



ABC's Robin Roberts talks with President Obama on May 9, 2012.
Photo by Pete Souza/The White House

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**Presidential
LGBT
Report Card**

For more information about the Obama administration's work to provide opportunities for LGBT constituencies, visit whitehouse.gov/lgbt

President Obama and His Historic Strides for LGBT Equality

On May 9, 2012, President Barack Obama affirmed his support of marriage for loving and committed same-sex couples. The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), the nation's leading Black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization, applauded the President for this historic endorsement of the freedom to marry.

In an ABC interview, President Obama proclaimed:

When I think about members of my own staff who are in incredibly committed, monogamous same-sex relationships, who are raising kids together; when I think about those soldiers or airmen or Marines or sailors who are out there fighting on my behalf and yet feel constrained — even now that 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' is gone — because they're not able to commit themselves in a marriage, at a certain point I've just concluded that for me, personally, it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same-sex couples should be able to get married.

Here is President Obama, the nation's first Black president, taking a position that no sitting president in history has had the fortitude to ever take. If anyone in America has ever

wondered what courageous leadership looks like, here it is. NBJC could not be prouder to stand with the President in the fight for full equality.

In our first edition of the NBJC Presidential Report Card, we assessed and graded the President halfway through his first term. He received A's across the board for his unwavering commitment to shape our nation's policies and governing laws to recognize the full equality of LGBT people. This year we are pleased to do the same. We also highlight some of the President's most notable remarks about LGBT equality and human dignity.

As we prepare to close out this historic first term of America's first Black president, NBJC has created a First Term Presidential Report Card to educate our members and supporters on advancements made on behalf of our community under President Obama's administration. Recognizing the attempts of anti-gay activists to use LGBT equality as a wedge issue to divide and conquer communities of color, it is imperative that we not lose sight of what the Administration has accomplished for Black and LGBT communities as well as those living at the intersection.

Building on our tremendous successes, it is evident that our movement for full equality is at a tipping point. More and more Americans are following in the President's moral leadership and are realizing that LGBT people deserve the same protections that are so fundamental to our nation's values.

President Obama, from the bottom of our hearts, we thank you and we salute you for your steadfast leadership. NBJC will continue to do our part to support your ongoing efforts to ensure that all Americans can participate safely, openly and honestly in family, faith and community, regardless of race, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Onward and upward,



Sharon J. Lettman-Hicks
Executive Director and CEO

PRESIDENTIAL LGBT REPORT CARD

Family & Relationship Recognition

“More remains to be done to ensure every single American is treated equally, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Moving forward, my Administration will continue its work to advance the rights of LGBT Americans.”



- *Signed a memorandum expanding federal benefits for the same-sex partners of Foreign Service and executive branch government employees.*
- *Called for equal treatment for same-sex adoptive parents in his presidential proclamation of National Adoption Month.*
- *Endorsed the Domestic Partnership Benefits and Obligations Act of 2009 to provide full partnership benefits to federal employees.*



DID YOU KNOW?

When compared with white same-sex couples, Black same-sex couples are **more likely to parent children** and **earn a lower annual income**.

Marriage Equality

“Over the course of several years as I have talked to friends and family and neighbors, when I think about members of my own staff who are in incredibly committed monogamous relationships, same-sex relationships, who are raising kids...at a certain point I’ve just concluded that for me, personally, it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same-sex couples should be able to get married.”



- *Publicly expressed his support for same-sex marriage on May 9, 2012 in an interview with Robin Roberts on ABC News.*
- *Permitted military chaplains to officiate same-sex marriages where legal.*
- *Spoke out against North Carolina’s Amendment One which prohibits same-sex marriage in the state.*



DID YOU KNOW?

There are almost **85,000 Black same-sex couples in the United States**. African Americans make up 13% of the United States population, while Black same-sex households are **14% of all same-sex households in the U.S.**

PRESIDENTIAL LGBT REPORT CARD

Defense of Marriage Act

A

“As we reflect on how far we have come and how far we have yet to go, let us recall that the progress we have made is built on the words and deeds of ordinary Americans.”

