

The Congress of California Seniors has worked in recent years to diversify our membership, our leadership, and our agenda. A special area of action has been in expanded outreach to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) community of seniors across the state.

This effort follows the statement of State President Hank Lacayo which was unanimously adopted as a resolution by our Board of Directors in 2010.

LGBT Statement
By Hank Lacayo, State President

CCS has always been an advocate for the underserved and we have always pushed for minority rights and equal justice.

One of the less noticed groups that is aging in bigger numbers, like all of us, are the lesbian and gay seniors in our communities.

Just like other minorities, they experience discrimination and have challenges in aging that may be different than most of ours.

For example, they may have different health care challenges. They are not eligible for Social Security benefits through partners. They may have inheritances challenged.

A big problem is that many may have to go back into the closet when they become old and need to go into Assisted Living or care facilities.

Just like ethnic minorities or the elderly, they suffer from all forms of obvious and subtle discrimination.

And no senior organization has picked up their cause and included their concerns in senior advocacy as such.

We have been there but not clearly in the open and I firmly believe that CCS should take on that challenge

It is a natural for us because fighting for justice has been our mission from our very founding. And there is a benefit for us because most older gays and lesbians have been through 20 years of intense advocacy. They are almost always progressive and share our politics. And I believe they wait to be asked to be an official part of CCS.

I would like us to reach out and invite their organizations to join us, or perhaps form a caucus within CCS that brings us together to build our advocacy for all seniors in our state.

Motion was made and passed by unanimous action in support of President Lacayo's LGBT Statement, Monday, April 12, 2010, CCS Board of Directors, Riverside, CA

