make a huge difference," he says. "\$1,000 could revolutionize a program we run. If the national organizations would toss us a bone, that would feed us."

Wilson says HRC has nothing to lose and everything to gain from reinvesting the money they raise from local communities and from dinners like the HRC Carolinas Gala. "What would a few hundred or thousand dollars do if reinvested in the communities they take them from," he asked. "If you send staffers to the ground more often and do the trainings to build the volunteers, that will naturally build more money and membership."

HRC maintains that their benefit to local communities comes in many forms, from outreach and trainings to the endorsement and D.C. lobbying of a state's elected officials.

National sponsor and supporter Gold says folks need to be reminded of HRC's mission when talking about money and local reinvestment. In his opinion, HRC's "singular goal is to get national legislation passed."

"HRC is a national lobbying organization," he says. "Their goal isn't to get North Carolina laws passed. It isn't to get North Carolina community centers built in Charlotte or Raleigh. It is important for people not to think negatively of HRC just because they don't come into North Carolina and do the things North Carolina organizations already do."

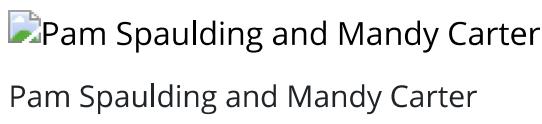
'Big fat target'

Pam Spaulding, who lives and works in Durham, N.C., and operates the nationally-acclaimed PamsHouseBlend.com, is often painted as a critic of HRC, despite willingly giving the group credit when it is due. In 2007, she was profiled for her new media-journalism work in HRC's

quarterly *Equality Magazine*.

"They excel in getting messages out when they get behind a cause," she says. "Because of their connections on the Hill, they're able to take action and be listened to. That's a great thing about a big national group and even some of the nay-sayers and critics will admit that that we need a healthy, strong, national organization — HRC is that in many respects."

In the most recent example of "getting the message out," HRC reacted swiftly when they learned the anti-gay American Family Association would air a one-hour special on "the homosexual agenda" on a Michigan TV network — the same program had aired on The CW (WJZY) in Charlotte. Hours after an HRC action alert, the station had agreed to move the special from its premier prime time spot.



Pam Spaulding and Mandy Carter

Spaulding says HRC tends to be "the big fat target" of scrutiny and criticism, because of its size and well-known reputation. "It is easy to shoot from the hip when you are sitting there not doing anything," she says. "The people who are complaining the loudest need to be asked, 'What have you done for your movement?'"

Mixed within her praise for the group and the good it can do, Spaulding recognizes that a common perception about the group's affluence and lack of diversity is doing harm.

"There's a perception — and it's reinforced at their banquets — that HRC is an organization comprised mostly of white gay men. They have been trying to make in-roads to communities of color, though. HRC was present during the Jena 6 controversy."

In addition to their work with North Carolina HBCUs, HRC has also organized each year for the past four local "Gospel & Unity" events reaching out to African-American communities of faith.

Spaulding also feels as though there's a growing "schism" among class lines and that the problem is often color-blind. "There is a big perception that working class LGBTs and low wealth LGBTs don't have a voice in the national organization at all. A lot of people are loathe to address that."

To combat the lack of access many lower wealth LGBTs face, HRC often pays for the complete cost of travel and trainings when they host events locally and nationally. At their Carolinas Gala, reduced ticket prices are offered and LGBT youth can apply for free admission.

Moving forward

After the historic election of so many fair-minded officials and the groundbreaking victory of President Barack Obama, HRC is poised to create change like never before.

Soon after Obama's transition team began work on moving the Obama administration into power, HRC released its "Blueprint for Positive Change." The plan outlines strategic issue areas the organization intends to address in the first months of the new administration.

In their Blueprint, HRC calls for the passage of hate crimes and civil rights legislation, increases in support for HIV/AIDS prevention and education, a federal workplace free from discrimination and the appointment of fair-minded men and women to the judiciary.

Carter is excited about what possibilities the future holds. "I think we've come into an exciting moment," she says.

Undoubtedly, HRC has been a part of the nation's exciting change. No matter the criticisms, the group still performs important and vital work at a national level. Some of that change has happened in the Carolinas, too.

