



Mitt Romney Doesn't Support Gay and Transgender Equality

Candidate Opposes Progress for These Americans





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Mitt Romney's positions on many gay and transgender issues have wavered over the past two decades.¹ But based on his most recent statements from the campaign trail, the Mitt Romney of today certainly does not support the vast majority of laws and policies that make the United States a more fair and equitable country for gay and transgender people as well as their children.

The chart below compares his positions to President Barack Obama's.

Mitt Romney: Wrong for Gay and Transgender Equality

	Obama	Romney	
Marriage equality and relationship recognition			Gov. Romney does not support marriage equality for same-sex couples. He does not even support civil unions, and instead supports a federal constitutional amendment that would ban marriage equality. As president, Gov. Romney would also defend the so-called Defense of Marriage Act, which denies same-sex couples and their children basic rights and access to social safety net programs that all other families have.
Employment nondiscrimination			While Gov. Romney has stated that he is against workplace discrimination, he has also stated that he does not support federal laws like the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.
Antibullying legislation			Gov. Romney has remained silent on pending legislation that would combat bullying against gay and transgender youth. This includes laws such as the Safe Schools Improvement Act and the Student Non-Discrimination Act. As governor, he took steps to curtail funding for programs helping gay and transgender youth victims of violence. If these actions are any indication of his policy position on the matter, it is likely he would not support either the Safe Schools Improvement Act or the Student Non-Discrimination Act.
Adoption rights			Gov. Romney walked back previous support for gay adoption rights to say that he simply "acknowledges" that it is legal in some states. He has not indicated what kind of position he would take on any federal law or policy that would affirm same-sex couples' right to adopt or foster parent children.
Domestic partner benefits			Gov. Romney supports equal benefits for worker's same-sex partners, but he does so only in theory. He has yet to state what kind of laws and policies—if any—he would support if president that would extend domestic partner benefits to gay federal employees and encourage companies in the private sector to offer those benefits.

Gov. Romney thinks inequality is A-OK

Mitt Romney thinks it's OK to fire a worker under federal law because they are gay

It is currently legal in a majority of states to fire someone because they are gay or transgender. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in all 50 states. Mitt Romney opposes this bill, even though 42 percent of gay workers and 90 percent of transgender workers have experienced discrimination on the job.²

Mitt Romney thinks it's OK that older same-sex couples receive less Social Security income than different-sex couples

After decades of paying equally into the Social Security fund, older same-sex couples receive on average \$3,000 (male same-sex couples) and \$5,000 (female same-sex couples) less in Social Security benefits than different-sex couples. As president, Mitt Romney would support and defend laws like the Defense of Marriage Act, which contribute to same-sex couples' financial insecurity during their golden years.³

Mitt Romney thinks it's OK that families headed by same-sex parents face a higher tax liability than different-sex parents

Children with same-sex parents live in families who often face a higher tax liability compared to children in families headed by different-sex parents. One estimate finds that families headed by same-sex families can pay \$2,200 more in taxes than families headed by different-sex couples. Mitt Romney does not support the kinds of laws that would treat all families the same regardless of sexual orientation.⁴

Mitt Romney thinks it's OK to strip funding from antibullying initiatives that combat violence against gay and transgender youth

As governor, Mitt Romney used a line-item veto to strip \$158,000 from a counseling program to help combat violence against gay and transgender youth. Gov. Romney also prevented the publication of a 120-page antibullying guide by the state of Massachusetts that included two pages on combating bullying of gay and transgender people. If these are any indication of how Mitt Romney would tackle bullying as president, our youth will not receive the support they need to protect them from violence based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.⁵

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Endnotes

- 1 In this charticle, we use the term “gay” as an umbrella term to refer to people that are gay, lesbian, or bisexual.
- 2 Christy Mallory and Brad Sears, “Documented Evidence of Employment Discrimination & Its Effects on LGBT People” (Los Angeles: Williams Institute, 2011), available at <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Sears-Mallory-Discrimination-July-2011.pdf>; Jaime M. Grant and others, “Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey” (Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011), available at http://transequality.org/PDFs/NTDS_Exec_Summary.pdf.
- 3 Movement Advancement Project, Services & Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders, and Center for American Progress, “LGBT Older Adults and Social Security” (2010), available at http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/09/pdf/lgbt_socialsecurity.pdf.
- 4 Jennifer Chrisler, Laura Deaton, and Jeff Krehely, “The Changing Reality of the American Family” (Denver: Movement Advancement Project, Family Equality Council, and Center for American Progress, 2012), available at http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/01/changing_reality_american_family.html.
- 5 Christopher Rowland, “Mass. stalled antibullying guide under Romney,” *The Boston Globe*, June 12, 2012, available at http://articles.boston.com/2012-06-12/nation/32176443_1_public-health-kerry-healey-transgender.