

May 2021





The Resilience Of Pride

by Tracey Carlos (she/her), LNI

Seven years ago Pride had started to feel like a victory celebration, rather than a protest. Some complained it was too commercial, too sanitized for our allies. Then in 2016 we were reminded of the real reason for Pride month. We need each other. The world shifted when on June 12, 2016 we all read the news of a mass shooting at an LGBTQ+ nightclub in a city I had lived in for 15 years, Pulse.

I lived on the other side of the nation on that night, so heard about it the next morning. Overnight people who had stopped attending those commercialized pride parties and parades returned to the streets to mourn, and yes celebrate our continuing visibility. We were reminded that we are stronger together. And like at Stonewall 51 years earlier, we saw our allies join us in solidarity.

Last year, Pride celebrated 50 years of marches and parades much more quietly than we had anticipated. We watched huge performances, heard speeches, and gathered in groups online while we were forced to social distance. At a time when we all needed to mourn so many losses together, and stand together to remind the rest of the world that this was not OUR first pandemic, unlike most we had to find new ways to be there for each other.

Once again we must mourn together from a distance as the world has lost over three million lives to COVID-19. While we continue to socially distance, we need to remember how much that commercialism has come to matter as well. The LGBTQ+'s power is behind its visibility. The more people realize that their family includes members of our family, and that we exist in every corner of society, the more they come to accept us and stand by us. That includes seeing ourselves reflected back to us in movies, TV shows and commercials. So, take pride in what we have built over the last 51 years and how even without our crowds and parades we are still visible. *We are still together, and we are resilient.*



Virtual Events: [Tacoma Pride](#) | [Seattle Pride](#) (Jun 26-27) | [World Pride](#) (Aug 12-22)

You can also donate to a local Pride organization: [Capital City](#) | [Federal Way](#) | [Spokane](#) | [Tri-Cities](#)

💧 *RAIN is not responsible for the content of an outside organization's website.*





Washington State Legislature LGBTQ Caucus

by Allison Fine (she/her), DSHS

Representation Matters.

It's a phrase we hear repeatedly these days in nearly all aspects of our life and though some people might not even think about its deeper meaning, others consider it a mantra. Whether it is a therapist, a teacher or a Doctor, having someone who looks like you and who can relate to your life experiences often makes the interaction more personal and for many people, more comfortable.

The Washington State Legislature has various caucus groups that help to elevate representation for various marginalized groups, including the LGBTQ Caucus. Started nearly 15 years ago, the LGBTQ caucus brings together LGBTQ Legislators from the House and Senate to work on bills and budget items. The goals of the caucus is to make sure that bills moving through the legislative process have a lens of equity applied to them that includes the needs of the LGBTQ community.

Senator Marko Liias from the 21st legislative district has been on the caucus since he started in the Legislature in 2008. He is currently the Senate Majority Floor Leader. He says, "The power in the caucus is that we make sure Queer priorities are being discussed and having the caucus makes us stronger together."

Having been both a State Representative and now a Senator, Liias notes that there is still work to do, even internally. "13 years ago when I started - there were a lot of micro aggressions from my peers. In the last 5 years, we have elected many more legislators that identify as LGBTQ and there's definitely been a decrease in the negative behaviors from others."

In the 2021 Session, Liias' SB 5313, the "Gender Affirming Treatment Act," was approved by the Legislature and delivered to the Governor's desk to be signed. This bill requires health insurers to cover medically necessary gender affirming treatment.

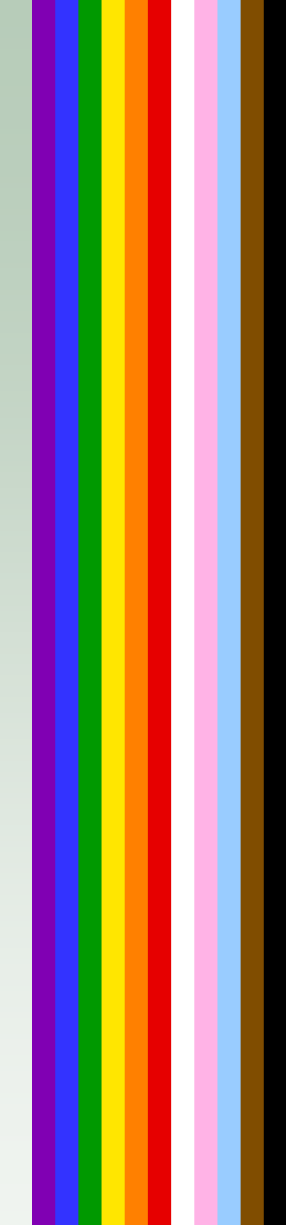
According to the Caucus [website](#), "The 2021 Washington State Legislature LGBTQ Caucus includes: Senators Jamie Pedersen, Marko Liias, Emily Randall, and Claire Wilson, Speaker Laurie Jinkins, and Representatives Nicole Macri and Kirsten Harris-Talley." In the past, Republican Representative Skyler Rude of the 16th legislative district was also a member of the committee.

