

KATE KENDELL

b. April 15, 1960

“The only way to win full equality is to engage in the hard work of making our lives real to everyone we know.”

Kate Kendell is a civil rights attorney and executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR).

Kendell was raised a Mormon in Utah. She learned about the intersection of faith and politics at an early age.

In 1988, Kendell graduated from the University of Utah College of Law. She worked as a corporate attorney, until she pursued her passion: civil rights advocacy.

In 1992, Kendell became the first staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union of Utah, where she litigated high-profile cases. Kendell focused on LGBT, reproductive, and prisoners' rights, and the separation of church and state.

In 1994, Kendell was hired as NCLR's legal director. She was promoted to executive director in 1996. Under Kendell's leadership, NCLR's impact has grown exponentially.

Each year, through litigation, public policy advocacy and public education, NCLR helps more than 5,000 LGBT people and their families nationwide. NCLR was one of the organizations that argued before the California Supreme Court for the overturn of Proposition 8.

On May 26, 2009, when the California Supreme Court upheld Proposition 8, Kendell responded, “Today, the California Supreme Court diminished its legacy as a champion of equality. No minority group should have to defend its right to equality at the ballot, and the Court should not have permitted such a travesty of justice to stand.”

Kendell is a frequent national spokeswoman for LGBT rights. Her commentaries have appeared in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and The Advocate, and on NPR and CNN, among other media outlets.

Kendell lives with her partner, Sandy Holmes, and their two children.

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