



# 35 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP & PROGRESS

## FIGHTING FOR LGBTQ EQUALITY

Since her first days in Congress, Speaker Nancy Pelosi has been a leading voice in the fight for the rights and dignities of the LGBTQ community. This longtime, unshakeable commitment can be traced back to her first speech in Congress on June 9, 1987, where she boldly declared that “we must take leadership of course in the crisis of AIDS.”

During her first Speakership, Pelosi spearheaded several monumental laws protecting LGBTQ Americans. She led the historic repeal of the discriminatory “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy – allowing gay and lesbian Americans to openly serve their country. She led the enactment of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, a law advancing justice for the millions of Americans at risk of violence for being who they are. She also secured House passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act – protecting LGBTQ Americans from being fired, denied opportunities or discriminated against because of their identity.

After retaking the Majority in 2018, Speaker Pelosi led House Democrats in twice passing the watershed Equality Act: a step to finally, fully guarantee civil rights protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. This legislation – which was blocked by Republicans in the Senate – would end anti-LGBTQ discrimination in employment, education, housing, credit, jury service and public accommodations. Speaker Pelosi also led the charge to fight back against the Trump Administration’s hateful ban on transgender Servicemembers.

An outspoken advocate for marriage equality for decades, Pelosi was the first national elected leader to call for the inclusion of a marriage equality plank in the 2012 Democratic National Convention platform. As Democratic Leader, Pelosi fought efforts by House Republicans to defend the so-called “Defense of Marriage Act” in federal courts – and forcefully backed President Obama’s decision to halt the federal government’s defense of the DOMA law in the landmark Windsor case. Following the Supreme Court decision striking down *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, Pelosi quickly orchestrated House passage of the Respect for Marriage Act to codify the constitutional right for LGBTQ couples to marry as found in *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

During Pelosi’s first two terms as Speaker, domestic funding for HIV/AIDS increased by over half a billion dollars and America’s contributions to the global fight against AIDS more than doubled. As Democratic Leader, Pelosi supported President Bush’s bilateral PEPFAR (President’s Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief) initiative. Earlier, as a member of the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee, she helped secure major increased investment in domestic HIV prevention, care, treatment and research. More information about Speaker Pelosi’s leadership on HIV/AIDS is [available here](#).