"Look at what has happened in this state in the last 20 years," she says. "We have such a solid, local state infrastructure. That speaks volumes. We need to do more local and state organizing and more partnering with national groups like HRC."

HRC's Program Expenses

HRC's 501(c)4 and 501(c)3 entities operate various programs and services. The group reports the cost of each program service area to the IRS each year. The majority of all contributions is directed toward programs and services directly benefiting members and other HRC constituencies. The approximate expenses are summarized below and are from HRC's 2006 IRS Form 990 returns.

501(c)4

Programs/Services – Amount (in millions)

Field and federal advocacy – \$6.

Communications – \$0.7

Membership Services – \$7.0

Public Policy, education & training – \$4.3

TOTAL: \$18.8

501(c)3

Programs/Services – Amount (in millions)

Public Policy research, training – \$5.1

Communications – \$0.3

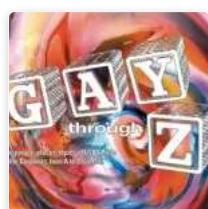
Advocacy – \$0.5

TOTAL: \$5.9

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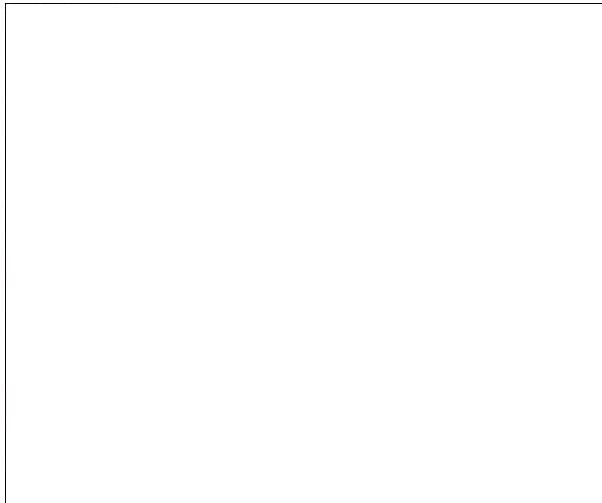
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Posted by Matt Comer

Matt Comer previously served as editor from October 2007 through August 2015 and as a staff writer afterward in 2016.

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11 Replies to “What you didn’t know about the Human Rights Campaign”



Mandy Carter

FEBRUARY 21, 2009 AT 9:00 AM

Saturday, February 21, 2009

Hi Matt,

Great piece on HRC and I thank you for the balanced points of view. Three quick points:

1. We do have a statewide LGBT political presence via Equality North Carolina PAC which is the direct outgrowth of North Carolina Senate Vote '90. When that campaign was over we said that it was important to have an ongoing presence in the state precisely because HRC doesn't do state lobbying work. Next year marks the 20th anniversary of NC Senate Vote '90 and plans are already underway for a year-long series of events to mark the occasion.
2. What I didn't see in the story about the annual HRC Carolina's Gala (that covers North Carolina and South Carolina) is how much money is raised each year that goes to Washington, DC and how much, if any, is given to North Carolina and South Carolina LGBT groups.
3. While I do surely appreciate the efforts of the HBCU program work that HRC does I'm also invested in the in-state, on the ground work of working with our eleven North Carolina HBCU's via the newly formed statewide North Carolina People Of Color LGBT & Allies Network that I'm honored to be coordinating on a volunteer basis. Interested folks can email me for more information, mandycarter@nc.rr.com. Subject line: NC POC LGBTA Network.

Thanks, Mandy Carter (former HRC Board of Directors, former HRCF/HRC Staffer)
Durham, NC



libhomo

FEBRUARY 21, 2009 AT 8:37 PM

How are the members of the Boards of Directors and Governors elected or selected?



