



# Is It Wrong To Ask If An LGBT Organization Should Still Exist?

May 7, 2013 By [David Mixner](#)

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“He who rejects change is the architect of decay”

-Former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson

Over the last few years, LGBT Americans have experienced amazing change and the tide of victory appears to be on our side. Many of our institutions or agents of change have done a remarkable job in bringing us to this point in our history. If the Supreme Court surprises us and gives us a broad based ruling on marriage equality, then that change will be monumental.

Increasingly the community should be reviewing our institutions/organizations and, with thoughtfulness and sensitivity, discussing if they still have a purpose to exist. Unfortunately, the mere suggestion sends people into spasms of indignant outrage and the idea is viewed as divisive. That is a serious mistake.

No one is saying that the battle is over or that there is no longer a need for institutions/organizations to fight the war. In fact, only a fool would not recognize that even with the most profound Supreme Court decision there will be tons more to do. The question is not if work needs to be done, but what work and who will be the effective agents of future change.

Recently [The Atlantic ran an article by James Kirchick](#) questioning if LGBT Americans still need to raise millions for GLAAD since he believes the cultural war has been won. While he seems to be more upset of their anti-conservative stances than their work, he raised some interesting points for further discussion. Even if we deeply believe an organization should continue, we should never be afraid of discussing its purpose, budget and future.

Kirchick writes:

What a difference 25 years makes. Not only are media representations of gays plentiful, they are almost overwhelmingly positive, which is perhaps why GLAAD curiously removed the above sentence from its website. The entertainment industry, for many years a “celluloid closet” (in the words of the late gay film historian Vito Russo), is exuberantly pro-gay. Being gay isn’t just OK these days, it’s positively cool. From Broadway to Hollywood, the message is one of uncompromising acceptance of gay people. The list of celebrities and television shows affirming a gay-positive message is endless, from Lady Gaga and her mantra of “Born This

Way” to hit television shows like Modern Family and Glee. Meanwhile, popular television journalists like CNN’s Anderson Cooper and NBC News’ Pete Williams face no barriers for being openly gay, a far cry from what it was like to work in the news industry just half a generation ago. The media’s reaction to NBA player Jason Collins’ coming out on the cover of Sports Illustrated has been almost exclusively supportive; just witness the hostility heaped upon Howie Kurtz, who was fired by The Daily Beast for a blog post in which he erroneously stated that Collins “didn’t come clean” over his previous engagement to a woman. As far as the mainstream media, movies, television, and popular music -- the monitoring of which is GLAAD’s raison d’etre -- goes, homosexuality has gone from the love that dare not speak its name to the love that won’t stop talking. The best thing the organization could do is dissolve -- not because it is actively harmful, but rather because it is a victim of its own success.

Simply put, gays have won the culture war. Social historians can debate when exactly this happened. (Was it Ellen DeGeneres’ “Yep, I’m Gay” Time cover? Or, as Vice President Joe Biden recently suggested, the popularity of Will & Grace?) Rather than being attributable to one instantaneous incident, however, today’s mainstream acceptance of homosexuality came about gradually, assisted by the fact that most people today personally know someone who is openly gay. While the Stonewall Riots of 1969 may seem like a long time ago, in the full sweep of American history, no other social movement has progressed so far and so fast as that of gays.

With the incredible changes taking place in our society, politics and institutions, it is essential for us to review our organizations in order to plan effectively for the work that needs to be done over the next couple of decades. Merely adapting in order to survive never has been an effective strategy.

LGBT Americans should not fear or shy away from such discussions. After all, we have been extraordinarily successful so far in advocating change and now is not the time to fear change.