



# THE EVERGREEN RAINBOW

## WINTER 2020/2021

### Your Washington State LGBTQ Commission Newsletter

If we hope for universal freedom, we must engage every option to advance that hope to its real-world realization.

Our LGBTQ Commission carries this thought forward through representative deliberation, community engagement projects, our seven specialized committees, advising the Legislature and, above all, careful attention to community needs.

Our work helps more than our own focused LGBTQ groups. I suggest this concept, because we know that, when used to inform Commission work, our own experiences of self-discovery help us to engage society with basic questions about what really matters in life; what frees individuals - while advancing all people, together. We have learned this truth from other state commissions, and follow them in keeping a wide view of all we take on.

Together, we face many problems history has bequeathed us, as well as the current discriminations of our day, and the possibilities for a truly better future. These are difficult tasks that demand and receive serious consideration by all our commissioners, our leadership staff, and our legislative advisors.

Deepest thanks to everyone who supports our LGBTQ Commission and our work. We are with you and for you!

**Marsha Botzer**  
**Co-chair, Washington State LGBTQ Commission**



#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Website : <https://lgbtq.wa.gov>

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/WAStateLGBTQCommission>

Director : [omar.santana@lgbtq.wa.gov](mailto:omar.santana@lgbtq.wa.gov)

# From the Executive Director

This year's legislative session has been like no other. Due to the double threat of COVID-19 and violent demonstrations at capitol campuses around the country, the Washington Legislature took the wise decision to host most of its work remotely. Last year, the Legislature launched a pilot program to allow remote access to committee work (you can read more about this program [here](#).) Through this program, people who live too far from Olympia can access the Legislature and participate in public hearings from specific locations in their regions. When the program was first introduced, nobody thought that remote work would become the – temporary – norm for legislative work.

As the Legislature meets this year for a long legislative session, it is easier than ever to be part of the decision-making process. A functional, representative democracy is founded on the principle of citizenship participation. It has been my experience that most legislators look forward to hearing the concerns, ideas, and feedback from their constituents. This doesn't mean that constituents and elected officials will agree on everything. What this means is that through open and constant communication between elected officials and constituents, we can work together for a better future for our state. We invite the LGBTQ community in Washington to engage with your local legislator, participate in public hearings, and keep track of legislation that affects our community. The Legislature has created a simple document which explains the way in which you can participate in remote, virtual hearings. You can find this on page six of this newsletter. The LGBTQ Commission has also released the list of primary and secondary legislation that we are monitoring, which you [can find here](#).

For the most part, the LGBTQ Commission works “behind the scenes.” Our role as a consulting agency, means that we reach out to the community to gather input and feedback, and relay that feedback to our allies in the Legislature. We work through committees to strategize on how to expand and advance protections for our community in Washington. Additionally, we work with state agencies to advise their leadership teams on how to address concerns of the LGBTQ community within their respective areas of work. An example of this type of work is the recent changes to the federal Department of Health and Human Services' rules regarding foster care systems. The previous administration had allowed foster care agencies to discriminate against LGBTQ families and children. The Commission's staff met with the WA Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to address this challenge and learn how to best keep our LGBTQ foster families, and children in their care safe. Thankfully, DCYF is led by a team of caring and brave allies and LGBTQ people, and Secretary Ross Hunter made his position clear through a [statement made public here](#). We expect that once a new HHS Secretary is confirmed, this rule will be rescinded.

There are many other challenges and opportunities for our LGBTQ Commission to work for the advancement of protections for our community. I am excited to continue working with a wonderful team of legislators, commissioners, staff, interns, and community leaders who deeply care about our people. I also look forward to hearing directly from our community to strengthen the current laws that protect LGBTQ Washingtonians, and to expand our rights. I believe that, with your collaboration, we can continue making Washington the leader in LGBTQ protections and opportunities in the USA.