Ryan Wilson

FEBRUARY 23, 2009 AT 1:53 PM

For those who attended the Gala, there was little to no mention of South Carolina during the gala program, much to the disappointment of state leaders from SC in attendance who have put blood, sweat, and tears into the work in our community with no acknowledgement from HRC. Elke Kennedy received mention for her important work on Hate Crimes but she isn't the only activist in SC and Sean's Last Wish is part of a network of extremely active SC organizations. Joe Solmonese mentioned the LGBT Center of Charlotte, but failed to mention the now 15 year old Harriet Hancock Community Center in Columbia or the well established Center Project of Myrtle Beach. Joe applauded Equality NC's work but failed to mention the existence of SC Equality or SC Pride, or our work to pass inclusive bills in 2008 including the City of Columbia Human Rights Ordinance which included Sexual Orientation AND Gender Identity. Additionally, the greetings from politicians only included NC representatives while we know full well that Columbia's entire City Council and Mayor Bob Coble (who attended several past Gala events) would have sent Greetings, as well as the GLBT supportive Mayor Riley of Charleston. For a "Carolinas" gala, South Carolina was certainly treated like a forgotten black sheep of the family, but some day when SC has surprised the national organizations with our renewed energy and strength, it won't be so easy to overlook our many and various accomplishments.

For examples of the work being done in SC, visit SCPride.org and download our 2008 Annual Report.

A disillusioned former HRC Intern and very disappointed HRC Carolinas '07 & '08 Gala committee member,

Ryan C. Wilson
President, SC Pride Movement



appellation

FEBRUARY 23, 2009 AT 2:44 PM

While hearing and acknowledging the above desire for recognition at this particular event, this year's program was reasonably heavy on NC as both award winners were from NC and the keynote was an NC Senator.

As mentioned, the SC award winner from last year was mentioned this year by several program speakers. In years past, Columbia's Mayor was welcomed with applause, whoops, and hollers, by all when he came to the stage promoting Columbia as LGBT-friendly.

However, note that this year's welcome was shortened to be from Charlotte-Mecklenburg officials (county commissioners, city council members, Charlotte-Meck state reps, and Congressman Mel Watt whose district holds the convention center).

There are many other LGBT-friendly officials in NC and SC that weren't included in the video welcome. It wasn't a state issue; it was a host city issue, and there's nothing wrong with that. Other LGBT-friendly Congress members and mayors from NC weren't in welcome video portion either. It was just a "host community" welcome with no nefarious intent.

SC can rightfully be proud at the quick progress happening with the hospital protections last year and organizing focusing on the SC legislature.

Further, the entertainer tweaked both NC and SC during her bit and the audience laughed audibly both times. No one was especially targeted for mistreatment or indifference.

@libhomo: Like many organizational governing bodies, HRC's board of directors are nominated by a committee and elected by the board.

I'm sure HRC would love to have more folks get involved in NC or SC, working their way through the pipeline after demonstrating a commitment to the organization's mission to become a Governor, then perhaps a Director.

In HRC's structure, the more work a community (such as the Carolinas region) does on the ground with letter to the editor writing, increasing membership, voter registration, lobbying activiy, etc. the more slots on the Board of Governors they typically receive.

Over time that eventually means more representation on the Board of Directors for your region. It's an interesting model based on results and sustained regional work.



Diego Sanchez

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 AT 7:25 AM

Kudos to Matt for taking on this effort, and thanks to Pam for calling it out on FB. From my limited lens, this writing is mostly and almost on the mark and a good place to launch but not fulfill understanding. I also hope that it might drive some enriching talk and foster more questions. I know all but one of the people quoted here, and I admire them greatly.

The TIMING of this item is important because it follows that recent LGBT Exec. Dir. meeting where leading national organizations (large and smaller) talked about collaboration and establishing some level of economies of scale, according to news reports I read about the meeting.

I am not on the inside of ANY group because of my new line of work, yet I have worked with so many national LGBT organizations of many sizes, geographic and ethic/racial focus for decades.

I'm sure I sound like that broken record. I know I repeat this too often, but when I need to do something huge in our community, I need ALL of the groups who are at my avail, not just one. I need each for different expertise areas.

I can't make soup with only water. I need flavor, spice, stock, meat, veggies and STUFF. Sometimes when belts get tightened, minds get expanded. Necessity is the mother of invention, so I never lose hope. Diego



Ryan Wilson

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 AT 8:53 AM

To appellation:

Having served 2 years on the Gala committee, I have distinct and insider view of the dinner that few in the Carolinas have. I drove the 2 hrs from SC to Charlotte once a month to meet with the Charlotte based dinner committee. Add to that having worked for HRC in DC for 3 months as an Intern, I've had many conversations with staff there. The local leaders are great but there is a disconnect between them and the national movers of the organization. If the dinner is the HRC "Charlotte" dinner, I would accept the focus on NC organizations & Charlotte politicians and their work, but to masquerade as 2 statewide event and then omit to recognize only 1/2 of the work being done in those 2 states is

insulting to those working in the forgotten state. Being made fun of by the entertainer doesn't count as being recognized by the HRC's President in his speech or welcomed to the stage as a presenter. It's like half of a team getting a gold medal, and the other half being kept off the podium.

