

The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) is a civil rights organization dedicated to empowering Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. NBJC's mission is to eradicate racism and homophobia. As America's leading national Black LGBT civil rights organization focused on federal public policy, the National Black Justice Coalition has accepted the charge to lead Black families in strengthening the bonds and bridging the gaps between straight and LGBT people and communities.

Since 2003, NBJC has provided leadership at the intersection of mainstream civil rights groups and mainstream LGBT organizations, advocating for the unique challenges and needs of the African American LGBT community that are often relegated to the sidelines. NBJC envisions a world where all people are fully-empowered to participate safely, openly and honestly in family, faith and community, regardless of race, gender identity or sexual orientation.

The need for NBJC is stronger than ever. Without authentic, meaningful representation and active participation from the African American LGBT community, LGBT equality cannot be positioned effectively within the broader civil rights context that it deserves. This requires much more than episodic collaborations; it entails building and sustaining relationships, and, in the process, addressing the challenges between African American communities and LGBT advocates that have previously created barriers in developing full partnerships. Within the African American community itself, the need to eradicate homophobia is critical to fostering acceptance and respect for our own brothers and sisters--our own families.

Homophobia and the anti-gay oppression it engenders has severely limited the extent to which African American LGBT people live open, authentic lives. To counter this, NBJC is deepening its focus on the African American family, putting a face on the Black LGBT community, and fostering a collective effort to accord dignity and respect to all African American families as an important step in individual and community empowerment. "Building Stronger Black Families" is the theme guiding NBJC's planning and program development as we focus on removing the inequalities of policy-based initiatives that weaken families, communities, and ultimately, the country.

Polls have repeatedly shown that respondents who know an LGBT person within their family, workplace, house of worship, and/or social networks have increased support for policies that foster equal rights. Progress on LGBT social, employment, and marriage equality issues grows as LGBT people feel empowered to be out and open in their families and communities. Increasing acceptance and respect for Black LGBT people within their families, churches and communities is essential to increasing that openness within the African American community and gaining support for LGBT equality.

## NBJC's ISSUE PRIORITIES & KEY INITIATIVES

- **EMPLOYMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT (ENDA)**

- ✓ *Racism, homophobia and transphobia create disproportionate job bias against LGBT people of color. Everyone should be able to work without being concerned that they will be fired for personal qualities and characteristics that they have little to no control over.*

- **MARRIAGE EQUALITY**

- ✓ *Develop a welcoming and affirming African American support network. Gay and lesbian couples should have access to the same rights and legal protections as other married couples.*

### **BULLYING IN SCHOOLS**

- ✓ *Victims of anti-gay bullying are often targeted due to their presumed gender identity and sexual orientation. Everyone should be able to attend school and gain a quality education free of any fear that they will be harassed or bullied.*

- **"DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL"**

- ✓ *DADT has represented overt discrimination. No other law has mandated firing someone because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual. As the repeal of DADT is implemented, we must remain vigilant as the military community adapts.*

- **HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (HBCUs)**

- ✓ *Encourage the leadership of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to create a safe, responsible and inclusive environment for LGBT students.*

- **HIV/AIDS**

- ✓ *Increase education on HIV/AIDS in the African American community, especially amongst young people.*