

RELEASE IN PART
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From: H <hrod17@clintonemail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 7, 2010 5:28 AM
To: 'JilotyLC@state.gov'
Subject: Fw: This is a pretty great review

Pls print.

----- Original Message -----

From: Cheryl Mills [redacted]
To: H
Sent: Thu Jun 24 22:15:07 2010
Subject: FW: This is a pretty great review

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fyi

From: Richard Socarides [mailto:[redacted]]
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2010 6:10 AM
To: Cheryl Mills
Subject: This is a pretty great review

An LGBT perspective on the Pride event at Foggy Bottom
<<http://feedproxy.google.com/~r/AMERICAblogGay/~3/NNWtNEY2f4o/lgbt-perspective-on-pride-event-at.html>>

One of our readers, who serves as a State Department Foreign Service Officer, provided a first-hand account of today's State Department Pride event. I have to hand it to Secretary Clinton. She's been the most forceful -- and unapologetic -- member of the Obama administration official when it comes to LGBT equality. And, that leadership has been well received by her Department:

For a gay State Department Foreign Service Officer such as myself, Secretary Clinton's appearance and seemingly heartfelt remarks <<http://www.state.gov/video/?videoid=97867356001>> at the State Department's LGBT Pride Month event were no less than remarkable. Not too long ago, we had an Administration that actually opposed acknowledging LGBT human rights as an issue to be considered by the international community. Today we had a Secretary of State stating clearly that not only should LGBT human rights be included in U.S. foreign policy, but that U.S. Ambassadors and diplomats should proactively support the efforts of non-governmental groups and individuals working to this end around the world. While she didn't say it, I know the Secretary's or State Department's interpretation of LGBT human rights wouldn't mean support for same-sex marriage (though I and practically everyone I know would argue that should be included), but rather the basic freedom of assembly and expression, and the freedom from fear that many LGBT people do not enjoy around the world. Not the full Monte, but still an important step forward.

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<<http://www.feedblitz.com/adfaq.asp>>

Secretary Clinton similarly went further in bringing transgender issues to the forefront. She noted the State Department's recent decision to revise passport regulations to allow transgender Americans to change their gender more easily on their passports. She also announced that the State Department would change its own non-discrimination policy to explicitly include gender identity as a protected category. Her announcement drew applause. The challenge will now be to implement this new inclusive policy in State Department that has never had a visible transgender diplomat.

Something else apparent in the auditorium today was how much the situation for LGBT diplomats has changed with time. Twenty years ago a Foreign Service Officer could lose his or her job for being gay, and there were active investigations against a number of employees on this count. Ten years ago, the situation was better, though few personnel were clearly out; during Gay Pride month it was edgy just to have the DC Gay and Lesbian Chorus sing in the State Department cafeteria (and most of our straight colleagues stood safely away, lest they be confused with the gay folks). Today, there were hundreds of people applauding at a standing room only event where the Secretary of State, with gay Foreign Service Officers at her side, loudly proclaimed that "gay rights are human rights" and should be firmly embedded in U.S. foreign policy.

Secretary Clinton also proudly noted her record of improving the situation for LGBT personnel in her agency. On that count she is definitely right. The State Department -- and by extension USAID -- has been ahead of all the federal agencies in expanding benefits for same-sex partners of personnel. Much of the package announced by President Obama in June 2009 was actually developed at the State Department. While many LGBT Americans at that time were disappointed with the the President's announcement, State Department and USAID LGBT personnel were jubilant as it gave diplomatic passports to partners, compensated for travel costs to transport our families overseas, and allowed for partners to work in embassies overseas and receive training at the Foreign Service Institute. At the core, it was Hillary's leadership that made this happen.

I'd also like to give props to the State Department and USAID LGBT employee group - Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies (GLIFAA). U.S. diplomats come and go from Washington, and hence the leadership of this group has changed often, in many ways keeping it dynamic. And indeed diplomats are hired and promoted for their ability to influence governments, perhaps adding to the group's effectiveness. While a number of federal agencies struggled to resuscitate LGBT employee organizations after eight difficult years when many died out, GLIFAA remained strong and independent and was ready to come forward with proposals when the Administration changed. Within days of her arrival on the job in 2009, GLIFAA delivered Clinton a letter signed by 2200 personnel requesting same-sex partner benefits, after having already delivered its specific proposals to the Obama transition team. Some six months later, the State Department was the first federal agency to begin providing these benefits. Not a bad situation to be in at all.

<<https://blogger.googleusercontent.com/tracker/281630668487321358-1793801954447243718?l=gay.americablog.com>>

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