



The Council for
Global Equality

Advancing LGBTQI+ Inclusion in
American Foreign Policy

Global Equality Today – JANUARY 2023

The 118th Congress is off and ... well, “running” is not quite the right verb.

The Council for Global Equality understands — as do our members and partners in the movement for LGBTQI+ human rights — that the 118th Congress is going to be a challenging one, especially given the deals that Speaker McCarthy had to cut within his own party in order to win the gavel and move forward. The far-right renegades in the Republican Party are clearly no friends of the LGBTQI+ community, nor of promoting human rights, civil society, or democracy writ large.

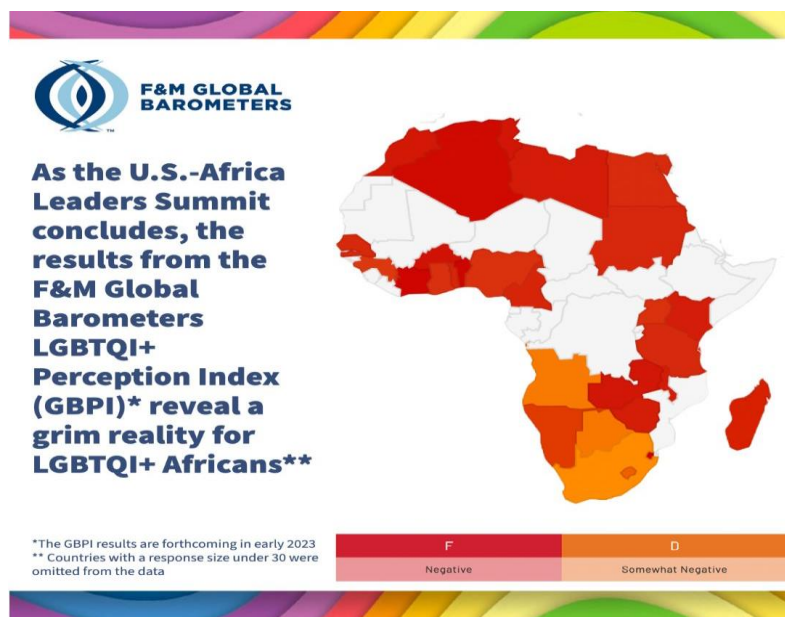
We’re going to hear more from the homophobic, transphobic, and anti-gender voices in the House of Representatives in the 118th. Champions need to be ready for malicious amendments, investigations, and other purported oversight. That said, however, we are most definitely neither going to sit on the sidelines nor operate solely from a defensive posture for the next two years. **So, what can we accomplish and what do we have our eyes on, for better and for worse? [Read about our priorities here.](#)**

CGE’s Recent Work

- With sustained advocacy from our coalition, in partnership with several Congressional champions, global LGBTQI+ assistance from the State Department and USAID has increased significantly in each of the past two appropriations cycles. CGE’s initial target for the Biden Administration was to increase global development funding for LGBTQI+ civil society to a minimum of \$60 million annually. In fiscal year 2021, at the end of the Trump Administration, global LGBTQI+ funding was earmarked at \$16 million. In fiscal year 2022, our advocacy helped increase global LGBTQI+ funding to \$25 million. This year, with our continued coalition advocacy, **fiscal year 2023 spending doubled to \$50 million.** Our goal for fiscal year 2024 is \$70 million — which still only scratches the surface of the demonstrated need in the world.
- In response to President Biden’s [Pride Month Executive Order](#), CGE [developed a roadmap](#) for State, USAID, Treasury, Health & Human Services, and other USG partners to implement the EO’s provisions related to **ending conversion therapy practices around the world.** The State Department (which is coordinating the USG response to the EO) should finalize its plan any day now, and we look forward to hearing the readout from our partners and coordinating with them on planning the road forward.
- Over the past six months, CGE has regularly offered its recommendations to USAID to ensure **comprehensive LGBTQI+ inclusion in the Agency’s work**, including in

regards to [centering LGBTQI+ people and communities in humanitarian response](#), to engaging faith-based partners, and to updating USAID's Gender Policy, LGBT Vision for Action statement, and Global Gender-Based Violence Strategy.

- In 2021, CGE partnered with [F&M Global Barometers](#) to produce [LGBTQI+ Report Cards](#) in advance of the Biden Administration's first [Summit for Democracy](#). Now, in advance of second Summit for Democracy coming up in March, CGE and F&M have collaborated once more on the [Global Barometers LGBTQI+ Perception Index \(GBPI\)](#). The full reports are due to be published before the second Summit, and we are excited to share the results of the more than 170,000 responses from individuals in 204 countries in every corner of the world.
- CGE continues to work with a coalition of U.S., European, and Central Asian partners (including HRC, the Open Society Foundations, and Freedom Now) **lobbying for the decriminalization of homosexuality in Uzbekistan and to hold the government in Tashkent accountable for its appalling human rights violations** against its LGBTQI+ citizens. Such abuses include the use of forced anal exams in prosecuting those accused of violating the law against consensual same-sex relations as well as conversion therapy used on those convicted under that law. In October, we held a **Congressional briefing** on the persecution of LGBTQI+ people in Uzbekistan, in partnership with Freedom Now and the Congressional Equality Caucus. We are also dedicated to shining a spotlight on [those D.C. lobbying firms that are enabling Uzbekistan's reputation laundering campaign](#) on Capitol Hill.
- At last month's **Africa Leaders Summit** in Washington, D.C., Stephen Chukwumah, CGE's Policy Advocate, was one of the advocates promoting LGBTQI+ human rights at this very important multilateral gathering. We were all delighted that morning when Lemogang Kwape, Botswana's Foreign Minister, spoke proudly of his country's decriminalization of same-sex relations. CGE also took the occasion of the Summit to [preview the findings](#) from our partnership with the Franklin & Marshall College Global Barometers and to call **for the full democratic inclusion and security of LGBTQI+ people** in both the United States and in all of Africa's 54 nations.



