

MARK POCAN

b. August 14, 1964

CONGRESSMAN

“As we celebrate the considerable progress we’ve made toward full equality in our military, we cannot forget about those who continue to suffer because of the discriminatory policies of our past.”

He is a progressive out gay congressman and the chair of the Congressional Equality Caucus.

Mark Pocan is an openly gay U.S. representative for Wisconsin’s 2nd Congressional District. A progressive Democrat, small business owner, and member of the AFL-CIO, he chairs the Congressional Equality Caucus.

Born and raised in the working-class city of Kenosha, Wisconsin, Pocan was elected senior class president of his high school. He attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he majored in journalism and honed his political skills as a member of the College Democrats. As an openly gay young man, he engaged deeply with the issues of social justice and equality. After graduating in 1986, Pocan started a union printing company, Budget Signs & Specialties. Around this time, as he was leaving a gay bar, two men followed him and beat

him with a baseball bat. The incident intensified his activism.

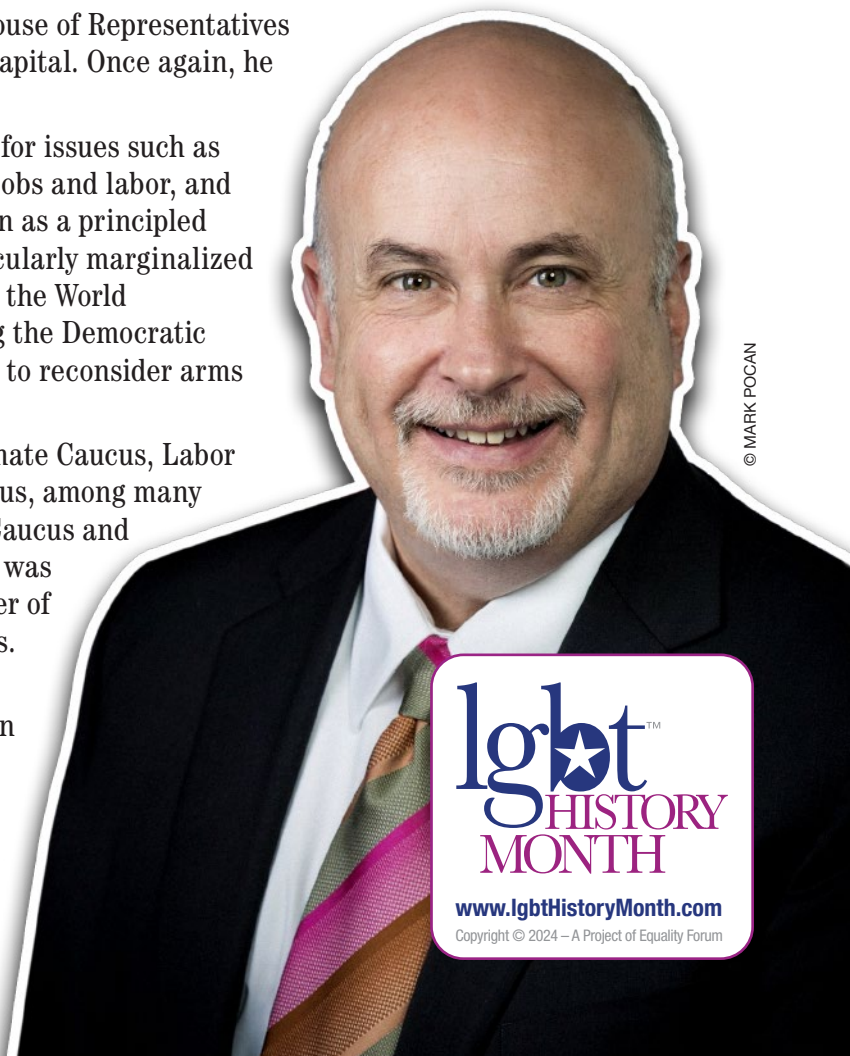
Impelled to advocacy, Pocan worked in various political capacities. He served as a member of the Dane County Board of Supervisors for three terms beginning in 1991 and the Wisconsin State Assembly from 1999 to 2013. He was elected to the State Assembly seat vacated by his longtime friend and ally, Tammy Baldwin, who left to run for Congress.

In 2012 Pocan successfully ran for the United States House of Representatives for Wisconsin’s 2nd District, which includes the state capital. Once again, he succeeded Tammy Baldwin.

Since assuming office, Pocan has staunchly advocated for issues such as health care, LGBTQ rights, environmental protection, jobs and labor, and social and economic justice. He has earned a reputation as a principled leader who fights for the rights of all Americans, particularly marginalized communities. In April 2024, after the Israeli strikes on the World Central Kitchen aid workers in Gaza, Pocan was among the Democratic Congressional members who exhorted President Biden to reconsider arms shipments to Israel.

Pocan participates in the Pro-Choice Caucus, Safe Climate Caucus, Labor Caucus, and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) Caucus, among many others. He is the cofounder and co-chair of the Labor Caucus and chair of the Congressional Equality Caucus. In 2014 he was named the Congressional Progressive Caucus Newcomer of the Year, and now serves as the caucus’s chair emeritus.

Pocan married Philip Frank in Toronto, Canada, in 2006. With his husband, Pocan continues to run his sign printing business in Madison, Wisconsin.



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