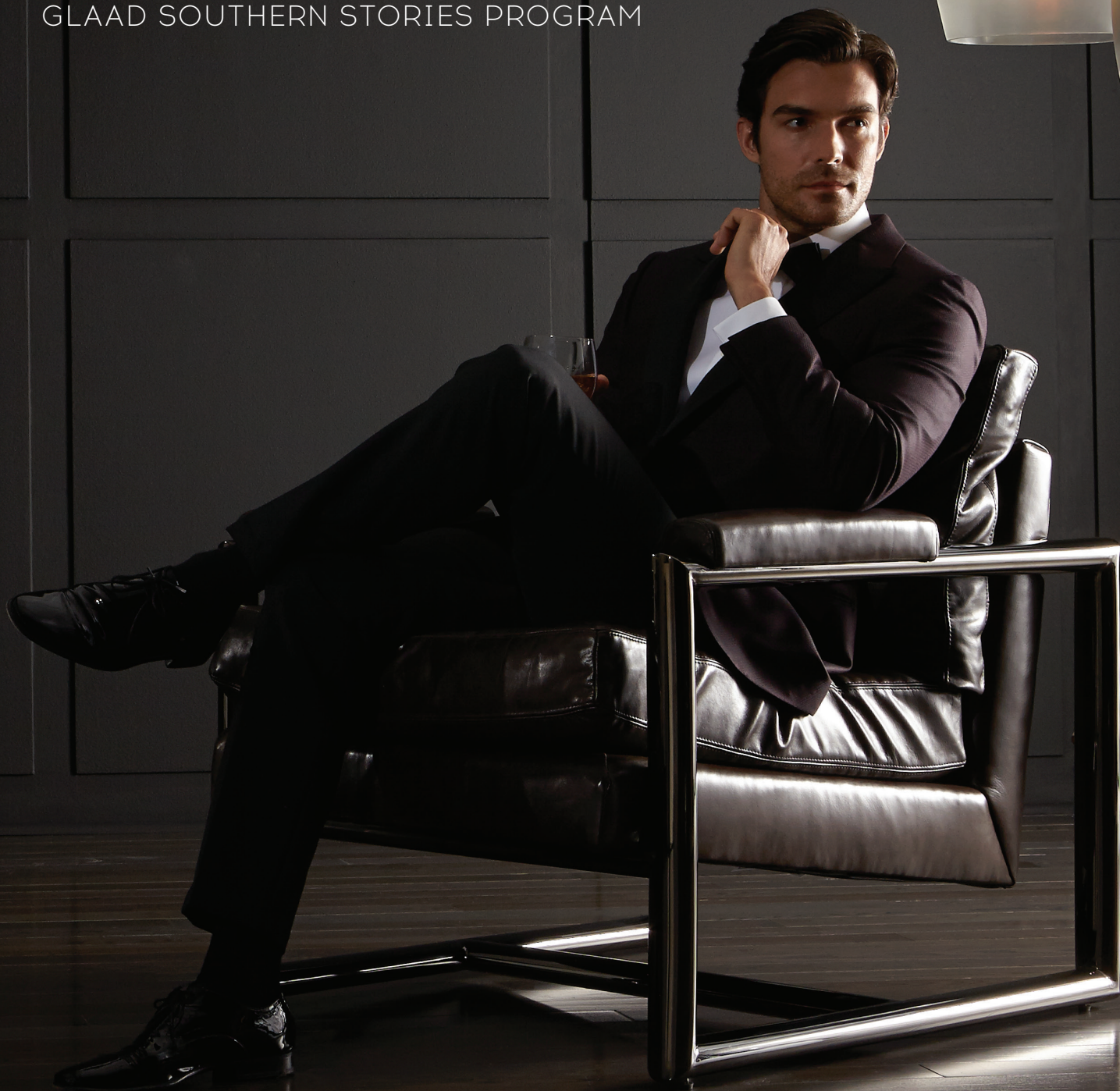




glaad 
**SOUTHERN
STORIES**

A Guide for Reporting on LGBT People in South Carolina

WE ARE A PROUD SPONSOR OF THE
GLAAD SOUTHERN STORIES PROGRAM



Mitchell Gold
+ Bob Williams

800.789.5401

MGBWHOME.COM

Getting Started	4
Terms and Definitions	5
South Carolina's LGBT History	6
Terms to Avoid	10
Defamatory Language	11
Best Practices in Media Coverage	12
Pitfalls to Avoid	13
Story Ideas	14
Organizations	15
GLAAD's Assistance	16



When GLAAD's Accelerating Acceptance report revealed that levels of discomfort towards the LGBT community are as high as 43% in America—and spike to 61% in the South—we knew we had to act. To accelerate LGBT acceptance in the U.S. South, GLAAD is telling the stories of LGBT people from across the region through our Southern Stories program. We are amplifying stories of LGBT people who are resilient in the face of inequality and adversity, and building a culture in which they are able not only to survive, but also to thrive. These are impactful stories with the power to change hearts and minds, but they are too often missed or ignored altogether.

In South Carolina, the LGBT community is making sure and steady progress, but the work to achieve full equality and acceptance is far from done. More and more, South Carolina sees communities of faith opening their arms to LGBT people; public officials listening to families, workers, and tax payers as they voice their need for equal protections; students creating supportive, inclusive spaces; and allies standing up for their LGBT friends, family members, and neighbors. This guide will serve as a useful tool for the media as it works to effectively share the stories of LGBT people so that all South Carolinians can live the lives they love.

Sarah Kate Ellis
GLAAD CEO & President

Getting Started

At first glance, South Carolina lags behind the rest of the country when it comes to protections for LGBT individuals. However, beneath the surface is a vibrant and diverse LGBT community that has built itself into an incredible force for change over the last few decades and is making significant progress to bring policy protections and cultural acceptance to LGBT people in the state.

