

**Mapping Change: The Human Rights Campaign's Contributions to Law and Policy  
in the United States Since 2018**

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What do you like? What are the things that you are passionate about? It might be a demographic you're a member of, a change you'd like to see in the world, or even righting something you felt was unjust in the past. We all have something that, when it comes across the newsfeed, you get sucked in, you want to learn more, understand the thought process, and see how it impacts you and the ones you love. Political Interest groups are organizations of people that fight for their beliefs in the legislative setting to further their cause. Most commonly, we see these interest groups taking shape in the form of political protests or lobbying.

The Human Rights Campaign, formerly known as the Human Rights Campaign Fund, is the largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) civil rights organization. Established in 1980, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) plays an active role as both an interest group, and in acts of activism in support of equal rights everyone. Since 1990, the HRC has spent over \$34 million dollars in lobbying (OpenSecrets, 2025) and garnered over 3.6 million registered members of the organization – representing just over 2.23% of the nation's eligible voting population. The Human Rights Campaign has hands in many of the recent Human Rights related activism and lobbying in recent years.

One of the most recent pieces of legislation that the Human Rights Campaign has played a key role in is the 119th Congress: H.R. 15; S. 1503, more commonly referred to as The Equality Act. The Equality Act is a bill, currently facing the Committee on the Judiciary as well as many other committees in Congress, that strives to “prohibit the discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation” (Takano, 2025). The HRC played several roles in this legislation – by both supporting

representatives financially through their election process, and by asking their members to write to their members of congress to Co-Sponsor the act (Human Rights Campaign, “Ask Your Members of Congress to Co-Sponsor the Equality Act!”).

I think that the Equality Act is a move in the right direction. As someone who understand the frustration and the experiences that come along with not being a cisgender, heterosexual, white male, I think that it’s important that we not only work to secure the rights for those of us that have the ability to affix labels to ourselves, but also to those where they could only do so at the risk of life or bodily harm. When we look back to the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s, we see minorities fighting for rights that are classified by the constitution as “inalienable”. Much like the movements of the past, each minority group has had to and will have to fight for the right to be treated to the same rights as a “normal” man.

Currently – on the Seventeenth day of July in Year of our Lord two thousand twenty-five – there are thirty-two states in our union that are infringing upon the constitutional rights of their citizens. Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr. of the Supreme Court stated in a 2015 ruling (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644) that the states’ ban on same sex marriage restricted the liberty of same sex couples and undermines the principals of equality at the base of American society. Yet we frequently see states that place undue burden on exercising one’s rights or outright deny them of the ability to do so. Frequently, we see that legislation prohibiting discrimination is often built upon the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – which continues to also be improved by people of color and other minorities as well. I believe there is a necessity for organizations like the Human Rights Campaign to fight for rights of minority groups. While the HRC is primarily

oriented to those that identify as LGBTQ+, their goals are for the betterment of all minorities here in the United States. When we think of discrimination it's often only in a single dimension – it's about someone's race OR their religion OR their sex OR their national origin - Intersectionality plays a role in interest groups as well.

Discrimination can be compounding – exponential at times. Organizations that lobby and fight on behalf of persons are often focused on a particular aspect of someone's being – whether that's their age, their potential benefits, their orientation, the color of their skin, or something else. There are few interest groups that can understand and fight for what I know as intersectionality – or where multiple types of groups cross, intertwine, or can otherwise share experiences. Often, even though I am a non-straight person, there are often... *privileges* that one gets just because I was born a white man. Often it can be easy to forget that even our siblings-in-arms can have vastly different perspectives on the causes we share due to past experiences. With 42% of all LGBTQ+ people in the United States identifying as a person of color, there are people who face the discrimination from others for both the color of their skin, their disability status, and their sexual orientation (Hall, 2022).

Having an organization like the Human Rights Campaign that does actively work to support those that face all types of discrimination is important to not only validating the struggles of those individuals, but also in shaping how legislation and activism takes shape in the future. Continued support for those diverse individuals has never been easy and with the shape of the current political climate, I do believe that the HRC has quite a bit of work in front of them. In the meantime, I do feel eternally grateful that there

are groups of people who are like me, with similar experiences that can enact change throughout our government in a way that benefits all involved.

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