



## **Gay man appointed to Obama faith council**

By [GoPride.com News Staff](#)

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Washington, D.C. - The White House has announced nine new appointments to the federal government's faith-based initiative.

Harry Knox, an openly gay man, is among the new appointments announced Monday to President Obama's Advisory Council to the White House Office of Faith-Based & Neighborhood Partnerships.

Knox is the director of Human Rights Campaign's religion and faith program and is a former pastor of a United Methodist Church in Georgia. HRC is a Washington-based gay rights group.

"I hope this council will draw upon the richness of our unique perspectives to advise the president on policies that will improve the lives of all the people we have been called to serve," Knox said in a statement. "The [gay and lesbian] community is eager to help the administration achieve its goals around economic recovery and fighting poverty, fatherhood and healthy families; inter-religious dialogue; care for the environment; and global poverty, health and development."

Former Indianapolis Colts Coach Tony Dungy declined the president's invitation to join due to scheduling conflicts. Dungy's invitation from the President sparked a public outcry from liberal and gay groups when it was made public. Dungy, an evangelical Christian, is known to be anti-gay and in 2007 supported an effort to ban same-sex marriage in Indiana.

"The Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships council shouldn't be used to reward voices of intolerance like Tony Dungy," Tanya Clay House, director of public policy at People for the American Way, said in a statement.

Last month, Knox was critical of Pope Benedict's statement that condom usage increases HIV infections. That stance, said Knox, "is hurting people in the name of Jesus."

The faith-based office begun by President George W. Bush and is charged with administering federal grants and advising the White House on policy.

In addition to Knox, several of the other new members also come from groups representing minorities, including: Dalia Mogahed, executive director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies and Anju Bhargava, founder of Asian Indian Women of America. The additions bring the council's ranks to 24 religious and secular leaders. Each member serves a one-year term.