Despite South Carolina having gained marriage equality, obstacles to exercising that achievement have popped up in the form of several State Senate and House Bills. One such bill would allow certain state employees to deny issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples if doing so would violate a “sincerely held” religious belief. Another such bill would prohibit the use of taxpayer funds or government salaries to pay for an activity that includes licensing or support of marriage for same-sex couples.

Beyond marriage, there are still many areas of life where LGBT people are not afforded the same protections as their peers. For example, in South Carolina schools, health education programs are prohibited from discussing LGBT people, except when speaking about sexually transmitted diseases.

LGBT South Carolinians still lack a statewide law that bans discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, and public accommodations. However, the cities of Columbia and Charleston have job protections specifically in place for LGBT federal employees. Additionally, Richland and Charleston are the two counties in the state that also have employment non-discrimination policies for government employees. To that end, South Carolina Equality has supported a bill pending before the General Assembly (H4025),

which would ensure workplace fairness and end discrimination based upon sexual orientation and/or gender identity at the state level. Similarly, South Carolinians have launched a statewide advocacy group in South Carolina called Equality Means Business, which highlights LGBT-friendly businesses that recognize the importance of LGBT customers and employees.

There are also no laws ensuring that transgender South Carolinians have access to medically necessary transition-related healthcare. People living with HIV in South Carolina face up to 10 years in prison and felony conviction if they do not disclose their status to a consensual sexual partner, a law that has brought unintended negative consequences to untold numbers of citizens living with HIV in the Palmetto State.

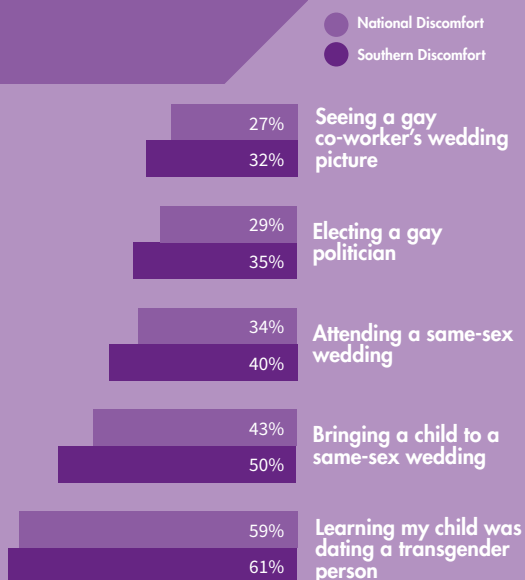
Despite these challenges, LGBT people have formed communities for support and advocacy. Many LGBT organizations, such as SC Equality, have a rich history and a robust presence in the state. LGBT people can be found in South Carolina doing what all others are doing – they are raising families, serving their community, working at their jobs, and making the state an even better place.

The contents of this guide only scratch the surface of LGBT life in South Carolina. Our hope, however, is that it empowers and motivates media professionals to find and discover new stories, new angles to existing stories, and a whole new framework for reporting on LGBT individuals in the state.

Why the South? Why now?

In late 2014, GLAAD commissioned Harris Poll to measure attitudes towards LGBT Americans. What we found is that even though 2015 has been an historic year for the rights of LGBT Americans, beneath legal and policy progress lies a layer of uneasiness and discomfort. While the public is increasingly embracing LGBT civil rights and equal protections under the law, many are still uncomfortable with having LGBT people in their families and the communities where they live. Within these numbers we find that Southerners feel significantly more discomfort about their LGBT families, friends and neighbors than is found in other regions of the country.

For more information, visit glaad.org/acceptance





Terms and Definitions

Sexual orientation – The scientifically accurate term for an individual’s enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual (straight) orientations. Avoid the offensive term “sexual preference,” which is used to suggest that being gay, lesbian or bisexual is voluntary and therefore “curable.” People need not have had specific sexual experiences to know their own sexual orientation; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all.

LGBT / GLBT – Acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.” LGBT and/or GLBT are often used because they are more inclusive of the diversity of the community. Care should be taken to ensure that audiences are not confused by their use. Ensure that the acronym is spelled out on first usage.

Queer – Traditionally a pejorative term, *queer* has been appropriated by some LGBT people to describe themselves. However, it is not universally accepted even within the LGBT community and should be avoided unless describing someone who self-identifies that way or in a direct quote. When Q is seen at the end of “LGBT,” it typically means queer and/or questioning.

Homophobia – Fear of lesbians and gay men. *Intolerance* or *prejudice* is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward LGBT people.

Marriage – An amendment banning marriage equality was added to the South Carolina Constitution in 2006 following a referendum vote, but same-sex couples in the state now have access to marriage equality on both state and federal levels. Because a key section of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), passed by the federal government in 1996, was declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in June 2013, legally married couples became recognized by the federal government. Furthermore, in June 2015, the Supreme Court’s historic ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* determined that the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right for someone to marry the person they love.

Transgender (adj.) – An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms – including *transgender*. Some of those terms are defined below. Use the descriptive term preferred by the individual. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to change their bodies. Some undergo surgery as well, but not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon medical procedures.

Trans – Used as shorthand to mean *transgender* or *transsexual* – or sometimes to be inclusive of a wide variety of identities under the transgender umbrella. Because its meaning is not precise or widely understood, be careful when using it with audiences who may not understand what it means. Avoid unless used in a direct quote or in cases where you can clearly explain the term’s meaning in the context of your story.

Transgender man – People who were assigned female at birth but identify and live as a man may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten it to trans man. (Note: trans man, not “transman.”) Some may also use FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male. Some may prefer to simply be called *men*, without any modifier. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers.

Transgender woman – People who were assigned male at birth but identify and live as a woman may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten to trans woman. (Note: *trans woman*, not “transwoman.”) Some may also use MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female. Some may prefer to simply be called *women*, without any modifier. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers.

