# The Significance of Allyship in Supporting the LGBTQ+ Community



### The Importance of Allyship During Pride Month and Beyond

As Pride Month unfolds, the importance of steadfast allyship and sustained support for the LGBTQ+ community cannot be overstated. The celebrations that feature rallies, parties, and concerts serve as poignant reminders of the history and ongoing struggles faced by the LGBTQ+ community. It all traces back to the Stonewall Riots of 1969, a pivotal moment that spurred the first Pride March in 1970. Recognising this significance, former President Bill Clinton officially declared June as "Gay and Lesbian Pride Month" in 1999, a scope later expanded to encompass the entire LGBTQ+ spectrum by President Barack Obama in 2009.

### The Role of Allies in Pride Events

Sandra Perez, executive director of NYC Pride, underscores the indispensable role of volunteers in orchestrating these monumental events. It’s a sentiment echoed by Ashley Smith, president of the Capital Pride Alliance Board in Washington, D.C., who highlights that participation from allies not only ensures the events’ success but also fosters a deeper understanding of queer experiences among non-LGBTQ+ individuals.

### Going Beyond Attendance

However, supporting the LGBTQ+ community requires more than just turning up for Pride events. Perez and Smith both strongly advocate for ongoing education as a pillar of genuine allyship. With over 516 anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced in the United States alone, it’s evident that awareness and knowledge are crucial tools. Allies must take active steps to educate themselves on the issues facing the LGBTQ+ community, thereby equipping themselves to stand against various forms of discrimination.

### The Power of Education

Understanding the history and current challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community can empower allies to take meaningful actions. This includes calling out discriminatory behaviour and policies whenever and wherever they occur. Both Perez and Smith emphasize that this kind of continuous engagement is vital. It’s not just about showing up for Pride events but advocating for LGBTQ+ rights all year round.

### Continuous Support and Activism

Continuous support involves understanding and addressing the systemic issues that the community faces. From oppressive legislation to everyday instances of discrimination, the stakes are high. Allies can play a crucial role by leveraging their voices to effect change. This kind of activism isn’t limited to grand gestures; it can be as simple as intervening when misconceptions and prejudices rear their heads in social and professional settings.

### Conclusion

Pride Month offers a unique opportunity to celebrate the strides made in LGBTQ+ rights and to acknowledge the work that still lies ahead. Leaders like Sandra Perez and Ashley Smith provide invaluable insights into how allyship can extend beyond the festivities. By committing to on-going education and active support, allies can help build a more inclusive and equitable society for everyone. This continuous journey of understanding, education, and activism is the bedrock of true allyship.