- Declared the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional and announced that the Administration will no longer defend it in court. The federal law, known as DOMA, defines marriage as a union of a man and a woman when it comes to federal laws and regulations, consequently limiting over 1,000 federal benefits such as Social Security survivor benefits and the ability to file joint taxes to opposite-sex couples.
- Endorsed the Respect for Marriage Act, a legislative effort to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act. This legislation would uphold the principle that the federal government should not deny gay and lesbian couples the same rights and legal protections as straight couples.



DID YOU KNOW?

Same-sex partners are not eligible for **1,138 federal protections** and benefits available to married couples, including **Social Security survivor benefits, Medicaid spend-down protections, and worker's compensation.** Anti-gay marriage amendments disproportionately affect Black same-sex couples because they are more likely to **work in the public sector**, relying on **domestic partner health insurance.**

Workplace Discrimination

B+

“Let us pay tribute to those who came before us, and those who continue their work today; and let us rededicate ourselves to a task that is unending — the pursuit of a Nation where all are equal, and all have the full and unfettered opportunity to pursue happiness and live openly and freely.”

- Protected LGBT federal employees from workplace discrimination by adopting an equal-opportunity employment policy that includes both sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Set a precedent in hiring LGBT employees by appointing more openly LGBT administration officials than any other president in U.S. history.
- Publicly endorsed and continues to support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.
- Ordered the federal government to extend key benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees.

DID YOU KNOW?

Black transgender people have an **extremely high unemployment rate** at 26%, two times the rate of the overall transgender sample and **four times the rate of the general population.**

PRESIDENTIAL LGBT REPORT CARD

Transgender Equality

“From generation to generation, ordinary Americans have led a proud and inexorable march toward freedom, fairness, and full equality under the law not just for some, but for all.”

A

- *Allowed transgender Americans to receive true gender passports without reassignment surgery.*
- *Ensured transgender veterans receive respectful care according to their true gender through the Veterans Health Administration.*
- *Issued guidance to foster safer working environments for transgender federal employees.*



DID YOU KNOW ?

Reports of anti-LGBT hate violence increased by **13% from 2009 to 2010**. Communities of color and transgender women were **disproportionally impacted by anti-LGBT motivated murder**.

Foreign Policy

“No country should deny people their rights because of who they love, which is why we must stand up for the rights of gays and lesbians everywhere.”

A+

- *Implemented U.S. Agency for International Development policy encouraging contractors to implement and enforce non-discrimination policies including sexual orientation and gender identity.*
- *Fought for the rights of LGBT persons worldwide by co-sponsoring the first United Nations resolution focused solely on LGBT rights, and preventing the removal of sexual orientation from a United Nations resolution condemning extrajudicial killings.*
- *Directed the Department of State and Homeland Security to ensure LGBT refugees and asylum-seekers have equal access to protection and assistance.*
- *Clarified the meaning of “family” to include LGBT relationships, helping to protect bi-national families threatened by deportation.*
- *Signed into law the FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, which included the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.*
- *Led a United Nations measure to restore “sexual orientation” to the definition of human rights.*
- *Ended the Social Security Administration’s gender “no-match” letters.*
- *Created first-ever U.S. government strategy dedicated to combating human rights abuses against LGBT persons abroad and made it clear that the United States will use all the tools of American diplomacy to promote LGBT rights abroad.*
- *Directed the Department of State to champion a comprehensive human rights agenda—one that includes the protection of the human rights of LGBT people and the elimination of violence, criminalization of LGBT status, and discrimination against LGBT people worldwide, particularly those forced to flee their homes or countries.*

DID YOU KNOW ?

Since 1998, over thirty lesbians have been **killed** in South Africa as a result of “**corrective rape**” (rape intended to punish a lesbian and believed to change or “correct” her sexuality). Some estimate that at least ten lesbians are **raped** or **assaulted** each week in Cape Town alone.