Transition – Altering one’s birth sex is not a one-step procedure; it is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. Transition includes some or all of the following personal, medical, and legal steps: telling one’s family, friends, and co-workers; using a different name and new pronouns; dressing differently; changing one’s name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) one or more types of surgery. The exact steps involved in transition vary from person to person. **Avoid the phrase “sex change.”**

Gender non-conforming – A term used to describe some people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. **Please note that not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender; nor are all transgender people gender non-conforming.** Many people have gender expressions that are not entirely conventional -- that fact alone does not make them transgender. Many transgender men and women have gender expressions that are conventionally masculine or feminine. Simply being transgender does not make someone gender non-conforming. The term is not a synonym for transgender or transsexual and should only be used if someone self-identifies as gender non-conforming.

South Carolina's LGBT History

1982

Harriet Hancock founds the first PFLAG chapter in South Carolina

Not long after her son comes out as gay, attorney Harriet Hancock founds the Columbia chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) – the first PFLAG chapter in South Carolina. PFLAG's mission is to provide support for families, allies and LGBTQ people, to educate themselves about the issues and challenges facing LGBTQ people and to advocate in communities to change attitudes and create policies and laws that achieve full equality for people who are LGBTQ.



1989

South Carolina Pride is founded and LGBT activists organize South Carolina's first Pride march

Founded by PFLAG mom Harriet Hancock with the help of SC Pride co-chairs Jim Blanton and Barbara Embick, South Carolina Pride is dedicated to supporting the LGBT community of South Carolina. It aims to celebrate the diversity and richness of LGBT lives, educate the general population on LGBT issues, and advocate for equality and inclusion in all areas of life.

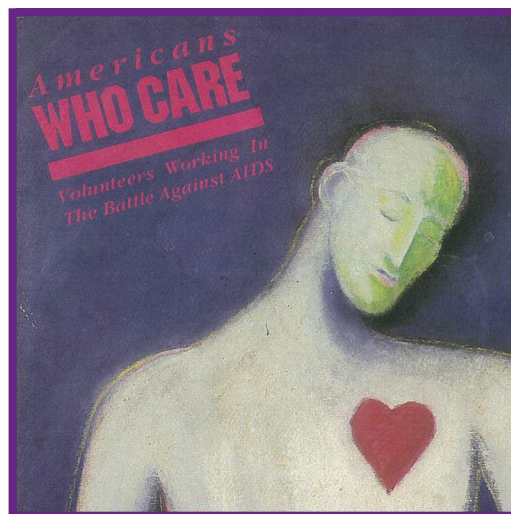
At a gay and lesbian community picnic held on Dreher Island, Harriet Hancock asks her

fellow attendees if they would be willing to march down Columbia's Main Street. An organizing committee develops, co-chaired by Jim Blanton and Barbara Embick, and issues nine demands for needed reforms including equal opportunity in employment, equal treatment in the military, the repeal of sodomy laws, the legal ability to adopt children, and the monitoring of hate crimes by law enforcement.

1985

Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services is founded

Members of the LGBT community found Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services (PALSS) to help South Carolinians equip themselves against HIV and AIDS, long before federal funding exists for HIV and AIDS-related services. PALSS offers free services to people who have been diagnosed with, or are at risk of contracting, HIV. The organization also provides assistance for the loved ones of HIV-positive individuals.



The timeline on these pages accounts for some of the important milestones in South Carolina's LGBT history. It is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to provide a context under which LGBT people in the state find themselves living at this critical juncture in the movement for equality and acceptance.



1998

Allies for Full Acceptance is founded

Linda Ketner – a prominent Charleston lesbian – forms AFFA, comprised of LGBT people and non-LGBT allies who are uniting to eliminate prejudice based on sexual orientation as well as gender identity and expression. In 2008, Ketner becomes the highest profile out LGBT individual in the state's history to run for office, narrowly losing a race to the incumbent in the race for the state's First Congressional District, stretching across Charleston, Georgetown, and Horry counties.

2003

The US Supreme Court rules that state laws banning same-sex relationships are unconstitutional

In a 7-2 decision written by Justice Anthony Kennedy in the landmark case *Lawrence v. Texas*, state laws banning same-sex sexual activity, such as sodomy laws in South Carolina, are ruled unconstitutional. The Court rules that such laws violate the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause, which is designed to protect personal liberty in intimate decisions. Same-sex partners can no longer be legally apprehended for engaging in consensual sexual activity.

1996

Whosoever Magazine is founded

Candace Chellew-Hodge of Columbia creates *Whosoever Magazine* to serve as a voice and a resource for LGBT Christians. The magazine runs in print and online for nearly 20 years.

2002

South Carolina Equality Coalition is founded

The South Carolina Equality Coalition is established in 2002 as "a statewide non-partisan coalition of local and state social, religious, and political GLBT organizations and allies with a mission to secure civil and human rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender South Carolinians." Ultimately, this coalition of more than 40 LGBT organizations across the state leads the charge against two attempts to amend the SC Constitution to limit marriage to one man and one woman. SC Equality defeats the first effort, but ultimately the marriage amendment passes in 2006.





2005

South Carolina Black Pride is founded

The mission of South Carolina Black Pride is “to help unify the South Carolina Black same-gender-loving, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community, to celebrate their diversity, genius, creativity, and beauty, and to empower as well as promote the human rights of these communities.”

2008

South Carolina Equality helps achieve LGBT equality in healthcare power of attorney issues

In June, after work by South Carolina Equality, the governor of South Carolina signed a bill that allowed healthcare power of attorneys full hospital visitation rights. In effect, this allowed LGBT people to visit their partners in the hospital.

2011

Richland County offers non-discrimination protections to LGBT citizens and residents

In June, Richland County unanimously passes an LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination ordinance on public accommodations and housing. Sponsored by Councilman Seth Rose, the ordinance protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national identity, familial status, disability, and sexual orientation. In the ordinance, “sexual orientation” is defined as “a person’s real or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality or gender identity or expression.” The ordinance sets a fine of \$500 for offenders.

Fort Jackson Army base assigns Captain Guy Allsup to speak to recruits in the Charlie Company about “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”

Also in June, Captain Guy Allsup emphasizes that openly gay members of the military are not a detriment to its mission and encourages an environment of acceptance as the military conducts training in advance of the repeal of the federal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy.

