

JÓHANNA SIGURÐARDÓTTIR

b. October 4, 1942

PRIME MINISTER OF ICELAND

On June 11, 2010, by a vote of 49 to 0, Iceland's Parliament approved same-sex marriage. On June 26, 2010, the first day that legislation became effective, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir and Jónína Leósdóttir were married.

“Egalitarian policies are the best way to unite and empower people.”

Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir is the first female prime minister of Iceland and the world's first openly GLBT national leader.

Sigurðardóttir was born in Reykjavik, where she received the equivalent of a high school diploma from the Commercial College of Iceland. Her first job was as a flight attendant for what is now Icelandair. After six years in that position, she became a union organizer with the airline—a move that served as her entrée into Icelandic politics.

Sigurðardóttir was elected to Iceland's Parliament in 1978. Viewed as a rising star, she was named Minister of Social Affairs in 1987. In 1990, she ran for the top spot in the Social Democrat Alliance party. She narrowly lost that race, declaring, “My time will come,” which has become a common catchphrase in Iceland.

In January 2009, following the collapse of the nation's economy in the worldwide recession, Iceland's president asked the Social Democrat Alliance to form a new government, which elevated Sigurðardóttir to the office of the prime minister. At the time of her appointment, she was the longest-serving member of Iceland's Parliament.

Four months later, Sigurðardóttir's party, along with its coalition partner, won a majority of seats in the Parliament, handing her a strong mandate to lead Iceland's economic revitalization efforts and to work toward joining the European Union. While focusing on these important tasks, Sigurðardóttir has not forgotten the value of equity in politics. “A society that does not use the intellectual power of its female population fully is not a wise society,” she says.

Sigurðardóttir was married to a man prior to coming out. She and her ex-husband are the parents of two adult children. On June 11, 2010, by a vote of 49 to 0, Iceland's Parliament approved same-sex marriage. On June 26, 2010, the first day that legislation became effective, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir and Jónína Leósdóttir were married.



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