

## The political divide

### Days after Orlando attack, House G.O.P. blocks vote on gay-rights amendment

Less than three days after a popular gay club in Orlando became the site of the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history, Republican leaders in the House of Representatives blocked a vote on a proposal that would ensure federal contractors<sup>1</sup> can't discriminate against employees on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identification. Hours earlier, a number of notable conservative figures had put on a good show of standing in solidarity with the L.G.B.T. community, making the rounds on cable news to stand up for the dozens of gay men and women who died in Sunday's attack. On Tuesday night, however, it was back to business as usual as the House Rules Committee prevented the amendment from reaching the floor<sup>2</sup> for a vote.

Democrat Sean Patrick Maloney, an openly gay congressman from New York, proposed the amendment, which is currently attached to a Defense Department spending bill<sup>3</sup> that was slated<sup>4</sup> for a vote this week. Should it pass, the proposal would enforce an executive order<sup>5</sup> from 2014 prohibiting discrimination against L.G.B.T. employees, *The Hill* reports. "It's hard to imagine any act that is so horrific could lead to anything positive. But if we were going to do anything, it would be a very positive step to say that discrimination has no place in our law and to reaffirm the president's actions in this area," Maloney said.

The decision to block a vote on the Defense Department bill comes mere days after a lone gunman opened fire at Florida's Pulse nightclub, murdering 49 people before being shot and killed by police.

## Culture Tip

The **Orlando nightclub shooting** is a mass shooting that took place in Orlando, Florida on June 12, 2016. A security guard killed 49 people and wounded 53 others at the gay nightclub, Pulse. Most victims were Hispanic. It was one of the deadliest attacks against LGBTQ+ people in US history.



◆ Signs showing support for the victims of the Pulse nightclub shooting, 2016

35 The shooting has since been labeled both a terrorist attack and a hate crime. Maloney told *The Hill* that passing the bill with the attached amendment would be a "pretty basic thing to do" to show support for the L.G.B.T. community targeted in the attack. [...]

40 Maloney drew parallels between the Orlando massacre and the shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, last year, which led to legislation that restricted how the Confederate flag can be displayed.

45 "Hate has no place in our flags, in our workplace, or in our country," Maloney argued. "And it should have no place in federal law."

◆ Abigail Tracy, *Vanity Fair*, 2016

1. government employees 2. being presented 3. budget law 4. planned 5. official directive