

# eQualityGiving - States of Equality Scorecard

Are you a second class citizen in your own state? Review state by state comparisons of the score on equality and gay rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Americans.

The score indicates the number of [Equality Goals](#) that have been reached in that state. Each "YES" gives 1 point. Half a point is given for partial achievement of an Equality Goal. One of the seven Equality Goals (repealing "Don't Ask Don't Tell") is mostly a federal level goal. Therefore, at the state level, the maximum score is 6.

Click on any heading to sort table. Highest possible score is 6.0.

STATE	SCORE	HATE CRIMES	NON DISCRIMINATION	MARRIAGE	GENDER	YOUTH	PARENTING
ALABAMA	2.0				Amended certificate		Some Jurisdictions
ALASKA	2.0				Amended certificate		Some Jurisdictions
ARIZONA	2.0				Amended certificate		Not tested
ARKANSAS	1.5				Amended certificate		
CALIFORNIA	5.5			Domestic Partnerships			
COLORADO	3.5			Domestic Reciprocal Beneficiaries	Amended certificate		Second Paren Adoption
CONNECTICUT	5.0		Only sexual orientation			Only sexual orientation	
DELAWARE	3.0		Only sexual orientation				Second Paren Adoption
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	5.0				Amended certificate	Only sexual orientation	
FLORIDA	1.5				Amended certificate		
GEORGIA	2.5						Not tested
HAWAII	3.5		Only sexual orientation	Domestic Reciprocal Beneficiaries			Some Jurisdictions
IDAHO	1.5						Not tested
ILLINOIS	4.0						

<b>INDIANA</b>	<b>2.5</b>						Partial
<b>IOWA</b>	<b>5.5</b>						Some Jurisdictions
<b>KANSAS</b>	<b>2.0</b>					Amended certificate	Not tested
<b>KENTUCKY</b>	<b>2.0</b>					Amended certificate	Not tested
<b>LOUISIANA</b>	<b>2.5</b>						Some Jurisdictions
<b>MAINE</b>	<b>4.0</b>					Amended certificate	Only Joint adoption
<b>MARYLAND</b>	<b>4.0</b>		Only sexual orientation	Recognizes marriages		Amended certificate	Some Jurisdictions
<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>	<b>4.5</b>		Only sexual orientation			Amended certificate	Only sexual orientation
<b>MICHIGAN</b>	<b>2.5</b>						Second Paren Adoption
<b>MINNESOTA</b>	<b>4.0</b>					Decided by Court order	Some Jurisdictions
<b>MISSISSIPPI</b>	<b>1.5</b>					Amended certificate	
<b>MISSOURI</b>	<b>2.0</b>					Amended certificate	Not tested
<b>MONTANA</b>	<b>2.0</b>					Decided by Court order	Not tested
<b>NEBRASKA</b>	<b>2.0</b>						
<b>NEVADA</b>	<b>3.5</b>		Only sexual orientation	Domestic Partnerships			Some Jurisdictions
<b>NEW HAMPSHIRE</b>	<b>3.5</b>		Only sexual orientation			Amended certificate	Some Jurisdictions