Senator Claire Wilson from the 30th legislative district, who is also The Assistant Majority Caucus Whip, is a champion for children and families. She explains, "Caucuses inside the legislative bodies, cross chambers, allows us to follow, support and advocate for all legislation being introduced to both bodies."

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She further notes, “It also provides representation for all (LGBTQ people) regardless of legislative district, especially when Representatives and Senators are not supportive”.

The effects of the LGBTQ caucus are far and wide. When Nikki Kuhnhausen was murdered in 2019 because she was a transgender woman, the legislature moved quickly to create law to ensure that no one could use “being surprised that someone is transgender” as a legal defense. HB1687 was passed in 2020, known as the “Gay Panic Defense Act” which made it illegal to use the fact that someone is transgender as a justification for violence.

Manny Santiago, Executive Director of the Washington State LGBTQ Commission says this about why the LGBTQ Caucus matters, “Our community has many allies in the Legislature, which is great. However, nothing compares to having the voice of LGBTQ folk being part of the decision-making process. The LGBTQ Caucus is also bipartisan, bringing an important aspect to the table: conversation, negotiation, learning, growth, and diversity of opinion.”

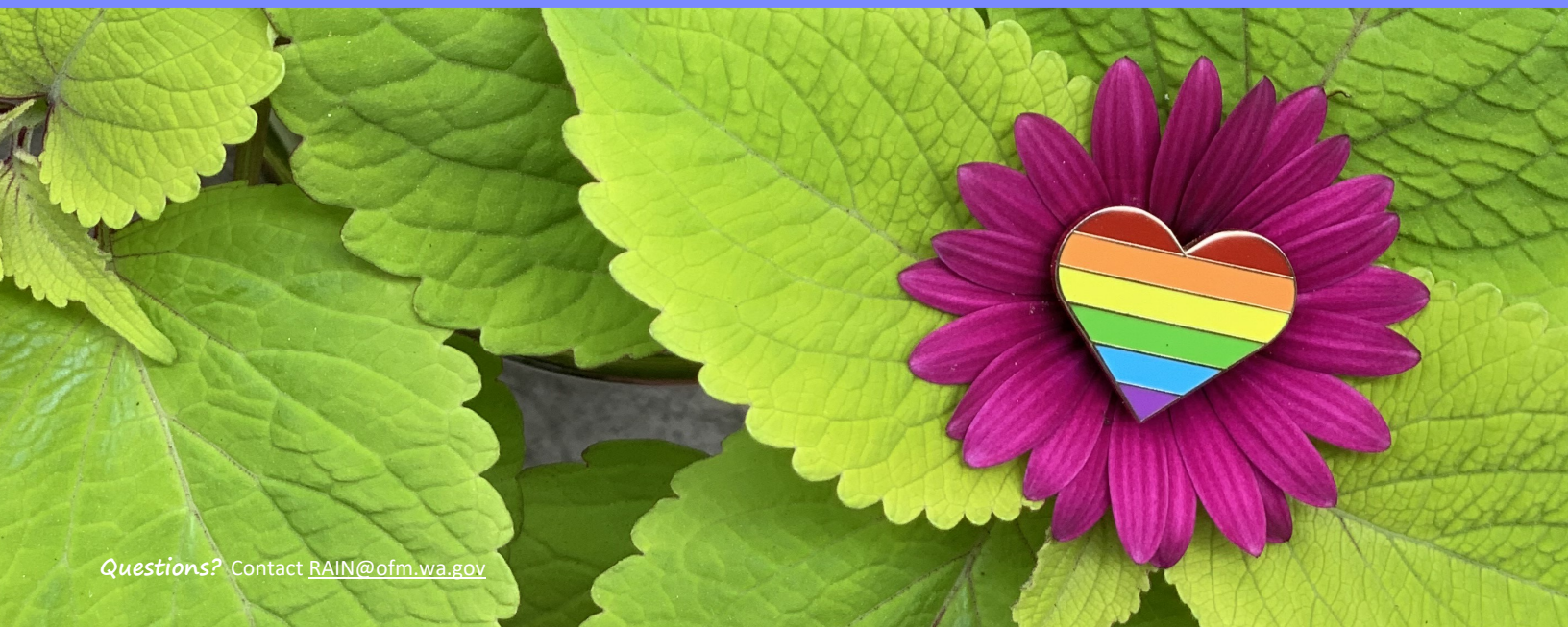
Santiago continues, “In my role with the WA State LGBTQ Commission, is important to have visible representation in the Legislature. On the one hand, when I approach the Legislature with proposals, feedback on bills, or requests to address a specific issue, I know that I do not have to spend time “translating” what the issues are. The LGBTQ Caucus has lived these experiences and knows exactly what we are experiencing as LGBTQ Washingtonians. From every corner of our state and both major political parties means that young LGBTQ Washingtonians can see themselves reflected on the halls of the Senate and House chambers.”

