

Select location

Search



Sign In | Register



News A&E Biz Tech Money Cars Style Health Travel Nightlife Pride Calendar

News » Politics

DNC Hires Ex-EMILY's List Head as First Lesbian CEO

by Winnie McCroy
EDGE Editor
Wednesday May 17, 2017

[PRINT](#) [EMAIL](#) [COMMENTS \(0\)](#)


For the first time in its history, the Democratic National Committee has hired an out lesbian at its chief executive officer. They recently appointed Jess O'Connell, the former head of EMILY's List, to the top leadership position.

The Washington Blade [reports](#) that the DNC named O'Connell as CEO after serving four years at EMILY's List, which seeks to elect pro-choice women to public office. Her appointment came after the election of Tom Perez as DNC chair.

"Every single day we are witnessing unprecedented activism and excitement across our nation," said O'Connell in a statement. "I am thrilled to join the fight at the national party to

make sure we translate this moment into a movement, and a movement into votes. The DNC has incredible potential and, under the leadership of Chair Perez, I'm ready to jump in and help make this organization more inclusive, effective, and influential."

O'Connell will oversee day-to-day operations and DNC-wide restructuring as the organization undergoes a transition after losses in the 2016 election. The DNC seeks to strengthen their organization, increase collaboration with progressive partners and better serve state parties, territory parties and Democrats abroad.

"Jess has an impressive progressive track record and I am honored that she will lend her talents to rebuilding our party and electing Democrats," Perez said in a statement. "She knows that we as a party need to get back to basics. We need to organize in every zip code and better communicate our message of inclusion and opportunity. We know what happens when Democrats don't win, because we are bearing witness to the chaos and harm to working families that results with Republicans at the helm."

Although Perez asked all top-level officials at the organization to submit their letters of resignation after his election as DNC chair, there was no CEO at that time, so O'Connell's appointment isn't a consequence of that action.

Prior to her work at EMILY's List, O'Connell was senior vice president and chief of staff for the Center for American Progress and served as a progressive activist for more than 20 years. She lives in Maryland with her spouse Holly, a librarian with Montgomery County Public Schools.

Related Stories

Liberal Activists, New DNC Chief Face a Trump-Era Reckoning

POLITICS | By Bill Barrow | Feb 26

When Tom Perez stepped to the stage as the newly elected Democratic national chairman, his first official act was to invite his vanquished rival to join him as deputy chairman.

As Party Rebuilds, Democrats Seek a New DNC Leader

POLITICS | By Bill Barrow | Feb 25

Democrats are beginning the process of rebuilding their party by choosing a new national chairman charged with turning widespread opposition to President Donald Trump into more election victories.

Gay Indiana Mayor Among Candidates to Head the DNC

POLITICS | By Tom Davies | Jan 8

A little-known mayor from Indiana on Thursday joined a crowded field of candidates seeking to become the next head of the Democratic National Committee.

Win Free Stuff!



WORKAHOLICS - The Complete Series on DVD!

Winnie McCroy is the Women on the EDGE Editor, HIV/Health Editor, and Assistant Entertainment Editor for EDGE Media Network, handling all women's news, HIV health stories and theater reviews throughout the U.S. She has contributed to other publications, including The Village Voice, Gay City News, Chelsea Now and The Advocate, and lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Comments

[Add New Comment](#)

Comments on Facebook

0 Comments

Sort by [Oldest](#)



Add a comment...

[Facebook Comments Plugin](#)

INSIDE EDGE



Watch: Gay Cop Who Proposed to Boyfriend at London Pride Regrets Decision



Showtime Confirms 'The L Word' Reboot is in Development



HIV Activist Jack Mackenroth Utilizes Best 'Assets' to Raise \$75K for HIV/AIDS



Fire Island Invasion :: July 4, 2017



Samsung on a Roll as Data Demand for Memory Chips Soars



Watch: 'Big Brother 19' Player Comes Under Fire for 'Tranny' Comments

Network Partners

- Atlanta, GA
- Atlantic City, NJ
- Austin, TX
- Baltimore, MD
- Boston, MA
- Buffalo, NY
- Charlotte, NC
- Chicago, IL
- Cleveland, OH
- Columbus, OH
- Dallas, TX
- Denver, CO
- Detroit, MI
- Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- Fire Island, NY
- Indianapolis, IN
- Key West, FL
- Las Vegas, NV
- Los Angeles, CA
- Miami, FL
- Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN
- Nashville, TN
- New Orleans, LA
- New York, NY
- Orlando, FL
- Palm Springs, CA
- Philadelphia, PA
- Phoenix, AZ
- Pittsburgh, PA
- Portland, OR
- Providence, RI
- Provincetown, MA
- San Diego, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- Seattle, WA
- Washington, DC

Email Updates

Enter your email address below to receive daily email updates including news, giveaways and more.

Things to do

- Get Newsletters
- Learn about EDGE
- Work here
- Visit our Press Room
- Advertise
- Write Feedback
- Read Privacy Statement
- Read Terms of Use
- Contact Us