PRESIDENTIAL LGBT REPORT CARD

Repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”

“Because we repealed ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,’ gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans can serve their country openly, honestly, and without fear of losing their jobs because of whom they love.”



- *Pushed for the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” in his first State of the Union address, and followed through to sign the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Repeal Act of 2010 into law.*
- *Signed the certification stating the statutory requirements for repeal of DADT (Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell) have been met, ending the discriminatory law that undermines our military readiness and violates American principles of fairness and equality.*



DID YOU KNOW ?

Under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” **racial minorities** and **women** were **discharged at a higher rate** than white males. In fact, African American women were discharged under DADT at almost **three times the rate** at which they serve in the military. Although Black women made up less than 1% of service members, they represented 3.3% of those discharged under the policy.

Elder Care

“To put us on solid ground, we should also find a bipartisan solution to strengthen Social Security for future generations. We must do it without putting at risk current retirees, the most vulnerable, or people with disabilities; without slashing benefits for future generations; and without subjecting Americans’ guaranteed retirement income to the whims of the stock market.”



- *Created a National Resource Center for LGBT seniors and awarded a grant to SAGE (Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, & Transgender Elders), supporting the first community center for LGBT seniors.*

DID YOU KNOW ?

Today, about **80% of long-term care** in the U.S. is provided by family members, and more than **two-thirds of adults who receive long-term care** at home depend on family members as their only source of help. By contrast, LGBT elders are **more likely to be single, childless, and estranged** from biological family—relying on friends and community members as their chosen family.

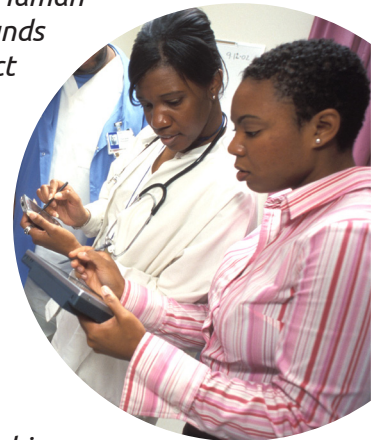
PRESIDENTIAL LGBT REPORT CARD

Health



“The question isn’t how we can afford to focus on health care. The question is how we can afford not to. Because in order to fix our economic crisis and rebuild our middle class, we need to fix our health care system, too.”

- Issued a Presidential Memorandum directing the Department of Health and Human Services Secretary to ensure that hospitals that receive Medicare and Medicaid funds give gay and lesbian patients and their families the compassion, dignity and respect they deserve in difficult times.
- Included specific data on health needs of lesbian and bisexual women in the Health Resources and Services Administration’s “Women’s Health USA 2011” report for the first time.
- Signed the Affordable Care Act of 2010, a comprehensive overhaul of America’s health care system that will hold insurance companies accountable, lower health care costs, guarantee greater patient choice, and provide access to affordable coverage and protection from insurance companies that deny coverage for pre-existing conditions. It has since been upheld by the Supreme Court.
- Ensured hospital visitation and medical decision-making rights for gay and lesbian patients.
- Clarified the Family and Medical Leave Act to ensure family leave for LGBT employees.
- Completed an Institute of Medicine study on LGBT Health, the first of its kind.
- Promoted equal access to health care by enabling searches for health plans with same-sex partner benefits on healthcare.gov.



DID YOU KNOW ?

When LGBT families are deemed ineligible for health insurance benefits or COBRA, they must **obtain their own insurance** or **go without it**, creating **added costs** to family security.

HIV/AIDS Awareness and Prevention



“To combat the HIV epidemic in the United States, we are implementing the first comprehensive National HIV/AIDS Strategy in our country’s history, which calls for strong, coordinated policy initiatives, enhanced HIV/AIDS education, collaboration across the federal government, and robust engagement with individuals, communities, and businesses across America.”

