



*Human Relations Commission 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Courtney Morgan-Greene addressed the board during its regular meeting on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, to acknowledge LGBTQ+ Pride Month. Below is a shortened version of her remarks.*

My name is Courtney Morgan-Greene. I am a Human Relations Commissioner and a proud member of the LGBTQ community.

Each year, June is set aside as Pride month to celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of the LGBTQ community.

It is a time, not only for internal community celebration, but it is also a time for LGBTQ allies, the larger society, municipal, state and national governments to say to the LGBTQ community that the fabric of our society is made stronger by the many beautiful rainbow threads that run through it. We no longer want you to hide - you are part of us. We see you, we need you, we want you and we celebrate you.

As I drive through the City, my young children, who are learning their colors, point out the celebratory rainbows on the metro busses and trains and I think how lucky I am to live in this time and in this place - to have seen the demise of Don't ask Don't Tell and DOMA.

But that doesn't mean there isn't still more work to be done. The Supreme Court now recognizes that the right to marry is protected by the Constitution of the United States of America, but it is not yet clear that we have the right to walk into any bakery and order a cake for the wedding that will mark the start of that marriage. Basic equal protection is still not established under the law. Our families are still not recognized or safe in certain states. In many places, we can be fired for being gay – not to mention international atrocities. And so after that major marriage accomplishment, we cannot let the wind escape our sails.

We must continue to work to end discrimination against the LGBTQ community. We know what happens when people are excluded and discriminated against: people go to great lengths to hide, endanger themselves, endanger people they love, self-medicate, hurt or kill themselves and are sometimes beaten or killed by others. We all suffer. We must stay vigilant because we all know what happens when you're not.

As Martin Luther King, Jr. said: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice" - but it only bends because our weight is on it, ensuring that it bends that way. We must stay vigilant and keep pushing for Justice. To do nothing is to be part of the problem.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s right hand man, Bayard Rustin, the architect of the March on Washington, even then an out, gay, black man, once said, "we need... in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers." I believe that to still be true, today.

So I want to thank Mr. Rustin and all the advocates for social justice who came before us: those who died for it, those who died without seeing the promise of it fulfilled and those who are still working toward it.

I would like to thank my parents and all of the interracial couples whose fight paved a long stretch of the road that allowed me AND the entire LGBTQ community the right to marry. They didn't realize it at the time, but they were fighting for us, too. A fight for justice is a fight for justice and has unknown benefits for generations to come.

I'd like to thank the City of Los Angeles, the City Council and Mayor Garcetti for being at the forefront of this fight. I'd like to specifically thank Council President Wesson and Councilman Marquise Harris-Dawson for pioneering a pride event in South LA for two years running. It is one of those rare public occasions when I feel safe and protected both as a member of the black community and as a member of the LGBTQ community.

I'd particularly like to state what an honor it is to sit on this Commission. The Human Relations Commission has, for many years - long before it was popular - been a champion for justice for the LGBTQ community. The HRC worked tirelessly with the LAPD to establish internal training with respect to the LGBTQ community and the HRC launched the Transgender Advisory Council, which is thriving, and we are so proud of the work it does - among countless other HRC projects to promote LGBTQ inclusion.

I call upon all advocates for social justice, including the City of Los Angeles and The Human Relations Commission to stay vigilant and to continue to be champions for justice for the LGBTQ community.