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HRC’s Project Win Back, Part II

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Abstract

I recently wrote about the lead role the Human Rights Campaign took in the historic transgender hearings, and it looks as if their project win back strategy is coming to fruition. The Human Rights Campaign has hired ordained Baptist minister Allyson Robinson as their Associate Director of Diversity. Here’s Allyson in action: The HRC website [...]

Article

I recently wrote about the lead role the Human Rights Campaign took in the historic transgender hearings, and it looks as if their project win back strategy is coming to fruition. The Human Rights Campaign has hired ordained Baptist minister Allyson Robinson as their Associate Director of Diversity. Here’s Allyson in action:

The HRC website states that:

> *“This is a regular, full-time staff position reporting to the Chief Diversity Officer. The Associate Director of Diversity will lead the Human Rights Campaign and its volunteer base in creating and promoting awareness of transgender issues and ensuring that all program areas demonstrate measurable commitment to transgender equality and inclusion.”*

Called for comment, Massachusetts transgender activist Ethan St. Pierre said of the hire:

> *“She seems very kind and innocent and I’m sure she’ll do the job that HRC has intended.”*

I spoke briefly with Diego Sanchez about the recent hiring. He said that:

> *“Allison is a great addition to the team. Under the direction Cuc Vu she’ll do a great job.”*

Meghan Stabler told me that:

> *“Allyson is a good hire. She comes to the position knowing the challenges that lay ahead. Challenges that are not internal to HRC, but challenges that exist externally both with the broader community of LGBt, as well as specifically to the transcommunity. What she brings from her ministerial teachings, learnings, and just being out there, is being able to listen and feel the hearts of the people.”*

Stabler also noted that:

> *"She's not there just to drive things for HRC, she's there as a trans individual, that just like so many of us, want to move towards an inclusive ENDA. I think the hiring of Allyson is a good approach, and that it's worthy of note that the hiring of her was not in reaction to actions happening in San Francisco. It's been in the works for a very long time."*

But some have not been as positive about the hiring. Blogger and activist, Autumn Sandeen said:

> *"The HRC changed their position on ENDA last fall regarding how inclusive an ENDA bill needed to be to receive their support. The organization hasn't since changed it back to requiring parity for sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.*
> *Hiring a transgender woman without a corresponding change in the HRC's political policies regarding full inclusion for all legislation the organization supports...Well, I think this hiring is going to be perceived by most transgender people as the HRC engaging in tokenism. If the HRC isn't going to treat gender identity and expression as having the same level of legislative priority with sexual orientation, then how is a transgender employee at the HRC going to be perceived externally as an equal to the gay and lesbian employees at the HRC?*
> *I personally don't see how."*

Donna Cartwright added:

> *"I have nothing against Allyson Robinson, but it's hard to see how she can reach out to the trans community, given HRC's current policies on ENDA, as well as HRC's historically weak record on trans representation on its board and staff."*

Regardless of how it is viewed, this hiring is historic. HRC has never hired an openly transgender woman. It's obvious that HRC is actively trying to refurbish its image in the transgender community. What is still a question is how the community responds to that push.

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