

# ROBERT GARCIA

b. December 2, 1977

## CONGRESSMAN

*"The American people deserve a government who works for them."*

**He is the first LGBTQ immigrant to serve in Congress.**

Robert Julio Garcia is the U.S. representative for California's 42nd District. A Democrat, he is the first LGBTQ immigrant elected to Congress.

Garcia was born in Lima, Peru. When he was 5, he immigrated to the United States with his mother. Garcia attended Covina High School and graduated from California State University, Long Beach, with a bachelor's degree in communication studies. He received his master's degree from the University of Southern California (USC) and accepted a job as a public information officer at Long Beach City College.

Garcia became a U.S. citizen in his 20s. Around the age of 30, he founded the Long Beach Post, a local news and sports website, which brought him a measure of celebrity.

Garcia earned his Ph.D. in education from California State University, Long Beach, in 2010. The year before, while serving as a faculty member at USC, Garcia won a seat on the Long Beach City Council. In 2012 he was elected to a two-year term as City Council vice mayor. It made him the first Latino and youngest person to hold the position in the city's history.

In 2011 Garcia successfully led an effort to name a planned public park in Long Beach after the slain gay activist and politician Harvey Milk. The park opened in 2013, the same year Garcia was appointed to the California Coastal Commission.

In 2014 Garcia ran for mayor. The win made him the first immigrant and first LGBTQ mayor of Long Beach. He was reelected in 2018. During his tenure, Garcia oversaw unprecedented economic growth. He passed aggressive environmental initiatives; fought to protect the rights of workers, immigrants, and LGBTQ citizens; and earned national recognition for his leadership in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (he lost both parents to the disease). In 2020 he delivered one of the keynote speeches at the Democratic National Convention.

Garcia was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2022. In 2023, when he took the oath of office, he was holding a picture of his parents.

Garcia sits on five House committees and has sponsored 19 pieces of legislation, including the International Human Rights Defense Act of 2023 and the Guaranteed Income for Foster Youth Act.

Garcia was recognized by The Advocate on its "40 Under 40" list, and CNN featured him in a special presentation, "Latino in America." He has been married to Matthew Mendez, a professor, since 2022. The couple lives in Long Beach.



© U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**lgbt**<sup>™</sup>  
**HISTORY**  
**MONTH**

[www.lgbtHistoryMonth.com](http://www.lgbtHistoryMonth.com)

Copyright © 2024 – A Project of Equality Forum