- Ended the ban that prohibited people with HIV/AIDS from entering the United States.
- Renewed the U.S. commitment to creating an AIDS-free generation by setting clear and measurable targets to be achieved by 2015 on World AIDS Day.
- Signed the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act.
- Announced that the Administration will invest nearly \$80 million in grants to increase access to HIV/AIDS care across the U.S., an investment expected to eliminate AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) waiting lists.

DID YOU KNOW ?

In 2009, Black men who have sex with men (MSM) represented an estimated **73% of new infections** among all Black men, and 37% among all MSM. New HIV infection rates among young Black MSM (aged 13-29) **increased by 48%** from 2006-2009.

PRESIDENTIAL LGBT REPORT CARD

Safe Schools



“If there’s one goal of [the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention], it’s to dispel the myth that bullying is just a harmless rite of passage or an inevitable part of growing up. It’s not. Bullying can have destructive consequences for our young people. And it’s not something we have to accept. As parents and students, teachers and communities, we can take steps that will help prevent bullying and create a climate in our schools in which all of our children can feel safe.”

- *Directed the Department of Education to issue a memo reaffirming the rights of students to form Gay-Straight Alliances and other student groups under the Equal Access Act, noting the important role they can play in promoting safer schools and creating more welcoming learning environments.*
- *Formed the Interagency Council on Bullying Prevention and convened the first White House Conference on Bullying Prevention.*
- *Launched Stopbullying.gov, a website with resources designed to assist bullied youth and their advocates—including specific information regarding LGBT bullying.*
- *Directed the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights to issue guidance as a “Dear Colleague” letter to clarify issues of bullying and violation of federal education anti-discrimination laws. The guidance explains educators’ legal obligations to protect students from student-on-student racial and national origin harassment, sexual and gender-based harassment, and disability harassment.*
- *Convened the first-ever LGBT-focused workshop during the 2012 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Week Conference in conjunction with the **National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC)**. Hosted by the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the session aimed to develop a deeper understanding of the changing socio-political climate around LGBT issues on a broad national level and how that context affects HBCUs as well as the necessity of fostering welcoming and supportive climates for LGBT individuals.*



DID YOU KNOW?

Students of color who were severely harassed in school because of both their **sexual orientation** and **race/ethnicity** were **more likely to miss school in the past month** (57%) than those who were severely harassed based on sexual orientation only (43%).

On July 26, 2012, President Obama signed an Executive Order establishing the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans. The program aims to improve educational outcomes for all African Americans and, in turn, strengthen our country. While we’ve made significant strides as a community, African Americans continue to disproportionately face obstacles when it comes to adequate and effective schooling. These disparities are even more severe when you compound race with sexual orientation or gender identity.

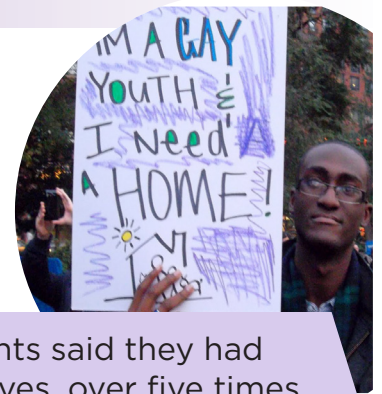
PRESIDENTIAL LGBT REPORT CARD

Housing



“Stable housing is the foundation upon which everything else in a family’s or individual’s life is built—without a safe, affordable place to live, it is much tougher to maintain good health, get a good education or reach your full potential.”

- Released America’s first comprehensive plan to prevent and end homelessness, which includes homeless LGBT youth.
- Announced Department of Housing and Urban Development new housing rule protecting against housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.



DID YOU KNOW ?

An alarming 41% of Black transgender respondents said they had experienced **homelessness** at some point in their lives, over five times the rate of the general U.S. population. Of those who had experienced homelessness, many tried to access shelters but were either **denied access altogether** (40%) or experienced **harassment** (61%), **physical assault** (32%), or **sexual assault** (31%) at the shelter.

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