



Don't Tell Me to Wait: How the Fight for Gay Rights Changed America and Transformed Obama's Presidency

Kerry Eleveld

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Gay rights has been a defining progressive issue of Barack Obama's presidency: Congress repealed Don't Ask, Don't Tell in 2010 with his strong support, and in 2011, he instructed his Justice Department to stop defending the Defense of Marriage Act, helping to pave the way for a series of Supreme Court decisions that ultimately legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. This rapid succession of victories is astonishing by any measure—and is especially incredible considering that when Obama first took office he, like many politicians, still viewed gay rights as politically toxic. In 2008, for instance, he opposed full marital rights for same-sex couples, calling marriage a “sacred union” between a man and a woman. It wasn't until 2012, in the heat of his reelection campaign, that Obama finally embraced marriage equality.

In *Don't Tell Me to Wait*, former *Advocate* reporter Kerry Eleveld shows that Obama's transformation from cautious gradualist to gay rights champion was the result of intense pressure from lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender activists. These men and women changed the conversation issue by issue, pushing the president and the country toward greater freedom for LGBT Americans. Drawing on years of research and reporting, Eleveld tells the dramatic story of the fight for gay rights in America, detailing how activists pushed the president to change his mind, turned the tide of political opinion, and set the nation on course to finally embrace LGBT Americans as full citizens of this country.

With unprecedented access and unparalleled insights, *Don't Tell Me to Wait* captures a critical moment in American history and demonstrates the power of activism to change the course of a presidency—and a nation.

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