

Community Business Position – CNN Interview

Overview: Hong Kong's veto of the same-sex partnership bill is not just a setback for equality—it's a missed economic opportunity. In today's global talent market, inclusion is a competitive advantage. Without legal recognition and protections for LGBTQ+ individuals, Hong Kong risks losing its edge to regional peers, who are advancing inclusive policies, as well as its in global competition for talent. This decision sends the wrong message, undermining the city's efforts to attract and retain the diverse talent it needs to thrive.

1. How may the vetoing on Wednesday affect Hong Kong's ability to attract global talents?

The Legislative Council's recent veto of the Registration of Same-sex Partnerships Bill is a strategic misstep that undermines Hong Kong's positioning as a global, inclusive, talent hub. While Hong Kong currently ranks 4th globally in talent competitiveness according to the IMD World Talent Ranking 2025, this progress is at risk. The veto contradicts the expectations of international talent, particularly LGBTQ+ professionals, who prioritize legal recognition, psychological safety, belonging and inclusive environments when choosing where to live and work.

In contrast, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Iceland – the top three in the IMD ranking – have marriage equality, offering full legal recognition and rights to same sex couples. Failure to implement even a limited partnership framework sends a signal that equality is negotiable, which may deter diverse talent and multinational investment.

2. What kind of message is it sending?

The veto sends a message of institutional resistance to inclusion, despite judicial mandates and growing public support. A survey from the Chinese University of Hong Kong found that 60% of Hong Kong residents now support same-sex marriage, up from 38% in 2013, and over 70% support anti-discrimination laws based on sexual orientation. Despite this, the Legislative Council's decision indicates a disconnect between public opinion and legislative action on LGBTQ+ rights.

More than 70% of LGBTQ+ employees in Hong Kong do not feel safe being open at work, with a 2022 study from The Open University of Hong Kong finding that 72% of LGBTQ+ employees chose not to disclose their sexual orientation to HR departments, 66% not to their bosses, and 61% not to colleagues. The veto perpetuates this stigmatised environment and signals to the community and global observers that legal progress is being stalled.

3. What other places (preferably in the region) have been faring better in this regard and may pose competition for Hong Kong?

Taiwan has positioned itself as a regional leader by legalising same-sex marriage in 2019 and recently extending adoption rights to same-sex couples. This legal certainty has bolstered Taiwan's ability to attract and retain diverse talent, including LGBTQ+ individuals, supported by growing multinational investment and inclusive workplace policies.

Singapore, while not recognising same-sex marriage, has advanced workplace inclusion initiatives and anti-discrimination efforts, making significant strides in fostering a more inclusive corporate culture. Both Taiwan and Singapore present strong competition to Hong Kong for global and regional talent, particularly from younger generations for whom diversity and equality are paramount.

4. What do LGBTQ+ talents look for when they decide to move to a new place? How much does LGBTQ+ friendliness play into that decision? How much has Hong Kong been able to provide to potential talents?

LGBTQ+ talent prioritizes:

- Legal recognition of relationships
- Equitable employment benefits
- Anti-discrimination protections
- Social acceptance and psychological safety

The Community Business LGBTQ+ Inclusion Index, with participation from 105 companies in Hong Kong over the last decade, shows improvement—with average inclusion scores rising by 17.3% and increasing numbers of companies achieving gold, bronze and silver standards. This reflects growing corporate commitment to creating inclusive workplaces.

However, the lack of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and the recent veto on the Registration of Same-sex Partnerships Bill leave significant gaps. Many LGBTQ+ employees still experience stigma and choose not to come out at work, hindering a fully affirming environment. Consequently, while Hong Kong has made progress in corporate inclusivity and public opinion is increasingly supportive, these factors have not yet fully translated into an optimal environment for LGBTQ+ talent compared to some regional peers.