Columbia adds gender identity to non-discrimination ordinance

In December, Mayor Bob Coble and the Columbia City Council add gender identity to the city’s non-discrimination ordinance to protect LGBT citizens in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

2006

South Carolina Amendment 1 constitutionally bans marriage equality

South Carolina Amendment 1 is approved by 78% of voters in November. The referendum specifies that the institution of marriage in South Carolina is solely the union between one man and one woman. No other domestic union can be recognized as valid or legal. The state is prohibited from creating or recognizing any protection or claim respecting any other domestic union by any name.

2009

Charleston passes LGBT non-discrimination ordinance

In November, Charleston passes a non-discrimination ordinance, which protects citizens in housing and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.



2012

Folly Beach passes LGBT non-discrimination ordinance

In March, the city council of Folly Beach passes a non-discrimination ordinance, which adds protections based on sexual orientation.

SC Equality Political Action Committee is established to elect fair-minded candidates to state and local office

In August, the South Carolina Equality PAC is formed. It endeavors to end discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression and to ensure the dignity, safety, and legal equality of all South Carolinians by working to elect fair-minded candidates to office, regardless of party affiliation.

2013

Analouisa Valencia becomes the first out lesbian Miss South Carolina contestant

In July, Valencia's appearance in the pageant is not just history-making in South Carolina, it's history-making across the country. "I'm the first openly lesbian contestant in the Miss America system," says Valencia, "and the first bilingual contestant we've had, so that's good."

Bradacs et. al. v. Haley et. al. is filed

In August, State Trooper Katherine Bradacs and Tracie Goodwin file a lawsuit in U.S. District Court. The suit challenges the Palmetto State's adherence to DOMA and Amendment 1, which bans marriage equality, declaring that the laws on marriage for same-sex couples fail "any level of constitutional scrutiny."



2015

State Attorney General leads fight against marriage equality

In April, State Attorney General Alan Wilson files an amicus brief with the Supreme Court arguing the framers of the 14th Amendment accepted the states discriminating against women, so they would accept discriminating against same-sex couples.

GLAAD's Southern Stories Tour spotlights the state

During GLAAD's Southern Stories Summer Tour across the South in June, *GLAAD Presents: State of Change - South Carolina*, premieres in Charleston and Columbia. The original short mini-documentary film spotlights local efforts to accelerate acceptance for LGBT people in the state and the challenges ahead to achieve full equality.

2014

Myrtle Beach passes far-reaching LGBT protections in city services, law enforcement and education

In June, Myrtle Beach amends its human rights ordinance, adding LGBT-inclusive protections on everything from public accommodations to education. The new protections, passed without objection by the six-member council, include the terms "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" in the human rights ordinance, which prohibits discrimination in "housing, employment, city services and programs, law enforcement, education, and public accommodations."

South Carolina police chief Crystal Moore is reinstated after anti-LGBT mayor ousts her from office based on her sexual orientation

In July, Crystal Moore, a civil servant of more than 20 years, is fired due to her sexual orientation. That month, there is an outcry from the citizens of Latta, where she serves. Thousands demonstrate in support of Moore. Despite Mayor Earl Bullard's repeated attempts to keep the police chief from her position, citizens of the town organize to change the town's form of government in order to give town council the authority to reinstate her against the mayor's wishes. Moore remains Chief of Police of Latta to this day.

U.S. District Court Judge Richard Gergel finds the state's marriage ban unconstitutional

On November 12, in the case of *Condon v Haley*, Judge Gergel proclaims that laws prohibiting same-sex couples from marrying "unconstitutionally infringe on the rights of Plaintiffs under the Due Process Clause and Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution and are invalid as a matter of law." After South Carolina's ban on marriage equality is struck down, state newspapers feature editorials calling for the state to stop fighting and begin to comply with the ruling. These include three of the largest daily newspapers: *The State*, *Rock Hill Herald*, and *The Greenville News*.

Columbia Mayor votes to extend family benefits to same-sex couples

On November 19, Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin extends benefits for same-sex couples in the city of Columbia who have a valid marriage license issued from any of the 50 states in the United States.

The next day, Reformation Lutheran Church of Columbia announces that same-sex couples are now officially included in its church wedding policy. Reformation has long been known for its support and commitment to the LGBT community.



Terms to Avoid

Offensive: “homosexual” (n. or adj.)

Preferred: “gay” (adj.); “gay man” or “lesbian” (n.); “gay person/people”

Please use gay or lesbian to describe people attracted to members of the same sex. Because of the clinical history of the word “homosexual,” it is aggressively used by anti-gay extremists to suggest that gay people are somehow diseased or psychologically/emotionally disordered – notions discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Please avoid using “homosexual” except in direct quotes. Please also avoid using “homosexual” as a style variation simply to avoid repeated use of the word “gay.” The Associated Press, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* restrict use of the term “homosexual.”

Offensive: “homosexual relations/relationship,” “homosexual couple,” “homosexual sex,” etc.

Preferred: “relationship,” “couple” (or, if necessary, “gay couple”), “sex,” etc.

Identifying a same-sex couple as “a homosexual couple,” characterizing their relationship as “a homosexual relationship,” or identifying their intimacy as “homosexual sex” is extremely offensive and should be avoided. These constructions are frequently used by anti-gay extremists to denigrate gay people, couples and relationships.

As a rule, try to avoid labeling an activity, emotion or relationship gay, lesbian, or bisexual unless you would call the same activity, emotion or relationship “straight” if engaged in by someone of another orientation. In most cases, your readers, viewers or listeners will be able to discern people’s sexes and/or orientations through the names of the parties involved, your depictions of their relationships, and your use of pronouns.

Offensive: “sexual preference”

Preferred: “sexual orientation” or “orientation”

The term “sexual preference” is typically used to suggest that being lesbian, gay or bisexual is a choice and therefore can and should be “cured.” Sexual orientation is the accurate description of an individual’s enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex and is inclusive of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, as well as straight men and women.