There is a larger issue here dealing with 3+ years of SC leaders trying to create an HRC South Carolina committee to be turned down over and over by Nationals for various and seemingly pointless reasons. Frankly SC leaders are tired of being rejected and many of them refused to attend this year for that very reason. In 2007 there were 10 SC tables, this year there was 1... I don't think this time we can blame the economy. Next year, will any attend in Raleigh? I'm not sure that I will...



appellation

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 AT 9:48 AM

Ryan,

Please deal with your real issue you reveal in the first sentence of your second paragraph, and don't be needlessly divisive here on the ground in the Carolinas. As you well know – and write – your beef is not with the local folks, but national.

You're not the first region in the country that has tried to start a new HRC dinner or community. As I indicated from my first post (and from my knowledge as former staffer and volunteer for HRC – you ain't the only one), the national office wants to see sustained numbers of members/letters/activity/support from a region before starting a new "city" dinner to make sure it doesn't fall flat on its face in the first or second year.

In my humble opinion, it would be great to have both NC and SC regions/dinners/whatever, but that's not what the infrastructure has demonstrated support for up until this time.



saguaroson

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 AT 4:23 PM

Here's something I don't know about the Human Rights Campaign that I'd like to: what have they actually gotten done? As in, what specific legislation have they gotten passed,

stopped from getting passed or otherwise done to further LGBT rights on a federal level?

In the time since they were founded, scores of state groups have gotten pro-LGBT state laws passed (some with an assist from the Task Force) and defeated anti-LGBT legislation. Lambda Legal, GLAD and the ACLU have won lawsuits that have established rights and struck down bad laws (e.g. Lawrence v. Texas). GLAAD has relentlessly defended against homophobia and transphobia in the media. GLSEN has passed state laws protecting LGBT students. I could keep going...

HRC raises more gay dollars than any of these orgs, supposedly to be our representatives in Washington. Well, they've got a fancy building in Washington. Have they gotten us any federal rights? Or anything?

I'm still waiting for an answer.



Rebecca P.

FEBRUARY 25, 2009 AT 6:46 PM

saguaroson just said what I've always heard about the HRC: they take in lots of money, but they don't seem to do anything for the community with it. Where does it go? What are they doing for us? Why do we never hear about them *except* for their fund-raisers??



libhomo

FEBRUARY 27, 2009 AT 7:14 PM

appellation: As I thought, the HRC is undemocratic.



Pey

OCTOBER 4, 2009 AT 8:03 PM

HRC raises more gay dollars than any of these orgs, supposedly to be our representatives in Washington. Well, they've got a fancy building in Washington. Have they gotten us any federal rights? Or anything?

, , , , , helped get Senator Kay Hagan elected (something she acknowledged herself, thus getting rid of Dole.

2) Check out for yourself what HRC is doing on YOUR behalf:

http://www.hrc.org/laws_and_elections/4732.htm

3) HRC coordinates lobby day once a year so that representatives (all of us volunteers who pay \$\$ out of our own pockets to help the cause; we are not professional lobbyists) to make a presence on Capito Hill to get these laws passed on YOUR behalf.

Do a little investigating (not opinion blogs, but real facts) and you'll find out what HRC is doing.

thanks!

Pey (just another non-anglo, non-elitist volunteer who helps HRC not to gain anyone's thanks, but because it is the right thing to do)

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Ever since she hit the scene, Laverne Cox has been entertaining the masses and bursting through barriers. This trans superstar more than anything gives of herself to champion causes that are noteworthy. An interview in this issue with Cox tells her story in more detail. In addition to this storyline, we have a feature that honors those transgender individuals whose lives were cut short in such a tragic way as part of our coverage of Transgender Day of Remembrance. We also have election endorsements for our readers. Don't forget to vote! Your participation is needed now more than ever. We also have current local, regional and national news, along with other pieces, that will serve to enlighten and entertain our readers.



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