

# [A dream of a LGBT lawyer: “All genders must be equal” \(5\)](#)

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It is in late afternoon, in the middle of the week. Pornsit Raksasap, or “Lawyer Tor” of the “Sisaket Can’t Stand It” group, speaks with the Isaan Record in a coffee shop, a hangout spot of the LGBT who’ve been engaged in the city’s political movement. They dream of seeing everyone, every gender, becoming equal.

The 27-year-old Pornsit is a former Future Forward Party MP candidate, and an assistant to former Move Forward MP Tanwarin Sukkhapsit. He’s also a lawyer representing a local movement against the Rasi Salai Dam, and he provides legal information that helps people know how to save themselves from prosecution.

He’s born and raised in Sisaket. He questions why, from when he was born until now, Sisaket remains unchanged. Why hasn’t it developed as much as Bangkok, when the people of Sisaket also pay taxes like those in Bangkok?

He wants to see his province move forward. He wants the law to be compatible with a world that’s changed, and he wants it to be able to serve justice, especially the law related to gender diversity.

“I want to see the law being used equally, and treating people the same, regardless of their gender,” he says.

It is this desire that motivated him to go into politics in Sisaket. Here, something of the life of Pornsit is introduced, the life of a local lawyer who wants Sisaket to develop as much as Bangkok has, and to see the LGBT in possession of rights equal to others.



***“I want to see the law being used equally, and treating people the same, regardless of their gender,” Pornsit “Lawyer Tor” Raksasap, a representative of local LGBT group.***

**The Isaan Record: How did the Sisaket Can’t Stand It come to be? How is it that most of the participants are LGBT?**

**Pornsit Raksasap:** When we had an open call to find people to help organize a political rally, we created a LINE group named “Sisaket Can’t Stand It.” We posted the link to the group on the province’s official Facebook page, saying, those who want to join the fight with us, please come join us [in the LINE group]. A lot of people joined the group afterward.

Then, we met up for coffee. There was a big police presence but we just sat and discussed how to organize a rally, and what we would do. When we came to a conclusion, we set up the group. At first, there were about ten people, but now we have up to 70 volunteers from various backgrounds: doctors, teachers, students, etc.

It didn’t really start with us pointing out that it should be a LGBT movement. We opened the group to all kinds of people but it turned out that almost everyone in the group was LGBT. Personally, I think LGBT are very outspoken and expressive. They can’t accept injustice and they want to speak out about it.

After forming the group, we saw that there are a lot of LGBT people, so we thought of what topics we could talk about: gender equality and gender diversity. LGBT-related issues should be discussed, including the problem about marriage equality. We were certain that we could simultaneously push for solutions to LGBT-related problems along with other political problems.

Another thing we’ve been advocating for, beyond marriage equality, is embracing diversity, for

society to see everyone of every gender as equal. We said that a good society is not a society where everyone thinks the same or are the same, but a society where everyone embraces diversity and understands that it's something normal, not a sickness. If we can normalize diversity, it would be normal to express different political opinions because a democratic society is about respecting diversity. This is what allows us to come together.

**IR: Why have so many people, so many students, come out at this time, especially the LGBT community?**

**PR:** The common sentiment that has pushed a lot of people to participate is the government and its use of violence. If there's a common sentiment that drives people, they will join naturally. If you ask what's triggered this movement, pushing more people out... I don't know if I want to change Section 112. I don't know if I want reform of the monarchy, but using violence is unacceptable, something like that. That's driven more people to join. You've seen so many more have joined. The government can't control it. I'd say there's no way it can be controlled.

As to why so many LGBT have participated in the movement, I'm not so sure. By the time I realized this, a lot of them had already joined. I think it's something public, and it's normal. I don't know the factor behind more LGBT people joining political movements.

We probably had never seen an LGBT rally in Bangkok specifically talking about politics. Maybe they thought that politics was all about the parliament, or that politics is all about the yellow shirts and the red shirts. But today, politics is not about the color of your shirt. Politics is about everyone, and it's something that we've realized, all citizens have realized by now, that everything is political. The price of gas is political. The marriage equality law is also political. Any law that suppresses: tax laws or others like the liquor law: they're all political. This awakening has driven so many people to join.

In the past, people might have thought that LGBT are probably not very interested in politics. They're fun, love having a laugh and love partying. Now we've shown that LGBT are a big part of the movement, in every aspect. That's because they've been bearing the impact. They see how society is, and they want to change it for the better, so they can have a place in it that's equal to others.

I think they've joined because they've had to live inside these problems. They think that they'll have a better life if they participate, and our fellow LGBT wouldn't have to struggle like this again in the future. And I think LGBT have a bigger part in this because we face more problems than others. Ordinary people might struggle with how to make a living, an economic problem, but we've been suppressed, discriminated against, by society. We face inequality based on our diverse genders.

**IR: Did you decide to run for MP in Sisaket with the Future Forward Party because the party had campaigned about LGBT rights?**

**PR:** Partly, but that's not what it's all about. One of the reasons was that I was already an activist. I think that one day, my dream is to be a part of the lawmaking process, amending laws, and working in the parliament. I realized that a lot of laws are not fair, including gender-related laws.

I look at it from several angles. For example, the law regulating alcoholic beverages, the Children's Council. I used to be president of the Children's Council. I saw that so many laws are problematic and I saw that the Children's Council is an agency with a lot of potential, and they're in every province, every sub-district and district. This is partly why I decided to become part of the movement.

Another reason is that I'd never seen a political party talk about this issue. I'd never seen a political

party announce that we'd have the first trans MP in Thailand, meaning to have a person who'd be ready to talk about gender, about diversity, and willing to bring their gender identity into parliament. No political party had ever done that, and there came the Future Forward Party. It also had a task force for gender diversity, set it up specifically to create a movement around this topic.

I'm certain that the Future Forward Party was sincere enough about this. People could put their faith in them, especially LGBT. It was something new that made me feel that there's no need to sweep it under the rug any more. Like, if I'm an MP, I don't need to hide my identity as a LGBT because I'm ashamed about it, or afraid that people will have an issue with it. If you ask me whether there are people thinking this way, of course there are. I'm not saying there had never been LGBT in the parliament. I'm sure there have been lots of them. But did they hide it away because they were ashamed or discouraged?