<b>NEW JERSEY</b>	<b>5.5</b>			Civil Unions			
<b>NEW MEXICO</b>	<b>3.0</b>				Amended certificate		Some Jurisdictions
<b>NEW YORK</b>	<b>4.0</b>		Only sexual orientation	Recognizes marriages			
<b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>	<b>2.5</b>						Not tested
<b>NORTH DAKOTA</b>	<b>2.0</b>				Amended certificate		Not tested
<b>OHIO</b>	<b>1.5</b>						Not tested Joint Adoptior
<b>OKLAHOMA</b>	<b>2.5</b>						Not tested
<b>OREGON</b>	<b>4.0</b>			Domestic Partnerships	Amended certificate		
<b>PENNSYLVANIA</b>	<b>2.0</b>				Amended certificate		Second Parent Adoption
<b>RHODE ISLAND</b>	<b>3.0</b>				Amended certificate		Some Jurisdictions
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b>	<b>2.0</b>				Amended certificate		Not tested
<b>SOUTH DAKOTA</b>	<b>2.5</b>						Not tested
<b>TENNESSEE</b>	<b>1.5</b>						Not tested
<b>TEXAS</b>	<b>2.5</b>				Depends on Clerk		Some Jurisdictions
<b>UTAH</b>	<b>2.0</b>						
<b>VERMONT</b>	<b>5.5</b>				Amended certificate		
<b>VIRGINIA</b>	<b>2.5</b>						Not tested
<b>WASHINGTON</b>	<b>4.0</b>			Domestic Partnerships	Amended certificate	Only sexual orientation	Some Jurisdictions
<b>WEST VIRGINIA</b>	<b>2.0</b>				Amended certificate		Not tested
<b>WISCONSIN</b>	<b>3.0</b>		Only sexual orientation		Decided by Court order	Only sexual orientation	Not fully tested
<b>WYOMING</b>	<b>2.0</b>				Amended certificate		Not tested

## NOTES

- Each column refers to an Equality Goal. [Check here for more information on them.](#)
- The Gender column refers specifically to the freedom of choosing your own gender. As such it focuses of the laws of different states regarding birth certificates. Other gender identity issues are addressed in the proper column. For instance, in Hate Crimes and Employment a state can only get a full score if they include gender identity.
- The Youth column focuses on whether the state has non-bullying statues that specifically enumerate sexual orientation and gender identity. If a state has non-bullying statues that do not enumerate sexual orientation and/or gender identity, we do not give any credit, because according to GLSEN's research, "these statues provide no more benefit to LGBT students than not having any law at all." There 27 such states without enumeration: Alabama (which uses the term harassment instead of bullying), Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming. Furthermore, some states provide policies through the Department of Education; GLSEN is investigating the effectiveness of these policies vs. state statues; after the results of this research are known, we will give credit to a state as appropriate.

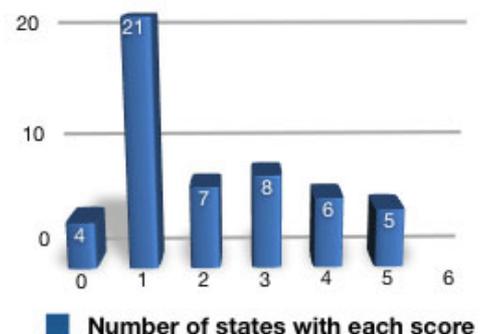
#### ANALYSIS (50 states + District of Columbia):

- No state provides full equality to the LGBTQ population (i.e., a score of 6).
- Four states: California, Iowa, New Jersey, and Vermont, achieve a rating of 5.5 out of 6. California and New Jersey can achieve the perfect score of 6 by converting civil unions (New Jersey) or domestic partnerships (California) to civil marriage. Iowa can reach a score of 6 by ensuring full parenting rights in all cases. Vermont can achieve a score of 6 by protecting the transgender population more (in particular: do not show "amended" birth certificates when changing gender).
- One other state (Connecticut) and the District of Columbia scores 5 out of 6.
- Massachusetts scores only 4.5 despite that it offers marriage equality. This is because it falls short in transgender protections in hate crimes, non discrimination, anti-bullying, and providing new birth certificates. (With the enactment of the Federal Hate Crimes Act, Massachusetts rating increased from 4.0 to 4.5 as the state legislation only offered hate crimes protections based on sexual orientation only.)
- Passing federal legislation on an Equality Goal would increase every state score by 1.

#### THE IMPACT OF FEDERAL HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION

The signing of the federal Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act by President Obama on October 28, 2009 marked the achievement of our first [Equality Goal](#).

The chart to the right shows the rating of states from zero to the maximum of 6 **before the enactment** of the federal Hate Crimes Prevention Act.



**Fifty percent of the states satisfied none or just one of the 6 Equality Goals** that are required to ensure that LGBTQ people have the same legal protections as everyone else.