**J. Manny Santiago**  
**Executive Director**  
**Washington State LGBTQ Commission**



# **The Washington State LGBTQ Commission**

## **Staff**

J Manny Santiago, He/She/They/Él/Ella - Executive Director

Omar Santana, He/him/his - Executive Assistant

## **Legislative Representatives**

Claire Wilson, She/her/hers - Senator (D-30)

Nicole Macri, She/her/hers - Representative (D-43)

Skyler Rude, He/him/his - Representative (R-16)

## **Commissioners**

Marsha Botzer, She/her/hers - Jefferson County - Co-chair

Isyss Honnen, She/her/hers - King County - Co-chair

Jac Archer, They/them/theirs - Spokane County - Vice-chair

Alvaro Figueroa, He/him/his - Spokane County - Secretary

Lars Erickson, He/him/his - King County

Karen Goldsen, She/her/hers - Island County

Maeve Griffith, She/her/hers - Spokane County

Tobi Hill-Meyer, She/her/hers - Thurston County

Michelle Kelly-Barroga (KB), They/them/theirs - Pierce County

Matthew Landers, He/him/his - King County

Everett Maroon, He/him/his, They/them/theirs - Walla Walla County

Jeffrey Robinson, He/him/his - Franklin County

Josette Ross, She/her/hers - Pierce County

Steven Sawyer, He/him/his - King County

Beto Yarce, He/him/his - Snohomish County

## **Committees**

Currently, the Washington State LGBTQ Commission has seven committees:

Communication and Outreach; Children, Youth and Families; Health and Wellness; Economic and Business Development; Vulnerable Communities; Transgender, GNC, Gender Non-binary, and Intersex Communities; and the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Committee.

# Pending 2021 legislation of interest to the Washington State LGBTQ Community

## Police Accountability

- **SB 5051 / HB 1082** State oversight & accountability of peace officers and corrections officers (Pedersen / Goodman)
  - Reduces barriers to decertification process for police officers for on- and off-duty misconduct, which eliminates bad officers cycling through departments across the state.
- **HB 1054** Establishing requirements for tactics & equipment used by peace officers (Johnson)
  - Establishes new standards for mandated and prohibited police conduct, including chokeholds, no-knock warrants, obtaining federal military equipment, and use of police dogs.

## Hate Crimes

- **HB 1071** Bias-based criminal offenses (Valdez)
  - Adding a bias indicator as an aggravating circumstance and classifying hate crimes as a crime against person will:
    - Subject offenders to community custody
    - Allow prosecutors to hold offenders accountable for the bias factors in a crime

## Health Equity

- **SB 5052** Creating Health Equity Zones (Keiser & Randall)
  - This bill creates health equity zones across the states that will empower local communities to address the health inequities that they determine are most important to their community.
- **(Draft)** Health insurance discrimination (Gender affirming treatment) (Lias)
  - This bill will make sure that all individuals have access to gender affirming treatment without discrimination from their health insurance carrier.

- **SB 5228** Addressing disproportionate health outcomes by building a foundation of equity in medical training (Randall & Liias)
  - Developing curriculum on health equity will enable more culturally safe health care to the diverse populations in Washington state who already have severe health disparities. This will lead to better care for communities of color and other marginalized populations.
- **SB 5229** Health equity continuing education for health care professionals (Randall)
  - This bill helps educate our health professionals on the structural and systemic health inequities in our health care system.

## Educational Equity

- **SB 5044** Concerning professional learning, equity, cultural competency, and dismantling institutional racism in the public school system (Das)
  - Adds equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism to existing cultural competency training for school board directors, district staff, and school staff. Directs school districts to prioritize one of three professional learning days to focus first on these topics.
- **SB 5227** Requiring diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism training and assessments at institutions of higher education (Randall)
  - Students will have better educational experiences and outcomes in academic cultures that foster belonging and invest in training for antiracism, and DEI.

*Thanks to Nicole Herrera for this information.*

## Black History Month - Celebrate!



# Stay In Contact With Your Washington State Government

- **Universal remote testimony:** The Legislature has expanded remote testimony capabilities so people can testify on any bill from anywhere up to an hour prior to a committee meeting.
  - To testify remotely in the Senate: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/CSIRemote/Senate>.
  - To testify remotely in the House: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/CSIRemote/House>
- **Submit written testimony:** People can also submit written testimony on any bill scheduled for a public hearing. People have long been able to submit written comment on a bill, but prior to this year, those comments were sent directly to the constituent's own legislators. The new written testimony system saves comments where committee members and staff can access and read it, and where committee staff will later place it in the committee file and archive it where it will be maintained as part of the public record.
  - Written testimony can be submitted at the same links used to sign-in for public testimony above.
- **Set up a Zoom with your legislator:** Due to Covid-19 protocols, legislators won't be meeting in person with constituents, but people are encouraged to schedule Zoom meetings with their senators and representatives.
  - To find your legislator's contact information and schedule a meeting: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/MemberEmail/>
- **It's all on TVW:** As always, every committee meeting, floor session, press conference and special event will be broadcast at [TVW.org](http://TVW.org).

*Thanks to Aaron Wasser for this information.*