

## Young people support LGBT rights but disagree on priorities

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A recent survey finds that many young people of color disagree with same-sex marriage being the top priority of the LGBT agenda, pointing instead to other issues like HIV/AIDS and bullying. Credit: Courtesy of Black Youth Project

A new national survey finds that while young people express strong support for marriage equality, they also believe the push for same-sex marriage has diverted too much attention from other important issues facing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered individuals. The study shows that young people differ along racial and ethnic lines in setting

priorities for advancing LGBT rights.

"Moving Beyond Marriage: What Young People of Color Think about the LGBT Agenda," is the newest report from the Black Youth Project at the University of Chicago, reporting on their findings from a nationally representative survey of 1,500 [young people](#) between the ages of 18 and 30, and conducted in June 2014. The sample includes young people from all sexual identities. The report is co-authored by Cathy J. Cohen, the David and Mary Winton Green Professor and chair, Political Science; and Jon C. Rogowski, assistant professor, Political Science at Washington University, St. Louis.

In contrast to white youth, who identified same-sex marriage as the top priority for LGBT organizations, black and Latino youth showed more concern about other issues, such as HIV/AIDS, bullying, equal employment rights and violence against LGBT individuals. Large majorities of all groups agreed that the LGBT community is subject to discrimination, and supported policies to advance LGBT rights.

"For the last decade, many LGBT organizations have worked tirelessly to expand marriage rights to same-sex couples and the public has become considerably more acceptant," Cohen said. "This report demonstrates that while young people grant strong support to marriage equality, young people—especially young people of color—also believe that several other policies should have greater priority in the fight for LGBT equality, including employment rights and prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS."

The main findings of the report include:

More black (80.2 percent) and Latino (74.9 percent) youth believe the marriage equality movement has taken too much attention away from other important LGBT issues compared to white youth (64.0 percent).

More black youth (58.0 percent) believe that LGBT issues in communities of color are not well represented by mainstream LGBT organizations than Latino (45.9 percent) and white youth (42.7 percent).

More than a third (35.0 percent) of black youth reported that HIV/AIDS is the single most important issue for LGBT organizations to address. Latino youth reported that bullying (20.1 percent) is the most important issue, while white youth (21.3 percent) reported that same-sex marriage is the most important issue.

"While some people argue that recent advances in same-sex marriage equality are an indicator of the end of discrimination against LGBT individuals, the survey participants disagreed," Cohen said. "Greater proportions of black youth than Latino and white youth believe that LGBT individuals experience discrimination."

Concern over HIV/AIDS among black youth was especially striking. The CDC has reported that among gay and bisexual men, African Americans are affected by HIV more than any other racial or ethnic group.

The survey found that black youth believe that LGBT individuals experience discrimination to a similar degree as African Americans. White and Latino youth believe that LGBT individuals experience discrimination at higher rates than other groups based on gender, race, ethnicity and religion.

"Our findings indicate that young people of color are skeptical about whether mainstream LGBT organizations advocate policies that are important for LGBT individuals in communities of color," Rogowski commented. "The data in this report may provide some guidance about how LGBT organizations may branch out beyond same-sex marriage in advocating on behalf of LGBT youth. While much has been accomplished, young people of color are reminding us that the fight for

overall equality is far from over."

**More information:** The report is available online:  
[research.blackyouthproject.com ... les/2014/07/LGBT.pdf](https://research.blackyouthproject.com/.../les/2014/07/LGBT.pdf)

Provided by University of Chicago

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