Offensive: “gay lifestyle” or “homosexual lifestyle”

Preferred: “gay lives,” “gay and lesbian lives”

There is no single lesbian, gay or bisexual lifestyle. Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are diverse in the ways they lead their lives. The phrase “gay lifestyle” is used to denigrate lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals suggesting that their orientation is a choice and therefore can and should be “cured.”

Offensive: “admitted homosexual” or “avowed homosexual”

Preferred: “openly lesbian,” “openly gay,” “openly bisexual,” or simply “out”

Dated term used to describe those who self-identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. The words “admitted” or “avowed” suggest that being gay is somehow shameful or inherently secretive. You may also simply describe the person as being out, for example: “Ricky Martin is an out pop star from Puerto Rico.” Avoid the use of the word “homosexual” in any case.

Offensive: “gay agenda” or “homosexual agenda”

Preferred: Accurate descriptions of the issues (e.g., “inclusion in existing nondiscrimination and hate crimes laws,” “ending the ban on transgender service members”)

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people are motivated by the same hopes, concerns and desires as other everyday Americans. They seek to be able to earn a living, be safe in their communities, serve their country, and take care of the ones they love. Their commitment to equality is one they share with many allies and advocates who are not LGBT. Notions of a so-called “homosexual agenda” are rhetorical inventions of anti-gay extremists seeking to create a climate of fear by portraying the pursuit of equal opportunity for LGBT people as sinister

Offensive: “special rights”

Preferred: “equal rights” or “equal protection”

Anti-gay extremists frequently characterize equal protection of the law for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as “special rights” to incite opposition to such things as relationship recognition and inclusive nondiscrimination laws.

Problematic: “transgenders,” “a transgender”

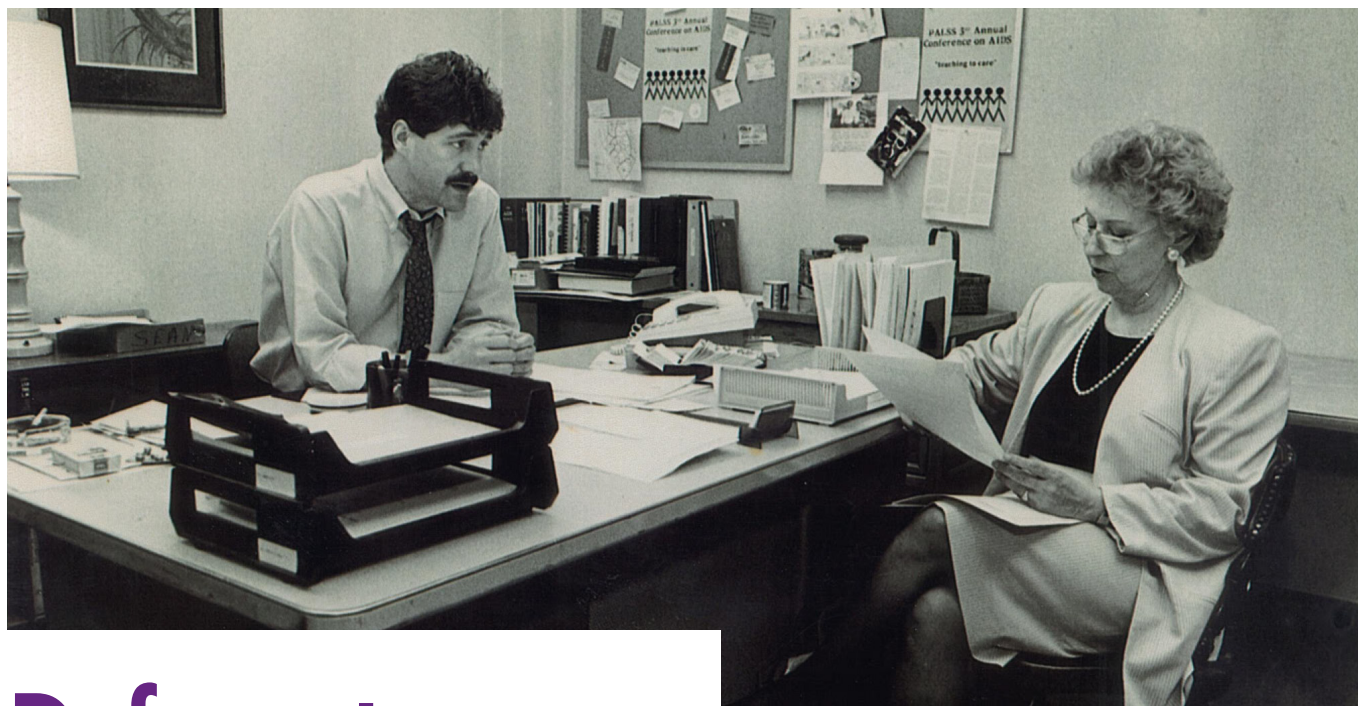
Preferred: *transgender people, a transgender person*

Transgender should be used as an adjective, not as a noun. Do not say, “Tony is a transgender,” or “The parade included many transgenders.” Instead say, “Tony is a transgender man,” or “The parade included many transgender people.”

Problematic: “transgendered”

Preferred: *transgender*

The adjective transgender should never have an extraneous “-ed” tacked onto the end. An “-ed” suffix adds unnecessary length to the word and can cause tense confusion and grammatical errors. It also brings transgender into alignment with lesbian, gay, and bisexual. You would not say that Elton John is “gayed” or Ellen DeGeneres is “lesbianed,” therefore you would not say Chaz Bono is “transgendered.”



Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services (PALSS) office, late 1980s

Defamatory Language

Defamatory: “fag,” “faggot,” “dyke,” “homo,” “sodomite,” and similar epithets

The criteria for using these derogatory terms should be the same as those applied to vulgar epithets used to target other groups: they should not be used except in a direct quote that reveals the bias of the person quoted. So that such words are not given credibility in the media, it is preferred that reporters say, “The person used a derogatory word for a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender person.”

