

September 25, 2015

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Along with Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand and other New York federal, state and local elected officials, I am proud to announce an initiative to officially honor the site of the Stonewall Rebellion, the birthplace of the early LGBT rights movement and the ongoing struggle for full LGBT equality. We are asking President Barack Obama to designate Stonewall as the first ever National Park Site honoring America's LGBT history.

The following is an Op-Ed on the importance of honoring LGBT history and America's struggle for equality that I wrote for The Advocate magazine. A condensed version is below, or you can [Click Here](#) to read the full version of the Op-Ed:

Stonewall Site to Honor LGBT History, America's Struggle for Equality *September 21, 2015*

In the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, the New York City Police Department raided the Stonewall Inn, a bar that served the LGBT community. What followed were six days of uprisings by hundreds of diverse individuals, demanding an end to police harassment, arrests and raids on LGBT establishments. This rebellion launched a civil rights movement that continues to this day, and in the more than 45 years since, the name "Stonewall" has become synonymous with the history of America's struggle for LGBT civil rights and the fight for equality.

As a longtime advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights, over the years I have participated in many of the efforts to secure equal rights for all and have had a front-row seat to watch as our country made great strides towards that goal. However, while we celebrate these successes and look to the fights we still have ahead, we must remember and honor the hard work and bravery that have achieved those victories and shaped our country for the better.

From the abolition of slavery with the Thirteenth Amendment to the enactment of women's suffrage to the recent Supreme Court decisions in *United States v. Windsor*, which struck down the heart of the Defense of Marriage Act, and *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which legalized same-sex marriage, throughout the course of our nation's history we have regularly redefined freedom. Just two decades

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ago these Supreme Court decisions for the LGBT community would have been nearly unimaginable.

In his second inaugural address, President Obama spoke about the star that guides our country — the premise that all of us are created equal — and how it guided our forebears through some of the most pivotal moments in our history: Seneca Falls, Selma, and, ultimately, Stonewall. What was unsaid but understood was that the expansions of freedom ultimately garnered by these moments and the movements they inspired resulted from impassioned stands by oppressed individuals standing together to demand equality.

However, today you can walk by the Stonewall site and hardly even know such an important movement started here.

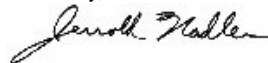
A Stonewall National Monument would be the first unit within the National Park system fully dedicated to LGBT Americans, and the creation of this site is integral to telling the civil rights story of our nation. We are pushing to ensure that all of the stories of the brave individuals who launched the movement — such as the transgender women of color like Marsha P. Johnson — are included in this history. Far too many times the story of Stonewall has omitted minorities, lesbians, and transgender people, many of whom were key actors in the rebellion and the early LGBT civil rights movement. It is vital that we preserve, protect and retell this history in its entirety, honoring all of the brave men and women who stood up for their rights.

The movement for LGBT equality has made significant progress since 1969 yet still has more work ahead to bring full equality for all Americans. As we continue to fight for full equal rights, we must always remember where the movement began and how far we have come in the struggle for freedom. The dedication of a monument to Stonewall would place it alongside other historic sites of America's civil rights journey, like Seneca Falls and Selma, and would provide federal recognition of the birthplace of the LGBT civil rights movement.

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For further information, see these stories by the [Washington Blade](#) and the [New York Times](#) detailing my efforts to bring federal recognition to an important civil rights historical site in my district and make the Stonewall Park a reality.

Sincerely,



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