Santiago also reminds us, “Trans activist Sylvia Rivera once said, ‘We have to be visible. We should not be ashamed of who we are.’”

Washington State is seen a national model for how the LGBTQ community should be represented in policy making and the LGBTQ Caucus is reflective of the efforts to elevate the voices of the community. The efforts of LGBTQ caucus are intentional and focused, because in WA State, representation matters.

Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network (RAIN)

RAIN exists to help Washington State create safe and inclusive workplaces where every LGBTQ+ employee can bring their full authentic selves to work, enabling them to do their best work every day for the people of Washington. It is a business resource group that advises state agencies on how to create inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ employees and customers.



LGBTQ+ Anti-Discrimination Bill Stalls in Congress. Meanwhile...

States Make Their Move

by Tyler Troutman (he/him), HRC

On June 15, 2020, the United States Supreme Court issued an opinion in the [Bostock v. Clayton County](#) case holding that statutory language in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting discrimination in employment based on “sex”, includes sexual orientation and gender identity. On January 20, 2021, President Biden issued [Executive Order 13988](#) directing his administration to interpret all laws that prohibit sex-based discrimination as laws that also prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Consequently, U.S. executive branch agencies, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development, issued [memorandums](#) to implement this change based on Bostock’s reasoning and the President’s order. However, sexual orientation and gender identity are not codified into federal civil rights law.

Members of the U.S. Congress have proposed legislation, known as the [Equality Act](#), to ban discrimination nationwide on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, credit, education, public accommodation and facilities, federal funding, and the jury system. The current legislation defines sexual orientation as “homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality.” and gender identity is defined as “the gender-related identity, appearance, mannerisms, or other gender-related characteristics of an individual, regardless of the individual’s assigned sex at birth.” If passed into law, the legislation would expand the protected class of “sex” to explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity under federal civil rights law.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Equality Act again in February 2021 after the bill failed to move through the Senate in 2019. The fate of this anti-discrimination legislation is still unknown as the bill remains in the Senate Judiciary Committee since March. Twenty-seven states do not have LGBTQ+ anti-discrimination laws, and currently, several states across the country are considering and/or passing legislation to restrict transgender individuals from equal access to many activities and services including school sports and gender affirming healthcare.

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In 2006, the Washington State Legislature added sexual orientation to the list of classes protected under the Washington Law Against Discrimination (WALAD), [Chapter 49.60 RCW](#). The WALAD defines sexual orientation as “heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, and gender expression or identity.” Washington State’s definition of “gender expression or identity” means “having or being perceived as having a gender identity, self-image, appearance, behavior, or expression, whether or not that gender identity, self-image, appearance, behavior, or expression is different from that traditionally associated with the sex assigned to that person at birth.”

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) enforces the WALAD, and in 2015, the HRC engaged in rulemaking to establish Washington Administrative Code ([WAC](#)) [162-32](#) to interpret and implement protections for LGBTQ+ individuals covered under the WLAD. The WAC identifies prohibited conduct, sets dress and grooming standards, and requires covered entities to allow individuals to use gender-segregated facilities consistent with their gender expression or gender identity. While LGBTQ+ individuals are covered under state anti-discrimination law, the Equality Act would expand those protections and ensure equal access and service – regardless of the U.S. state you are in.

If you have faced discrimination in Washington State based on your sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, or any other protected class in the last six months, [file a complaint](#) with the Human Rights Commission or call 1-800-233-3247 for assistance.





Caring For Our **LGBTQ** Elders

by Miranda Gargiulo (she/her), RAIN Community Member



As human beings we all have to confront our own mortality in one way or another. The reality of facing our twilight years can be overwhelming and frightening. Many questions will have to be answered: Who will take care of us? Who will make medical decisions for us if and when we become incapacitated? Where do we want to be when our life ends - and how will we pay for it? Those of us who are part of the LGBTQ community are likely to face additional challenges as we age that most elders who identify as binary will not.