Defamatory: “deviant,” “disordered,” “dysfunctional,” “diseased,” “perverted,” “destructive” and similar descriptions

The notion that being gay, lesbian or bisexual is a psychological disorder was discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Today, words such as “deviant,” “diseased” and “disordered” often are used to portray LGBT people as less than human, mentally ill, or as a danger to society. Words such as these should be avoided in stories about the gay community. If they must be used, they should be quoted directly in a way that clearly reveals the bias of the person being quoted.

Defamatory: associating gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people with pedophilia, child abuse, sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery and/or incest

Being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender is neither synonymous

with, nor indicative of, any tendency toward pedophilia, child abuse, sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery and/or incest. Such claims, innuendoes and associations often are used to insinuate that LGBT people pose a threat to society, to families, and to children in particular. Such assertions and insinuations are defamatory and should be avoided, except in direct quotes that clearly reveal the bias of the person quoted.

Defamatory: “deceptive,” “fooling,” “pretending,” “posing,” “trap,” or “masquerading”

Gender identity is an integral part of a person’s identity. Do not characterize transgender people as “deceptive,” as “fooling” or “trapping” others, or as “pretending” to be, “posing” or “masquerading” as a man or a woman. Such descriptions are defamatory and insulting.

Defamatory: “tranny,” “she-male,” “he/she,” “it,” “shim”

These words dehumanize transgender people and should not be used in mainstream media. The criteria for using these derogatory terms should be the same as those applied to vulgar epithets used to target other groups: they should not be used except in a direct quote that reveals the bias of the person quoted. So that such words are not given credibility in the media, it is preferred that reporters say, “The person used a derogatory word for a transgender person.” Please note that while some transgender people may use “tranny” to describe themselves, others find it profoundly offensive.

Best Practices in Media Coverage

Include LGBT angles in stories that may not immediately have an LGBT focus

Stories like immigration, health care, housing, and even the economy can have LGBT angles. One of the questions to ask is, “What impact does this have on someone who is LGBT?” Finding subjects who can speak to this angle is important. Refer to the South Carolina state-based organizations listed on page 15.

Include voices of people who identify as LGBT

Often, news coverage silences the community by covering anti-LGBT legislation and social groups without including the voices of those who are most affected. Hearing from everyday LGBT-identified people - not just allies or advocates - is critically important. Positive change is made when marginalized persons and groups are humanized in the press.

Use a personal lens in your reporting

LGBT people live rich and complex lives, and reporting on them should reflect such. Ask for personal stories; community activities, faith involvement, and organizational membership. People can also discuss both the joys and challenges of being LGBT in South Carolina. One particularly helpful angle is to ask about relationships and networks of support. LGBT people often overcome challenges because friends and families are there to support them. Find these stories.

Personal details about someone’s life may be more important than labels

If sexual orientation or gender identity is indeed relevant to the piece, be sure to use accurate and respectful terminology to discuss the subject. You do not have to necessarily apply an LGBT label to them, but rather provide details that give a fuller picture of the subject’s life. For example, “When Tonya Johnson isn’t running the new tech startup, she’s at home helping her wife raise their two children.”

Challenge anti-LGBT activists with accurate information about the LGBT community

Often, anti-LGBT activists will make claims about the LGBT community that are not based on fact as a way to score political points. Do not let fallacies stand. Do your research and come prepared with accurate information. Note the inaccuracies as soon as they are stated and present clear and factual information in their stead. If you want more information on state and national anti-LGBT activists, visit GLAAD’s Commentator Accountability



Project at www.glaad.org/cap. The Commentator Accountability Project aims to put critical information about frequent anti-LGBT interviewees into the hands of newsrooms, editors, hosts and reporters. All of the quotes listed are sourced back to video, audio, or writings from the activists themselves.

Reach out to state and local organizations

The more localized your sources, the better able you are to tell an accurate, genuine story. State and local organizations can more readily tell you what is at hand in their communities. See the list of South Carolina-based LGBT organizations on page 15 of this guide.

Explore the intersection of LGBT issues with other identities

LGBT people do not live in a vacuum, but rather approach the world with other identities, including race, gender, and class. To isolate out an LGBT identity from the rest of the person is to make them one-dimensional. Ask questions that can talk about the challenges and privileges that come with various aspects of one’s identity.



Pitfalls to Avoid

Avoid minimizing the advancements of the LGBT community in South Carolina

While South Carolina is not the archetype for LGBT acceptance in the United States, it does not behoove you to ignore the progress and progressive ideas that emerge from the Southern state. Highlighting advancements sends hope to LGBT individuals in the state and elsewhere.

Avoid omitting coverage of South Carolina's laws that negatively impact LGBT people

Coverage of South Carolina and its political progress should make note of the laws in South Carolina that have had a negative impact on the LGBT population whenever possible. Omitting information about this community may give the impression that your news outlet is overlooking the safety of LGBT South Carolinians or condones the state's anti-LGBT laws.

Avoid pitting people of faith against LGBT people

Being a person of faith and an LGBT person are not mutually exclusive. Do not presume or imply people who identify as LGBT are not also people of faith.

Avoid speaking only to anti-LGBT activists about LGBT people

It is hard to hate somebody when you know their story. When the media acts as an unbiased conduit of people's authentic stories, cultural acceptance is accelerated.

Avoid pitting the LGBT community against other marginalized communities

The reality is that LGBT people exist within every community, and LGBT equality does not have to come at the expense of other marginalized group. Do not ask questions that imply that growing LGBT acceptance or legal protection is a step back for another group. If an anti-LGBT activist makes that claim, challenge it.

Avoid the use of outdated or pejorative terminology

See "Terms to Avoid."

Story Ideas



Marriage equality is ahead of employment protections

While South Carolina has achieved marriage equality, there is currently no job protection in place for LGBT individuals. In fact, South Carolina is one of 32 states in the country that lacks explicit state-level workplace protections for all LGBT employees. This makes LGBT people anxious about the consequences of being openly LGBT or perceived as LGBT in the workplace.



