

STATE OF DELAWARE



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
DOVER

**EXECUTIVE ORDER
NUMBER ONE**

TO: HEADS OF ALL STATE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

RE: CREATION OF THE DELAWARE LGBTQ+ COMMISSION

WHEREAS, the LGBTQ+ community is a diverse, widespread group of individuals whose lives and contributions are woven into the fabric of Delaware, with a growing number of individuals representing the community by serving in various positions of responsibility across the state; and

WHEREAS, the number of American adults who identify as LGBTQ+ has more than doubled in the last 12 years, increasing to 7.6 percent, and more than one in five Generation Z adults identify as LGBTQ+, according to a [2024 Gallup poll](#); and

WHEREAS, misconceptions, bigotry, violence, and hatred have continued to plague the LGBTQ+ community, including the anti-gay paranoia surrounding the AIDS epidemic, the 2016 Pulse Nightclub massacre, and continuing legislative actions in states to target transgender people, limit exposure to LGBTQ+ topics in public education, and restrict access to lifesaving healthcare, resulting in negative impacts on mental and physical health; and

WHEREAS, results from a [2023 study by the Human Rights Campaign](#) found that “LGBTQ+ youth report much higher rates of depression, anxiety, and lower self-esteem than their cisgender and heterosexual peers, as well as higher rates of maladaptive coping mechanisms such as substance use;” and

WHEREAS, despite there being numerous independent groups representing the LGBTQ+ community, there is no entity at the state government level principally dedicated to addressing the needs of the community and the challenges they face; and

WHEREAS, Delaware has strived to be an open, friendly and inclusive state for all residents, providing LGBTQ+ people protections from discrimination and being amongst the first states to enact marriage equality legislation in 2013; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the lack of a state government-level group focused primarily on LGBTQ+ issues, in 2024, then-Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long initiated regular

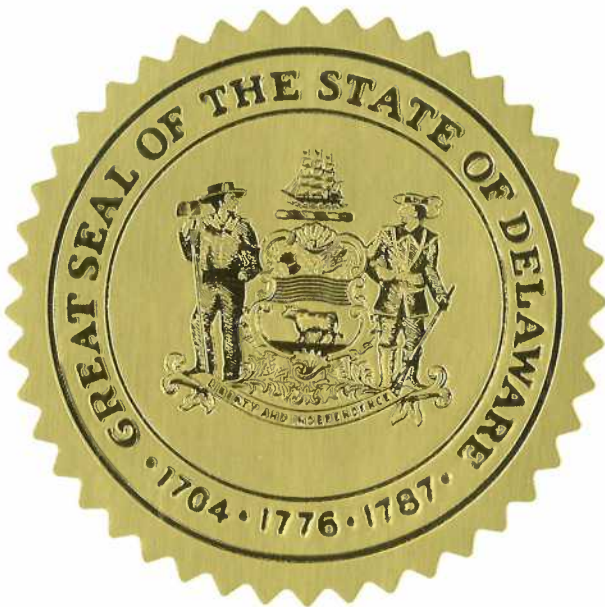
convenings with LGBTQ+ leaders across the state to bring people together to identify and discuss various issues facing the community and share information, ideas and camaraderie; and

WHEREAS, the State of Delaware administers several commissions that exist to provide a platform for numerous communities of common interest and identity across the state, while no such commission exists for the LGBTQ+ community;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BETHANY A. HALL-LONG, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Delaware, do hereby **DECLARE** and **ORDER** that:

1. The Delaware LGBTQ+ Commission (the “Commission”) is hereby created.
2. The Commission shall consist of nine members, appointed by the governor, to a term of three years, subject to renewal. Members shall serve at the pleasure of the governor. Any vacancies shall be filled by the governor.
3. The membership of the Commission shall be representative of the different facets of the LGBTQ+ community, taking into account age, race, gender, identity, background, life experiences and other factors, and reflect the geographic diversity of the state. At least one member should specialize in nonprofit or advocacy work.
4. The Governor shall designate one or more members of the Commission to serve as Chairperson(s). Members of the Commission shall receive no compensation. The Commission shall adopt and make public procedures and standards for the conduct of its affairs, consistent with this Order.
5. The Commission shall have the following powers, duties, and responsibilities:
 - a. Advise the Governor, members of the Governor’s Cabinet, members of the General Assembly, and other policymakers on the effect of agency policies, procedures, practices, laws, and administrative rules on the unique challenges and needs of LGBTQ+ people.
 - b. Advise on ways to improve the delivery of services to the LGBTQ+ community in Delaware in areas such as employment, equality, education, mental health, social services, health, and housing.
 - c. Create and maintain ties among the different components of the LGBTQ+ community in Delaware.
 - d. Consult with nonprofit organizations.
 - e. Establish and promote programs and events that create awareness of the LGBTQ+ community and their contributions to the state, and advocate for awareness and protections for the community against bigotry, violence, hatred, and other forms of discrimination.

- f. Advocate for removal of barriers from societal participation of LGBTQ+ people and provide an annual report regarding the participation of people who voluntarily and openly identify as LGBTQ+ in roles of responsibility, including, but not limited to, those serving in state executive branch roles.
 - g. Develop partnerships between LGBTQ+ groups and executive branch agencies that will facilitate the missions of those organizations.
 - h. Provide a forum through public hearings and other means for the exchange of ideas and information among LGBTQ+ organizations whereby such organizations can work together to improve delivery of services in the community.
6. All executive branch state agencies and departments shall cooperate with the Commission when requested. The Commission may call and rely upon the expertise of individuals and entities outside of its membership for research, advice, support, or other functions necessary and appropriate to accomplish its mission.
7. The Department of State shall provide administrative support and space for meetings.



APPROVED this 16th day of January 2025.

Bethany A. Hall-Long
Bethany A. Hall-Long
Governor

ATTEST:

[Signature]
Secretary of State