

# WINNING EQUALITY 2019

## DEAR SUPPORTERS:

2019 was a challenging year for the equality movement, from over 240 anti-LGBTQ bills introduced in state legislatures to the Trump administration's rollbacks of critical federal protections.

But we are winning equality because of the remarkable people working for justice in the states every day. Our annual Leadership Conference brought together 235 movement leaders to learn from each other and from experts, while building the relationships that fuel and sustain them through challenging times.

Despite facing an onslaught of bad bills, we partnered with our members to advance important LGBTQ policies. The greatest progress happened at the state level where we won 9 trans rights bill, 10 bills making health care more accessible, and 4 conversion therapy bans.

We deepened our support of state equality group leaders by supplementing our successful New Executive Director Boot Camp with 6 months of executive coaching, giving leaders the tools, skills, and networks needed to grow their organizations. We also provided intensive training and support for board members and communications, field, and fundraising staff.

In 2019, we launched Project Game Changer, starting with 6 state-based organizations to execute year-round, civic engagement strategies that build power by integrating organizing, voter engagement, fundraising, and digital campaigns. Our investment in savvy organizing will be transformative and critical in 2020 as we expand Project Game Changer to other states.

**Never has the impact of Equality Federation's work building the movement that is winning equality in communities we call home been more important or more impactful.**

The fight for justice is a long game. We are committed to using every opportunity to keep building the power of our state-based movement while inspiring communities to stand with us on the side of fairness and equality.



*Rebecca Isaacs*

Rebecca Isaacs  
Executive Director  
Equality Federation

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## CONVERSION THERAPY

Conversion therapy refers to attempts to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity through a variety of methods, including coercive counseling, electric shock, and other barbaric methods. All of the nation's leading medical and mental health professional associations condemn conversion therapy as unnecessary, ineffective and, more importantly, dangerous. We support bills in states that would ban conversion therapy and hope to end the practice nationwide--to add to the 20 states that have already successfully passed bans.

## EDUCATION

School should be a safe place to learn, make friends, and explore interests, but for many LGBTQ students school often means bullying and harassment. The lack of LGBTQ inclusive curriculum and increased religious-based discrimination on campuses stands in the way of equal academic rights. Politicians continue to debate laws that would ban discussion of LGBTQ people in schools. We're committed to stand against all bullying, harassment, and discrimination on school yards and campuses.

## HIV ADVOCACY

The HIV epidemic continues to disproportionately affect gay and bisexual men, transgender women, youth, and communities of color. Our HIV Advocacy Program prioritizes building HIV advocacy in the states. We've trained state LGBTQ leaders on HIV policy at our regional summits and national Leadership Conference, inspiring state organizations like Equality Florida to center HIV as an important part of their work. Building up strong coalitions of HIV advocates and LGBTQ advocacy organizations can make a real difference in the lives of people living with HIV.

## NONDISCRIMINATION

Only 20 states and the District of Columbia have comprehensive laws banning discrimination against LGBTQ people based on sexual orientation and gender identity. This means that more than half of all Americans live in states that don't have explicit nondiscrimination protections in employment, housing, and other public accommodations. Equality Federation and our member organizations are hard at work to pass comprehensive and inclusive nondiscrimination laws all over the country.

## PREEMPTION

State legislatures are increasingly "preempting" the laws of cities and towns that seek to protect low-income workers, immigrants, and LGBTQ people. "Preemption" strips municipalities of their ability to pass LGBTQ local nondiscrimination protections. We fight with our members to preserve the power of towns, cities and counties to do the right thing: protect all citizens from any form of discrimination.

## TRANSGENDER RIGHTS

Transgender rights are being recognized around the country thanks to vocal activists and strong allies. We support affirming policy initiatives like: nonbinary gender markers on ID docs, nondiscrimination in healthcare, gender neutral bathrooms, and changing language in other state laws to be gender neutral. Still, many lawmakers continue to threaten the livelihoods of transgender people and their families. Our members are standing in the way of attempts to ban transgender people from getting the healthcare they need and lawmakers who target transgender youth specifically by trying to retract access to affirming healthcare, sports, and facilities that match their gender.

## LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We build strong leaders who inspire action and drive progress in their home states. We provide critical opportunities for training, peer learning and networking through the annual Equality Federation Leadership Conference, the movement-wide go-to gathering of state leaders and national partners. In addition we build on the national training with regional summits in the South, Midwest/West, and New England as well as our Executive Director Bootcamp and regular online coaching and training opportunities.

## ADVOCACY

We work closely with our members, national partners, and other stakeholders to build an active base of LGBTQ supporters in every state to advance pro-LGBTQ policies and defeat anti-LGBTQ policies from the ground up. We believe grassroots, community organizing is key to power building, and our member groups need access to sophisticated tools used by political campaigns to supercharge this work. We provide tools, training, coaching, and leadership development so that leaders on the ground learn how to maximize their impact. Our experience allows us to support all users, from beginners to experts.

## PROJECT GAME CHANGER

In 2019 we launched Project Game Changer to help six target states grow their year-round organizing capacity and build an engaged base of supporters. When people feel more engaged with an organization they're not only more likely to vote but also more likely to give, participate in online actions, and volunteer. We are working with organizations to create truly integrated plans that build a base of engaged volunteers who have ownership of the work being done in their state.



# OUR MEMBERS HAD GROUNDBREAKING WINS IN 2019

We support over 40 Equality  
Federation state-based  
organizations.



Over the past few years, Fairness Campaign has helped nearly 20 Kentucky municipalities enact Fairness Ordinances prohibiting LGBTQ discrimination.



Equality Utah helped Utah become the 19th state and one of the most conservative to ban conversion therapy for minors.



Equality Virginia came closer to making nondiscrimination a reality when they worked to elect pro-LGBTQ legislators in the House.

## WE APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT OF OUR DONORS

**Thank you to all 900+ donors  
who supported equality in 2019.**

### 100k - 500k

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### 20K - 99K

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### 1K - 19K

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