

# **U.S. Attorney's Report to the District**

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## Diverse Communities United

The month of June this year marked the annual LGBT Pride Month. At the Department of Justice's observance program, which we replayed by video in my office for our employees, Attorney General Loretta Lynch noted the progress made in recent years on issues of importance to the LGBT community and to our nation as a whole: adoption of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in the military, signing of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act with its new protections for LGBT survivors of domestic violence, and the Supreme Court's marriage equality decision. Also in June, our country added its first National Park Service site highlighting the history of the LGBT community when the President designated the Stonewall Inn and surrounding land in New York City's Greenwich Village as a new national monument. In June 1969, opposition to police raids on a bar there led to protests and helped spark the national movement for LGBT rights.

June also marked the beginning of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, which Muslims around the world observe as a time of fasting and religious reflection. During the month, many Muslims fast every day, then break the fast with a meal after sundown. Members of my office and I were honored to attend several Iftar celebration dinners during the month to break the fast with Muslim congregations in our district. The congregations I joined were uniformly welcoming, the mood was festive, and the food was excellent. What was truly remarkable, though, was the interfaith nature of the dinners—not only were law enforcement officials like myself, local political leaders, and community leaders invited, but the events were also attended by religious leaders from other faiths. Congregations opened their doors to outsiders to help them celebrate one of the most important annual events in the Islamic religion.

Tragically, the month of June also saw the devastating and unconscionable terrorist attack in Orlando, Florida, when a single gunman targeted members of the LGBT community at that city's Pulse nightclub. News that the perpetrator made a statement in support of an extremist foreign terrorist organization horrified the Muslim American community. The day after the attack, LGBT community leaders and Muslim community leaders in Sacramento joined together with other members of the community at large to denounce the senseless act of violence and to show support for one another. At Iftar dinners I later attended, speakers—both Muslim and non-Muslim—decried the hatred that the attack represented and asked for peace, respect, and understanding. I had the privilege of addressing a vigil at the Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Sacramento where members of

the LGBT community, the Muslim American community, and concerned citizens of various faiths and backgrounds joined together to call for unity of all Americans against hate and violence.

In this country, and in the Eastern District of California in particular, we live in an incredibly diverse population of people from a variety of backgrounds, faiths, and ethnicities. In the face of acts of hate by those who seek to divide us, we must remain united, respecting each other and even celebrating our differences. As a law enforcement official, it is my duty and that of the people with whom I work to help protect our larger community to ensure that everyone can enjoy the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, the guarantee of which is enshrined in our nation's founding document. As a citizen of this country and as a member of the community in which I live, it is my intention to do what I can to make our nation and my community stronger and more resilient so that the next generation and the one after that can enjoy the promise of liberty and justice that America holds dear.

If you would like to communicate with our office, contact the main number in Sacramento, or submit a suggestion by clicking on the button below. Thank you.

Acting United States Attorney

*Phillip A. Talbert*