

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

I often think about how members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community were denied security clearances until the 1980s—and subjected to discrimination and intrusive questioning about their sexual orientation throughout the 1990s. While this may seem like a history lesson to some, for many of us across the Intelligence Community (IC), this was a very real and personal threat to our careers and ambitions to help keep Americans safe.

The ability to lead the ODNI on an acting basis without fear of reprisal is a testament to how far we have come as a nation, a government, and a community. Yet, we can still do more.

Every member of the Intelligence Community's workforce deserves to feel safe living authentically, with the knowledge that outstanding work is the most important determinant of career trajectory.

While I will likely not be in this role for long, I plan to use this opportunity to drive lasting impact for the IC Pride community. And I am asking every member of the IC's leadership team to join me. I am committed to doing more to detect and respond to all discrimination and harassment within the workforce. I expect every IC agency to ensure policies are specific and deliberate in protecting the LGBT workforce. To drive the right changes, I am directing human resource officers to improve our voluntary collection of sexual orientation and gender identity data so we can better understand the LGBT experience across all stages of recruitment and hiring—as well as career advancement.

Last year, the President charged me with leading the U.S. government's efforts to help decriminalize homosexuality in the 69 countries that currently make being gay a crime. In line with this, I have directed our team to establish an interagency working group to fully leverage the expertise of the IC and will further advance these efforts through membership on the National Security Council.

Finally, I ask you to remember that June is Pride Month. Although this year's IC Pride Summit has been postponed, I look forward to hosting members, allies, and friends of the IC's LGBT community in-person when we return to the new normal after COVID-19.

Sincerely,

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Acting Director of National Intelligence