

# Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance

*Fighting for equal rights since 1971*  
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## **GLAA Gives Mayor Gray Distinguished Service Award**

*Non-partisan advocates surprise Mayor with unannounced recognition, calling him “the best mayor on LGBT issues our city has ever had”*

The Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance (GLAA) surprised Mayor Vincent Gray on Wednesday evening by giving him its Distinguished Service Award as he was about to issue a proclamation celebrating the group’s 43<sup>rd</sup> anniversary. The group held its annual reception, a gathering of LGBT activists and public officials, at Policy Restaurant and Lounge at 1904 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW.

GLAA President Rick Rosendall used his introduction of the Mayor as a citation for the previously unannounced award:

"The Mayor is here to present a proclamation, but first some words of recognition are in order. As a cabinet officer and director of a nonprofit, Vince Gray was our ally and friend long before he ran for elected office. As Council chair, he presided over the enactment of marriage equality. As mayor, he has been down to earth and accessible, brought the right officials to the table, followed through, and took action. For those of us working in the trenches, it is all too easy to focus on the latest flap and forget that Vince is, by the evidence, the best mayor on LGBT issues our city has ever had.

"Specifically, Mayor Gray’s Department of Employment Services launched the city’s first transgender employment initiative through Project Empowerment. His Office of Human Rights launched the Transgender and Gender Identity Respect Campaign. His Office of GLBT Affairs has facilitated LGBT cultural competency trainings at District agencies, and created the LGBT Employee Resource Group. GLBT Affairs holds monthly meetings of the Violence Prevention Response Team. It works with the U.S. Attorney’s office to solicit community impact statements in bias-related criminal cases.

"Vince launched the LGBTQ Youth Task Force and the Bullying Prevention Task Force. He convened the District’s first Youth LGBTQ town hall. His Superintendent for Education is participating in the GLSEN Safe Schools Initiative. His Department of Corrections convenes quarterly meetings of its Transgender Advisory Committee. Vince acted to end the denial of healthcare coverage to transgender residents. He is soliciting input from LGBTQ seniors to make our city more welcoming for all of its elders. Under his leadership, the District joined amicus briefs in the two marriage equality cases before the Supreme Court last year. He signed into law birth certificate and marriage officiant reforms.

"Late last week I sent the Mayor's office a detailed schedule for this evening's program, but I left out one thing, something we've never done before under these circumstances: For the reasons just stated, it is my honor on behalf of GLAA to present a special Distinguished Service Award to our mayor, Vincent C. Gray."

Rosendall explained afterward, "We make a point of staying above the partisan fray, thus we rate candidates rather than endorsing them. While Mayor Gray was a candidate, we avoided choosing him for an award lest it be taken as an endorsement. Now that he is no longer a candidate, we decided the time was right to honor him for his service and leadership."

The reception also featured the presentation of previously announced Distinguished Service Awards to activists Jerry Clark, Earl D. Fowlkes, Jr., and Alison Gill. Information on those honorees can be found at:

<http://www.glaa.org/archive/2014/dsarelease0307.pdf>

Founded in 1971, the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington (GLAA) is an all-volunteer, non-partisan, non-profit political organization that defends the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the Nation's Capital. GLAA lobbies the D.C. Council, monitors government agencies, educates and rates local candidates, and works in coalitions to defend the safety, health, and equal rights of LGBT families. GLAA is the nation's oldest continuously active gay and lesbian civil rights organization.

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