Explore the stresses of LGBT individuals who are denied goods and services because of their identity

While legislation has advanced some protections for the LGBT community in South Carolina, changing hearts and minds remains necessary so that full acceptance is achieved. A string of proposed bills have popped up around the country that would allow private businesses to refuse goods and services to LGBT people. Such laws could deny LGBT people vital services like emergency response, medication, transportation, and housing. The repercussions of such laws would have a strong negative impact on South Carolina's LGBT community.



Explore how faith communities and the LGBT community intersect

Though the media occasionally portrays them in opposition, faith communities and the LGBT community often overlap in positive and interesting ways. Speak with LGBT people about their faith journeys, allies of faith about their journeys to LGBT acceptance, and faith leaders who minister to the LGBT community.



Explore the experiences of LGBT individuals living on military bases in South Carolina

Despite the repeal of "Don't Ask Don't Tell," the military remains a difficult place for LGBT people to live their safely and openly. Seek out LGBT military members and ask them about their experiences in South Carolina bases. Weave in stories of patriotism and service to country, with the challenges of serving in the military as an openly LGBT individual.



Examine HIV advocacy in South Carolina, as well as those who are living with the virus

While all STD transmission in SC is illegal, the transmission of HIV/AIDS remains a felony with hefty fines and lengthy minimum sentences. The criminalization of HIV and AIDS complicates the experiences of LGBT people who are living with HIV. Tell their stories in a way that is humanizing and raises awareness about the discrimination, stigmatization, and potential difficulties accessing resources that they face. You can also spotlight the work of HIV and AIDS advocacy organizations in the state who have been serving those who live with HIV, as well as advocating for the broader LGBT community.



Focus on the advocacy of LGBT communities of color in South Carolina

Much of the coverage and storytelling around the LGBT community in South Carolina has centered on the experiences and needs of gay white men, while underreporting the experiences and advocacy of LGBT communities of color, who face intersections of oppression through racism and homophobia. There are vibrant LGBT communities of color in South Carolina, and their experiences and work are integral to coverage about equality and acceptance in the state.



Focus on the activism of the transgender community in South Carolina

The transgender community in the south is prolific in advocacy and it is important to highlight both the accomplishments it's achieved and the struggles it continues to face. Many of the equality groups have increased visibility for the South Carolina transgender population. Transgender individuals have compelling stories of family relationships, public challenges, and hopes for a future within the state. A significant number of transgender people, particularly transgender people of color, also continue to face violence and discrimination on a regular basis.



Spotlight loving LGBT parents and their children

The South has a high number of same-sex couples raising children. Ask LGBT parents about both the joys and challenges of raising children in South Carolina. Ask their children about the joys and challenges of being raised by an LGBT couple. Ask about their hopes and their fears regarding the future of LGBT people in their state.



Upstate Pride, 1997

Organizations

Alliance for Full Acceptance

29 Leinbach Dr
Charleston, SC 29407
(843) 883-0343 (phone)
(843) 723-3859 (fax)
www.affa-sc.org

Charleston Pride

P.O. Box 61558
North Charleston, SC 29419
(843) 410-9924
www.charlestonpride.org
info@charlestonpride.org

Gender Benders

GenderbendersSC@hotmail.com
www.genderbenderssc.org

Harriet Hancock LGBT Center

1108 Woodrow Street
Columbia, SC 29205
(803) 771-7713
info@lgbtcentersc.org
www.lgbtcentersc.org

Palmetto Transgender Association

palm_tg_assoc@yahoo.com
www.palmettotgassociation.org

PFLAG Upstate Greenville

(864) 232-2988
PFLAGGreenville@gmail.com

Spartanburg

210 Henry Place
Spartanburg, SC 29304
(864) 381-8187
PFLAGSpartanburg@gmail.com

South Carolina Equality

P.O. Box 544
Columbia, SC 29202
(803) 256-6500 (phone)
(866) 532-1223 (fax)
www.scequality.org

South Carolina Black Pride

info@southcarolinablackpride.com
www.southcarolinablackpride.com

South Carolina Gay and Lesbian Business Guild

P.O. Box 7913
Columbia, SC 29202-7913
Email: scglbg@aol.com
www.scglbg.org

South Carolina Pride

931-D Senate Street
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 771-7713
info@scpride.org
www.scpride.org

Sean's Last Wish

P.O. Box 5697
Greenville, SC 29606
www.seanslastwish.org

Upstate Pride SC

3740 Boiling Springs Road
Suite #10
Boiling Springs, SC 29316
publicrelations@upstatepridesc.org
www.upstatepridesc.org

We Are Family

P.O. Box 21806
Charleston, SC 29413
(843) 637-9379
info@waf.org
www.waf.org

GLAAD's Assistance

For more information, help, and guidance, please contact GLAAD. We can put you in contact with the organizations and spokespeople, and provide resources, facts, and ideas to tell the stories of LGBT people living in the US South.



Zeke Stokes
Vice President of Programs
646-871-8015
zstokes@glaad.org



Ross Murray
Director of Programs,
Global and US South
646-871-8040
rmurray@glaad.org



