Fifty-one years ago this Sunday marks the beginning of the Stonewall Riots: six days of protests and riots in downtown Manhattan against police brutality, harassment, and discrimination against queer people. The riots are often cited as a major turning point in the queer liberation movement; they led to the first pride parades and major pro-LGBTQ+ organizations being founded. Nowadays, it may be easy to think that America provides a welcoming atmosphere for its LGBTQ+ people. Every June, corporations throw a rainbow behind their logo. In Delaware, strong legal protections exist for members of the queer community. Being publicly homophobic or transphobic is tolerated less and less. Gay marriage is legal nationwide. Last week, the Supreme Court ruled that people could not be fired because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. However, when you look behind the bright facade of rainbow flags and happy faces at pride parades, you will uncover a brutal reality.

LGBTQ+ people are estimated to make up 5% of America’s population, yet they make up 20% of hate crime victims. Non-heterosexual youth are three times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers. Only twenty-two states ban housing discrimination based off of sexual orientation and gender identity; one-quarter of the American transgender population reports having faced housing discrimination in the past year. In twenty-nine states, LGBTQ+ people can legally be denied service in public places. Transgender people are not allowed to openly serve their country in the military. Six states have “no promo homo” laws, which ban health teachers from discussing LGBTQ+ topics. Conversion therapy is legal in thirty states. In North and South America, the life expectancy for trans women of color is only 35.

These statistics illuminate the stark inequality and persecution queer Americans face in their everyday lives. We are not done fighting. As we celebrate and remember Stonewall today, we must continue its legacy until LGBTQ+ people in this country have full equality.

**Resources:**
- https://www.hrc.org/
- https://www.history.com/topics/gay-rights/the-stonewall-riots
- https://www.lgbtmap.org/
- https://www.glaad.org/resourcelist