

# ANTHONY ROMERO

b. July 9, 1965

*“When you’ve seen prejudice, you understand that we aren’t finished, that we’re still perfecting this American experiment.”*

**Anthony Romero is the first openly gay executive director of the ACLU.**

**Under his leadership, the organization championed racial justice, reproductive freedom and lesbian and gay rights.**

Anthony Romero is the first openly gay person and the first Latino to become executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the nation’s largest public-interest law firm.

Romero was raised in New York City by parents who emigrated from Puerto Rico. When he was young, his father faced discrimination for a job promotion. A lawyer hired through his father’s union won him the promotion, and the extra earnings helped the family purchase a new home and their first car.

Romero was the first member of his family to finish high school. He graduated from Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy and Stanford Law School. In 2003, he was named Stanford’s first Public Interest Lawyer of the Year.

Four days before the 9/11 attacks, Romero took over as executive director of the ACLU. In response to post-9/11 government policies, he helped create the ACLU’s “Keep America Safe and Free” campaign, which aims to protect basic freedoms during times of crises. The campaign was successful in its opposition to the USA PATRIOT Act and litigation regarding the torture and abuse of detainees in U.S. custody.

Under Romero’s direction, the ACLU has achieved its highest level of membership and tripled its budget. This growth allowed the organization to expand its efforts to champion causes such as lesbian and gay rights, racial justice and reproductive freedom.

Romero was named one of TIME magazine’s 25 Most Influential Hispanics in America in 2005. He received an honorary doctorate from the City University of New York School of Law and coauthored “In Defense of Our America” (2007), about America’s fight for post-9/11 civil liberties.