Alexandra Bolles
Strategist, Global and US South
646-871-8057
abolles@glaad.org

Acknowledgements



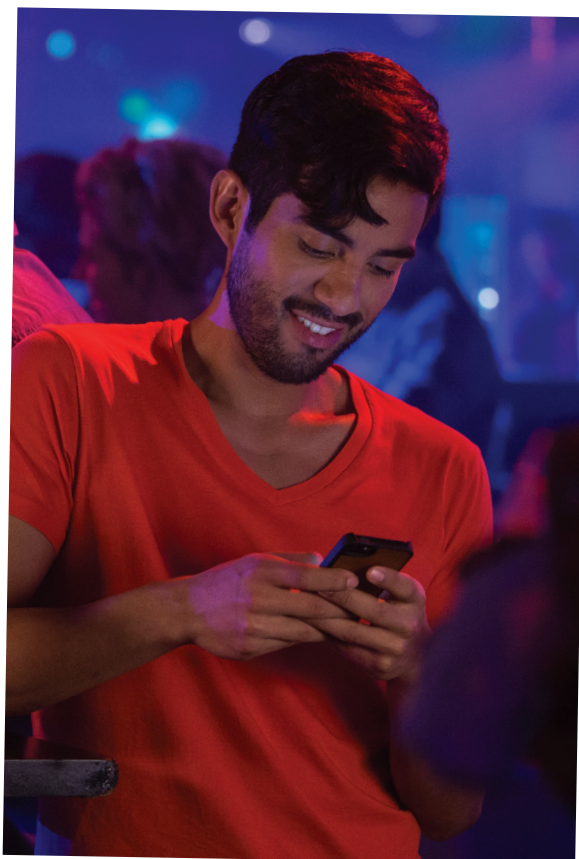
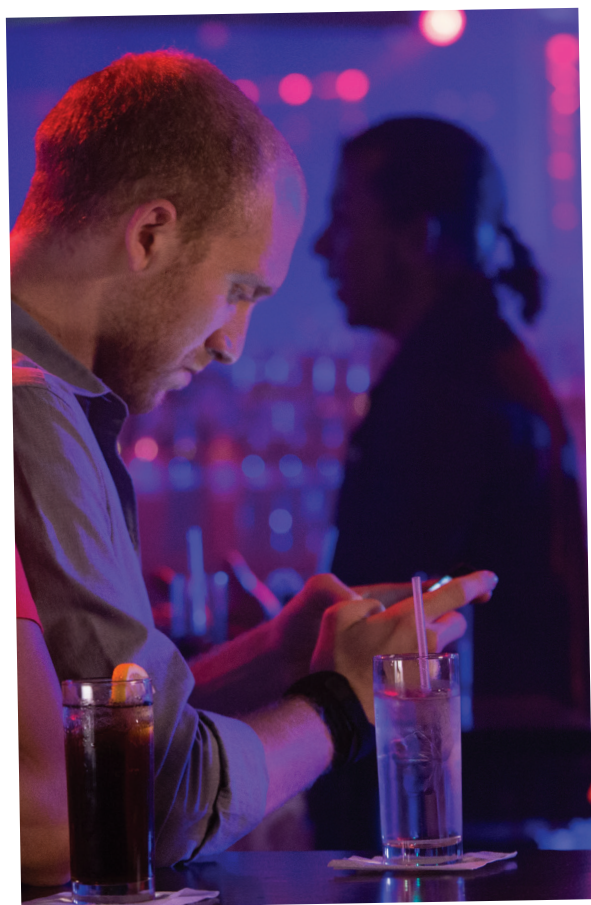
For this resource guide, GLAAD partnered with South Carolina Equality, which provides leadership in working for LGBT-inclusive policy at the local and state level.

Special thanks to GLAAD interns Effy Donovan, Carrie Seigler, Kate Sutton, and Adrianna Redhair for research and writing of this guide.

Additional thanks to Harriett Hancock, Crystal Moore, and Malissa Burnette for providing the photographs and clippings used in this guide.

Talk

can be the perfect foreplay.



Protect yourself and your partner. Talk about **testing**, your **status**, **condoms**, and new options like **medicines** that prevent and treat HIV. Get the facts and tips on how to start the conversation at cdc.gov/ActAgainstAIDS/StartTalking.

Start Talking. Stop HIV.



Follow us online at:  facebook.com/StartTalkingHIV

 [@TalkHIV](https://twitter.com/TalkHIV)



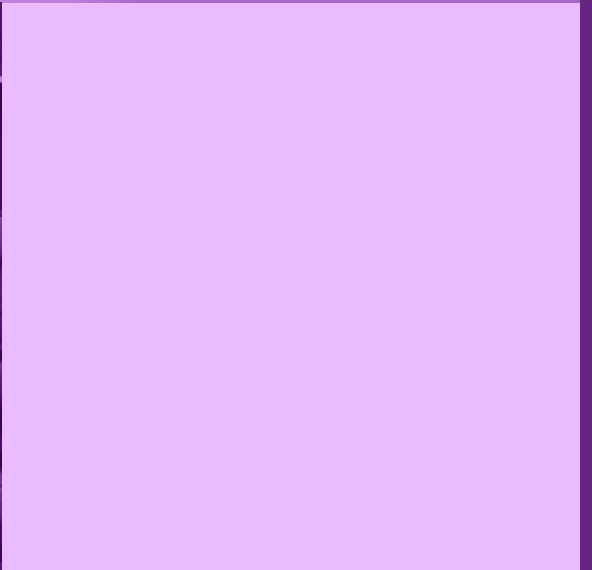
GLAAD rewrites the script for LGBT acceptance. As a dynamic media force, GLAAD tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. GLAAD protects all that has been accomplished and creates a world where everyone can live the life they love.

glaad.org
facebook.com/glaad
[@glaad](https://twitter.com/glaad)



Americans' attitudes and behavior on LGBT equality are not just influenced by what they see and hear, but who they know. GLAAD's Southern Stories initiative tells the stories of LGBT people and their allies in the South to create a cultural shift towards LGBT acceptance and understanding in the region.

glaad.org/southernstories
[#SouthernStories](https://twitter.com/SouthernStories)





glaad 

SOUTHERN STORIES

A Guide for Reporting on LGBT People in South Carolina



glaad 
**SOUTHERN
STORIES**

A Guide for Reporting on LGBT People in South Carolina



GLAAD rewrites the script for LGBT acceptance. As a dynamic media force, GLAAD tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. GLAAD protects all that has been accomplished and creates a world where everyone can live the life they love.

glaad.org
facebook.com/glaad
[@glaad](https://twitter.com/glaad)



Americans' attitudes and behavior on LGBT equality are not just influenced by what they see and hear, but who they know. GLAAD's Southern Stories initiative tells the stories of LGBT people and their allies in the South to create a cultural shift towards LGBT acceptance and understanding in the region.

glaad.org/southernstories
[#SouthernStories](https://twitter.com/SouthernStories)