The sad reality is many in our community will choose to re-closet ourselves for fear that we will face retribution for who we are as human beings. We may face harassment, violence, discrimination, neglect, and absence of identity-affirming treatment because of our sexual orientation and gender identity. As a result, some may not seek care, and some may suffer from chronic stress and isolation -- which sadly may result in suicide or an untimely death.

As a community that strives for inclusivity and affirming treatment and support, we must face this reality together and come up with solutions.

Knowledge is power! In order to make a difference we can educate ourselves before we face our twilight years, and support now those who are living them. LGBTQ Long Term Health forums, Federal, State and local organizations and

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May2021

task forces do exist, and we all can participate, educate and be of service to each other. Organizations such as SAGE, RAIN, Rational Unicorn, GenPride, LAMDA Legal, National Resource Center on LGBTQ Aging -- along with many others -- were created to inform, support, and find solutions to help the LGBTQ community at large as well as our elders.

Activism is also a much-needed and effective tool for making a difference. Placing pressure on our government and local authorities is happening, but we have a long way to go.

Long-term health care planning does not need to be overwhelming and frightening. It also can be cost effective. Those of us who have knowledge of estate planning and social work and experience in the medical field can rise to the occasion and provide pro bono assistance for our elders.

Affordable housing funding and outreach is desperately needed, because, as you are well aware, not everyone has financial stability or family support. There are two organizations which are prime examples of how to provide affordable housing that celebrates, affirms and cares for our LGBTQ elders. Openhouse, located in San Francisco, is an organization that has been serving LGBTQ seniors for 20 years. Openhouse founders Dr. Marcy Adelman and the late Jeanette Gurevitch began their journey of creating community and housing solutions for LGBTQ seniors in 1998. In 2016 the first residence, 55 Laguna, was opened, followed by a second at 95 Laguna in 2019. Openhouse has set an impressive example of how housing for elders can be affordable and still focus on health, community, and affirming health care treatment. In 2019, SAGE NYC along with Marvel Architects opened its first affordable, LGBTQ-friendly senior housing development in New York City, and construction of a second one is underway. The path has been laid: who will follow the example of these two organizations?

Change is imperative. We need more solutions, and we must support each other. We are a strong community and we have come so far; however, there is more work to be done. Together we can make a better world that works for all, throughout all the stages of our lives!



Nominate Your Agency for the RAIN

Outstanding Agency Award

by Elizabeth Fontanilla (she/her), DES



**Past winners of the
RAIN Outstanding Agency Award**

2020

- Department of Financial Institutions
- Department of Social and Health Services
- Office of the Insurance Commissioner

2019

- Department of Health
- Department of Labor & Industries
- Employment Security Department

Other agencies with past nominations include:

- Attorney General's Office
- Department of Children, Youth, and Families
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Enterprise Services
- Department of Licensing
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Revenue
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Office of the Secretary of State
- Washington's Lottery

RAIN exists to help Washington State create safe and inclusive workplaces where every LGBTQ+ employee can bring their full authentic self to work, enabling them to do their best work every day for the people of Washington.

This mission is carried out through the recommendation of best practices for state agencies, the establishment of the Safe Place WA program in public-facing state offices, and communication and outreach efforts to bring in diverse perspectives and celebrate achievements.

The RAIN Outstanding Agency Award recognizes the agencies that have led the way in this work.

As part of the LGBTQ+ community, if you would like to nominate your agency for a 2021 award, complete the [nomination survey](#) by **June 1, 2021** to provide feedback about how your agency encourages a safe, diverse, and inclusive workplace.

Join us in October when we honor the 2021 recipients of the RAIN Outstanding Agency Award.





RAIN Pride Month Panel

by RAIN Best Practices



SAVE THE DATE!

We only have one lived experience, but we can learn and grow through other people's stories. This year for Pride month RAIN will be hosting a Pride Month Panel where several RAIN members will share about their experiences and journeys as part of the LGBTQ+ community.

The panel will be comprised of people with different gender identities and sexual orientations. They will share about themselves as well as provide tips on how to be a supportive ally for the LGBTQ+ community.

Please join us to hear their stories.

Date: June 16, 2021

Time: 12:30 – 2:00 PM

To join:

[https://zoom.us/j/94635147604?](https://zoom.us/j/94635147604?pwd=VXdnVnNaUnFQak43QUdrYUdOb2lIUOT09)

[pwd=VXdnVnNaUnFQak43QUdrYUdOb2lIUOT09](https://zoom.us/j/94635147604?pwd=VXdnVnNaUnFQak43QUdrYUdOb2lIUOT09)

Meeting ID: 946 3514 7604

Passcode: 479418



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