



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

House of Representatives

REMARKS OF HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HONORING THE GAY AND LESBIAN ACTIVISTS ALLIANCE OF WASHINGTON, D.C.
THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2016

Ms. Norton. Mr. Speaker;

I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in celebrating the 45th anniversary of the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance (GLAA) of Washington, DC, a valued organization that has long been a local leader in the struggle for equal rights for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community.

Since its founding in April 1971, GLAA has been a respected and tireless advocate for full and equal rights for the District of Columbia, and has been at the forefront of efforts to strengthen enforcement of the landmark D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977. One of GLAA's most significant achievements, on which it worked with coalition partners, D.C. elected officials, and District residents, was enactment of the District of Columbia Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act, which permits same-sex couples to marry in the District of Columbia.

GLAA has stoutly defended the District's comprehensive human rights law; has been an outspoken advocate for LGBT youth and seniors; has stood up for the rights of LGBT consumers; has upheld the rights of transgender people, including equal treatment by police and access to culturally competent healthcare; has educated and rated local candidates on LGBT issues; and has built and nurtured coalitions with other constituencies to advance these causes and defend the District's autonomy.

At GLAA's 45th anniversary reception on April 21, 2016, the recipients of its 2016 Distinguished Service Awards will be recognized, including:

June Crenshaw serves as the chair of the Board of Rainbow Response Coalition. June is one of the original founders and continues to lead this all volunteer coalition. She is a board member and emeritus Chair of Whitman Walker Health. In addition, June is a Board of Governor of the Human Rights Campaign. June was the first African-American woman to co-chair HRC's National Dinner. She was a longstanding member of the Advisory Board of the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs. She also previously served on the Community Advisory Board of Lesbian Services Programs and Black Lesbian Support Group. She volunteered for over five years with Heartly House. Professionally, she is PMP® certified and has worked over 19 years as a project manager.

Mónica Palacio has served as Director of the D.C. Office of Human Rights since March 2014. In that capacity, she directed a six-month study in 2015 that revealed anti-transgender job bias at 48 percent of District employers. Mónica brings 20 years of experience in civil rights, strengthening communities in crisis and coalition building for social justice. She previously directed the District's Language Access Program, and served as a commissioner on the D.C. Commission on Human Rights. She holds a J.D. from the Georgetown University Law Center and a B.A. from Fordham University. Mónica has lived in the District for 25 years and was born in Bogotá, Colombia.

Sterling A. Washington served as director of the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs for two years ending in January 2015. Prior to that he was Resource and Grant Development Manager for the Center for Black Equity; worked on grants, newsletters, and community relations at Us Helping Us, People into Living, Inc.; and led the Bisexual, Lesbian and Gay Organization of Students at Howard. He has a bachelor's degree in political science from The George Washington University and a bachelor's degree in music history from Howard University. He is a tenor soloist and section leader at National City Christian Church.

I ask the House to join me in honoring the recipients of GLAA's 2016 Distinguished Service Award and in celebrating GLAA's 45 years of contributions to the LGBT community in the District of Columbia.