

The Council for Global Equality



Advancing an American Foreign Policy
Inclusive of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Principles Guiding Our Work

The Council for Global Equality believes that adherence to fair, equal and inclusive policies is central to our country's founding and integrity, and to its international responsibilities. We see such policies as crucial to LGBTI populations at home and abroad. We reject divisive rhetoric and actions, and place our coalition within a broad spectrum of progressive U.S. policy organizations that advocate for a better world. In that advocacy work, whether shared or separate, we affirm the following principles:

1. **United States international engagement and leadership are crucial.** We oppose calls for isolationist policies and call for continued political and financial engagement in multilateral bodies that are charged with seeking a better future for all peoples. These bodies include the United Nations, Organization of American States, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.
2. **Freedoms abroad and freedoms at home are linked.** Our organizations are empowered by strong democratic institutions and practices at home. Ensuring that these institutions remain responsive and accountable is a prerequisite to democratic progress abroad.
3. **Equal treatment is at the heart of human rights.** We reject discrimination in all its forms, including homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. We are committed to standing against these discriminatory societal attitudes wherever they exist, including within elements of the progressive community.
4. **Fundamental freedoms cannot be abridged.** Freedoms of speech, of the media, and of association and assembly are as critical to true democracy at home as they are to democratic progress abroad. Safeguarding these freedoms is a priority for us and must be a bipartisan endeavor.
5. **Civil society demands respect.** A strong and empowered civil society is the best guardian of democracy. Government must respect that role. We commit to its protection and stand against any effort to weaken it, at home and abroad.
6. **Democracy can only be rooted in secular, inclusive values.** Religious belief can neither justify discrimination nor compel democratic exclusion. Any organization that receives government funding to carry out government missions must comply with government non-discrimination policies on employment, service delivery and grants. We oppose exempting any organization, religious or other, from this policy, whether at home or abroad.

7. **One population's rights cannot transcend those of another.** We affirm mutual respect for each component population of the LGBTI community and that the needs of one population will not be prioritized at the expense of another. We further support humanitarian treatment and respect for migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees, in keeping with the universal human right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
8. **Progressive policies are intertwined.** We recognize that issues and attitudes negatively impacting racial justice, religious freedom, reproductive and health rights, class equities, youth opportunity and LGBTI rights are interconnected and indivisible. We express solidarity with communities impacted by these issues and attitudes, and understand that LGBTI people exist and intersect with all of these distinct issues. Where appropriate, we will embrace coalition initiatives in solidarity with them.
9. **Truth cannot be based on untruth.** Our advocacy strategies and policy positions will be rooted in facts, evidence and principle. We reject acceptance of "fake news" in the guise of freedom of speech and call for isolation and opposition to organizations and individuals that promote "fake news."
10. **Window-dressing is no substitute for genuine progress.** Neither our commitment to ensuring respect and equality for LGBTI populations at home and abroad, nor our solidarity with other groups that demand principled action, can be bought through random Administration appointments or stand-alone, singularly insufficient action. We reject any such attempt to paint a more positive picture than warranted of LGBTI-affirmative actions (aka "pink-washing" or "the gays are alright") and urge other progressive communities to do the same.

We are committed to protecting the hard-fought gains that have been achieved for LGBT and intersex equality over the past decade. We look forward to achieving even greater gains in solidarity with one another. We actively and imaginatively will use our communications and advocacy capabilities to these ends.