

# RITCHIE TORRES

b. March 12, 1988

# U.S. CONGRESSMAN

**He was the youngest elected official in New York City, the first openly gay elected official in the Bronx and the first Afro-Latinx elected to Congress.**

*“In politics, it’s important to be decisive, to take a stand, which is what I do.”*

Ritchie Torres is the first Afro-Latinx U.S. congressman. He represents New York’s 15th District, one of the poorest and most diverse in the nation. At age 25, he became the youngest elected official in New York City and the first openly gay elected official in the Bronx.

Raised by a single mother, Torres and his two siblings grew up in a run-down public housing project in the South Bronx. Though Torres realized he was gay in middle school, he did not come out to anyone until 10th grade.

Throughout high school, Torres held part-time jobs and developed a taste for political nonfiction. He was the captain of the law team and loved participating in moot court. At 16, he interned with the deputy mayor of New York City.

Torres attended New York University for a little more than a year before he fell into depression and dropped out in 2007. He speaks candidly about his journey from standing “on the verge of suicide” to overcoming “the odds” to realize his political aspirations.

After a time, Torres became a community organizer, advocating for adequate, affordable public housing. He also worked for a city councilman, who encouraged Torres to run in 2013 for a seat on New York City Council.

Torres opened up about his sexuality, concluding, “If you are deceitful about your personal life, then you’re likely to be deceitful about your professional life.”

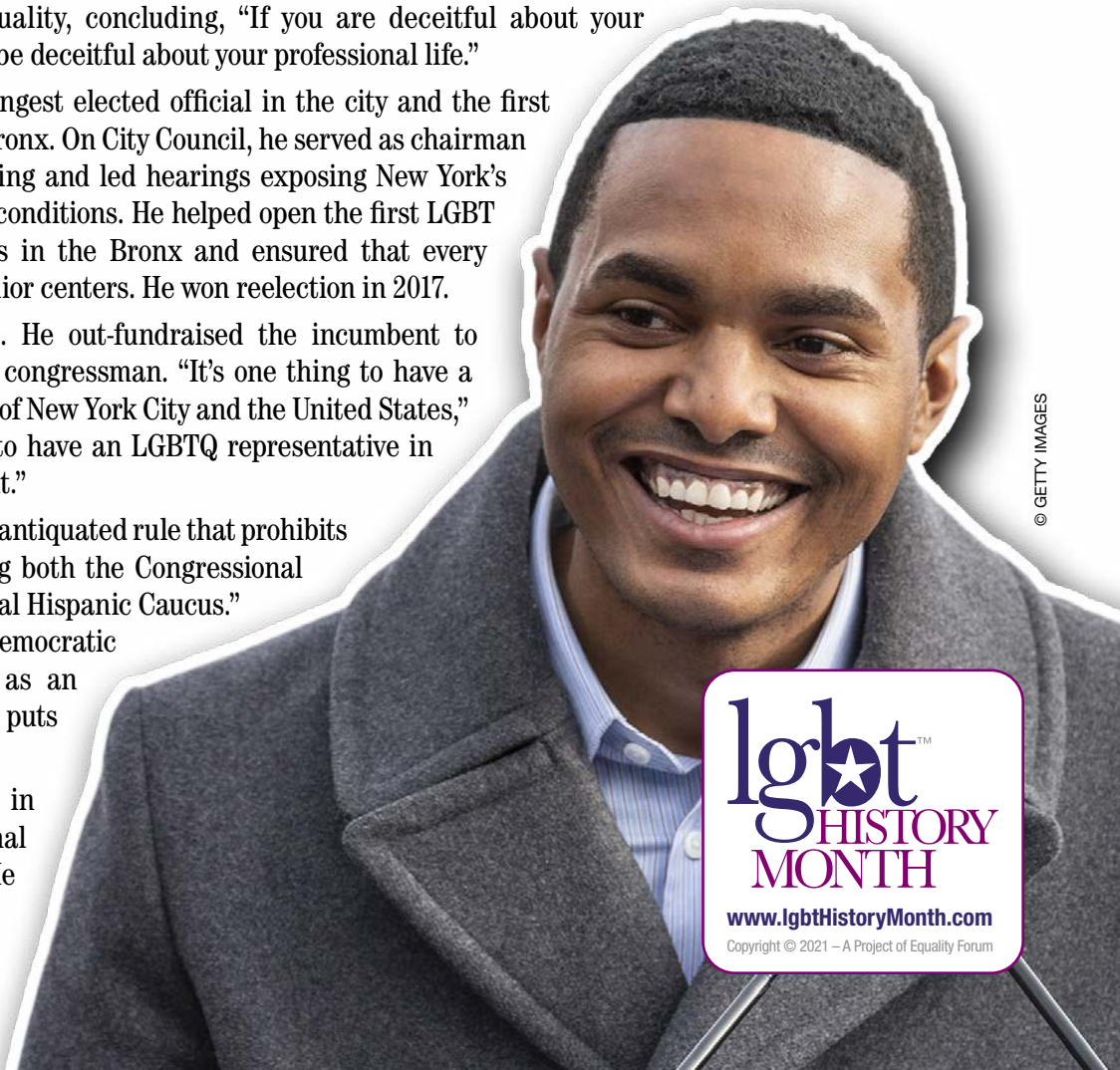
At age 25, Torres became the youngest elected official in the city and the first openly gay elected official in the Bronx. On City Council, he served as chairman of the Committee on Public Housing and led hearings exposing New York’s failure to correct unsafe building conditions. He helped open the first LGBT homeless shelter for young adults in the Bronx and ensured that every borough had funding for LGBT senior centers. He won reelection in 2017.

Torres ran for Congress in 2020. He out-fundraised the incumbent to become the first Afro-Latinx U.S. congressman. “It’s one thing to have a representative in the gayborhoods of New York City and the United States,” he explained. “It’s another thing to have an LGBTQ representative in the places you might least expect it.”

Torres has spoken out against the “antiquated rule that prohibits members of Congress from joining both the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.”

Though he supports much of the Democratic Socialists’ agenda, he identifies as an independent progressive who puts legislative efficacy above ideology.

Torres received the Courage in Government Award from the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce. He lives in the South Bronx.



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