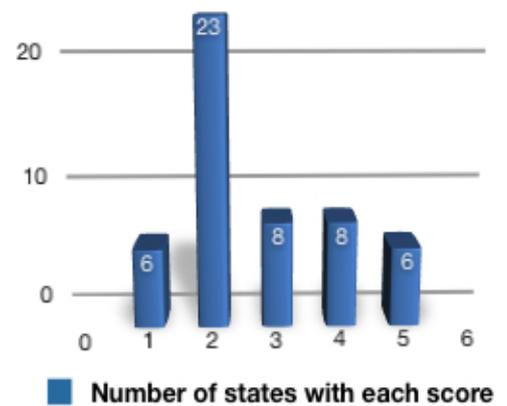
Prior to this federal legislation out of 50 states plus the District of Columbia:

- 19 states did not have legislation protecting against hate crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity/expression

- 17 states had only hate crimes protections based on sexual orientation
- 14 states and the District of Columbia had had hate crimes protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression

After the enactment of this federal legislation all states and the District of Columbia are covered by the Hate Prevention Act based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Note that the number of states with a score of 5 has not changed (there are only five such states: California, Iowa, New Jersey and Vermont with a score of 5.5 and Connecticut with 5.0). All of these states already offered already hate crimes protection for sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

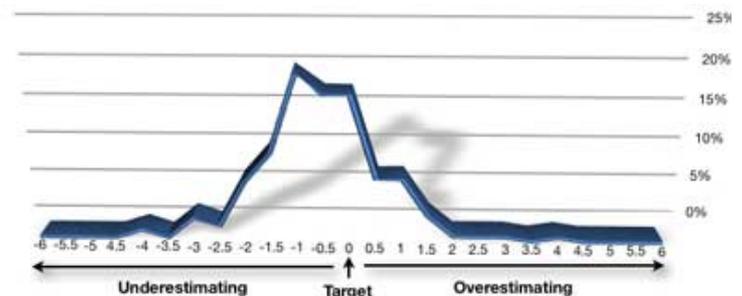


Because of passing the federal Hate Crimes Prevention Act, the number of states with very few protections for LGBT people has improved. Before the Act, fifty percent of the states satisfied none or only one of the Equality Goals; now all states satisfy at least one goal, but ten percent of the states provided little more (they are: Arkansas, Idaho, Mississippi, Ohio, and Tennessee).

[Check our LGBT directory of organizations working to achieve equality.](#) Each organization is represented by a major donor explaining why he or she is so committed to the organization.

## RESULTS FROM THE QUIZ

The people who took the [Equal and Gay Quiz](#), as a group had a tendency to underestimate the actual score in their state by about 1 point out of 6 as the chart indicates.



So, the good news is that most states offer slightly more equality than the average person who took the test estimated. The bad news is that the state of equality in the United States is unacceptable with half of the states offering none or 1 of the six equal protections that all other citizens enjoy.

## RECENT HISTORY

- On October 28, 2009 President Obama signed into law the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.
- On November 4, 2008 voters placed a constitutional ban on marriages in Arizona, California, and Florida. Arizona and Florida already had laws prohibiting same-sex marriages. But, in California same-sex couples had a constitutional right to marry; this right was taken away by voters.
- On October 10, 2008 the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that the civil unions that the legislature approved for the state violated the Connecticut constitution and the state had to provide marriage to same-sex couples. But the federal government still does not recognize those marriages and does not allow to serve openly in the military. On November 4, 2008 voters rejected a call to have a Constitutional Convention in Connecticut. Therefore, the right to marry is secure in Connecticut (like in Massachusetts).
- On May 15, 2008 the California Supreme Court approved marriage equality for same sex couples. California became the first state to offer full equality to the LGBTQ population. There is a ballot initiative on November 2008 to try to overturn this ruling. **Everybody's support is critical.**

- In May 2008, the Florida legislature passed anti-bullying legislation (but it does not enumerate protected classes)
- In May 2008, Maryland became the 7th state with anti-bullying legislation that specifically protects youth because of their sexual orientation and gender identity/expression