

# JOHN BERRY

b. June 10, 1951

## GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

*“Each time we act against discrimination, we add a ring of life to the American tree of liberty.”*

John Berry is the director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). He is the highest-ranking openly gay federal employee in U.S. history.

Born in Rockville, Maryland, Berry is the son of two federal government employees. His father served in the U.S. Marine Corps and his mother worked for the U.S. Census Bureau.

Berry earned his Bachelor of Arts in government from the University of Maryland and a Master of Public Administration from Syracuse University. His first federal government job was as legislative director for U.S. Representative Steny Hoyer. Thereafter, he served as deputy assistant secretary for law enforcement at the U.S. Treasury Department.

After two years as director of government relations at the Smithsonian Institution, Berry was appointed assistant secretary for policy, management and budget at the U.S. Department of the Interior in the Clinton administration.

Prior to joining the Obama administration, Berry pursued his interest in environmental conservation as the director of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and subsequently as director of the National Zoo.

In 2009, President Obama appointed Berry to his current position, where he is responsible for recruiting, hiring and benefits policies for 1.9 million federal employees.

**There is a mountain in Antarctica named after him: the Berry Bastion.**

With Berry's appointment came accolades from the LGBT and mainstream communities. “The selection of John Berry is a meaningful step forward for the LGBT community,” said

Joe Solmonese, president of the Humans Rights Campaign. John Gage, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, described Berry as the “perfect choice for the OPM. He's smart, courageous, and has all the right experience in policy and in politics.”

In 2009, Berry served as the keynote speaker for the International Gay & Lesbian Leadership Conference in San Francisco.

One of the few Americans to stand on both the North and South Poles, Berry's government career has taken him around the globe and literally to the ends of the earth. There is a mountain in Antarctica named after him: the Berry Bastion.



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