Brian Sims Set To Become First Openly Gay Pennsylvania State Lawmaker

Pennsylvania is set to get its first openly gay state lawmaker after a Democratic state House primary left Brian Sims with an open path to election in November.

Sims, a Philadelphia-area lawyer, is expected to be announced the victor over longtime state Rep. Babette Josephs once incomplete voting tallies from a number of polling places are resolved. Elections officials have said they don't expect there to be much change from Sims' 233-vote lead, according to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Serving as Josephs' campaign treasurer in 2010, Sims helped propel the progressive advocate to her 14th term. After defeating her, he won't face a Republican in November, though an Independent candidate could still announce a bid for the seat.

Victory Fund, a group dedicated to electing LGBT political candidates, relays some of Sims' past work:

Sims, a former member of the Victory Campaign Board, is a distinguished policy attorney and civil rights advocate from Center City Philadelphia. The former Staff Counsel for Policy and Planning at the Philadelphia Bar Association, he recently stepped down as the President of the Board of Directors of Equality Pennsylvania.

"This is a long overdue victory for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Pennsylvanians," Equality Pennsylvania said Wednesday in a statement commending Sims on his victory, according to the *Inquirer*. "No longer will we have to embarrassingly admit that the place that gave birth to the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution has no openly gay members serving in its highest governing body. This is a relief and it gives us hope."

LGBT advocates could also see more progress in the state legislature in 2012, as another openly gay House candidate, Chris Dietz, officially became the Democratic candidate in his district this week after winning an unopposed primary.