- Long-time friends of CGE may remember our 2012 resource, [Accessing U.S. Embassies: A Guide for LGBT Human Rights Defenders](#). Well, a lot has happened in the past decade, and we're pleased to give you the heads up that **we will be releasing a thoroughly revised, more extensive version of our embassy guide very shortly.**
- Beirne Roose-Snyder, CGE's Senior Policy Fellow, spoke recently at [OutSummit](#) and on the [Repros Fight Back podcast](#) about the danger the global anti-gender movement poses to LGBTQI+ and reproductive rights in particular and to democracy and open civil society more broadly.
- CGE joined a coalition calling on President Biden, Vice President Harris, and members of Congress to follow the example of former Speaker Pelosi and other Representatives by [ending their involvement with the annual National Prayer Breakfast](#). The coalition of Black, LGBTQI+, and religious leaders and organizations warned that the annual event "has become a nexus for religious extremism ... and organized bigotry (anti-LGBTQ and anti-labor). The National Prayer Breakfast is an active marketplace of Christian nationalism, and it is not the bipartisan event that it purports to be." In an interview, Bishop Tolton called the National Prayer Breakfast "a playground for white Christian nationalists to connect and to further promote their agenda, which makes it such a dangerous event because they lure members of Congress into the event." You can read more from Bishop Tolton and the full story [here](#). And as we go to press, we are learning that in response to growing criticism, the [Prayer Breakfast will no longer be hosted in its current format](#) – *let's call that a partial win.*



Team CGE: Stephen Chukwumah, Julie Dorf, Bishop Joseph Tolton, Ian Lekus, Beirne Roose-Snyder, Mark Bromley, & Jace Ritchey

Progress, Concerns, and Other Topics of Note

- We continue to work with Jessica Stern and the entire staff of the Office of the Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons. We want to particularly note our excitement by the [appointment of Kimberly Zieselman – former Executive Director of CGE member InterACT – as a Senior Advisor to Special Envoy Stern](#) this past October. She will bring important expertise on intersex issues to the Office of the Special Envoy.
- We continue to applaud our diplomatic leaders – including [Secretary of State Anthony Blinken on Transgender Day of Remembrance, Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman meeting with Japanese LGBTQI+ activists,](#) and [Ambassador Virginia Palmer speaking to the Ghanaian media](#) – when they promote LGBTQI+ inclusion and security and when they condemn anti-LGBTQI+ politicians and movements. We also continue to call on Secretary Blinken to offer a comprehensive policy speech on LGBTQI+ rights as human rights.
- We are closely monitoring the regions around the world where LGBTQI+ human rights defenders are in danger, and we are working with USG partners to support those advocates in a timely, politically sensitive manner. This includes in Uganda, where the Museveni regime [must reverse its decision to shut down Sexual Minorities Uganda \(SMUG\)](#), and in Kenya, where authorities must fully investigate [the murder of activist and fashion designer Edwin Chiloba](#).
- We stand with our members and partners in the immigration justice movement and with those members of Congress – [including Senators Menendez, Luján, Padilla, and Booker](#) – who **reject the Biden Administration’s expansion of Title 42 and the new transit ban regulations imposed to block asylum seekers**. These moves represent an inhumane disregard for both U.S. values and U.S. commitments under international law and will do little to address the crisis at the U.S.-Mexico borders. LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers will continue to face especially grave dangers as they seek to reach safety.
- We continue to collaborate with the Treasury Department and various international financial institutions, and we are especially glad to work with the Biden Administration push for the [inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics in the Asian Development Bank’s new Environmental and Social Standards](#).
- As we move into the 118th Congress, we are excited to work with [Rep. Mark Pocan \(D-WI\), the new Chair of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus](#), and we also want to thank Rep. David Cicilline for his leadership of the Equality Caucus during the 117th Congress.
- We congratulate and offer our thanks to our colleagues in the diplomatic corps and hostage affairs who worked so hard to [bring Brittney Griner home](#) from prison in Russia.

- Finally, CGE staff and members were well represented in December at the White House when [President Biden signed the Respect for Marriage Act](#) into law.



Listen to CGE...

- [Beirne Roose-Snyder, “A Deep Dive on the Global Anti-Gender Movement, podcast guest on *Repros Fight Back* \(October 18, 2022\)](#)
- [Julie Dorf, “Lessons from the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement with Activist Julie Dorf,” podcast guest on *Democracy in Color with Steve Phillips* \(July 7, 2022\)](#)
- [Julie Dorf, “Advancing LGBTQI+ Rights with Julie Dorf,” podcast guest with *The President’s Inbox* by the Council on Foreign Relations \(June 28, 2022\)](#)
- [Ian Lekus, “The Global Struggle for LGBTQI+ Human Rights, video guest with The Wilson Center NOW series \(June 22, 2022\)](#)