

## Pride Month Speaker Inspires Urgency in Fight for Equality



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“Happy Pride, everyone,” said LGBTQ activist Sarah McBride as she addressed firm members, clients, and alumni who attended Winston’s Pride Month program on June 19. McBride introduced herself as a policy wonk, political nerd, movie buff, and transgender woman. “It took me 21 years to muster up the courage to say those last two words.”

McBride talked about the current landscape in the fight for transgender equality and shared her story of hope that has been shaped by acts of amazing grace. Growing up, she marveled at the scope of social change in her history books while recognizing that no one who was openly transgender had ever made history before.

She aimed to change that, making national headlines in 2012 when she came out as transgender at the end of her term as student body president at American University and was the first openly transgender person to address a major party political convention. “The celebratory atmosphere on campus when I came out sent a message to the country: this is how you respond—with love, acceptance, and support.” Today McBride continues to impact history as national press secretary for the Human Rights Campaign and one of the most public voices for LGBTQ equality.



While coming out had been the hardest thing I'd done up to that point, McBride recounted, it soon became clear that other transgender people were not greeted with the same level of support I had received. This is especially true for people living at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities, leading McBride and other LGBTQ advocates increasingly to link their efforts with those for racial justice, gender equity, and religious freedom "because we recognize that our community is as diverse as this nation."

McBride explained to attendees that after years of progress we are at an inflection point for transgender equality with more than 100 bills introduced in the last year seeking license to discriminate against marginalized people and legislate them out of public life. While most of these efforts have been defeated, she urged attendees to continue the fight against injustice "so we can finally build a world where no child must be forced to defend their dignity or give up on their dreams."

The fact that I can live authentically and pursue my dreams is now very real to young kids and demonstrates how far we have come, McBride said. She continues to dream and work toward a day “when ‘we the people’ finally includes every single one of us, and young LGBTQ kids will learn about this struggle for justice in their history books and never have to know what this progress felt like.”

Winston’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee and Pride affinity group presented this program as part of our annual series that celebrates the diversity that exists at the firm and helps foster an inclusive work environment. Visit our [Diversity & Inclusion page](#) for more information.

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