

Nevada fares well in LGBT study

Nevada is one of 18 states in the country that has explicit state-level workplace protections for all LGBT employees. It is also one of 36 states with marriage equality.

This data was released this week by Human Rights Campaign in partnership with the Equality Federation in its first national report assessing the status of state legislation affecting LGBT equality across the United States. HRC is the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization.

"Despite historic progress on issues like marriage equality, a majority of states still struggle to reach even a basic level of equality for LGBT people," said HRC President Chad Griffin said in a statement. "Most states lack statewide non-discrimination laws to protect LGBT people – putting countless individuals and families at risk, and creating inequalities in adoption and surrogacy, employment benefits, and youth safety and well-being."

"Even worse," Griffin said, "equality opponents continue to push deeply harmful laws forward, including those seeking to undermine critical protections in the guise of "religious liberty."

Though same-sex marriage is legal in 36 states and Washington, D.C., more than 111 million people, or 35 percent of Americans, live in states that have marriage but where LGBT people are not fully protected from discrimination in the workplace. And more than 206 million people nationwide live in states where every LGBT person lacks fully-inclusive statewide workplace sexual orientation and gender identity protections.

Advocates in Nevada are expected to focus this year on passing

comprehensive anti-bullying protections for young people.

The SEI assesses states on their LGBT-related legislation and policies, good and bad, in six areas: relationship recognition, parenting laws and policies, non-discrimination laws, hate crimes laws, anti-bullying laws, and health and safety laws and policies. Based on that review, the SEI assigns states to one of four distinct categories.

Nevada and six other states falls into the category Building Equality. These have marriage equality and have taken steps toward more robust LGBT equality, including passing basic non-discrimination and hate crimes laws. Some lack explicit gender identity protections, and several lack comprehensive anti-bullying laws. Bad laws are more common, so advocates work to stop bills that undermine LGBT equality, and pass more comprehensive non-discrimination laws.

The full report, including detailed scorecards for every state, is available online.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report