



PFLAG of Cape Cod, Brewster

Parents, Families, Friends of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transgenders

April - June 2005

NEWSLETTER

Brewster, MA

Nebraska Anti-Gay Amendment Struck Down

[Excerpted from lambdalegal.com 5/12/05]

In a ruling issued May 12, a federal court struck down Nebraska's anti-gay-union constitutional amendment that bans any and all forms of legal recognition for same-sex relationships, including domestic partnerships and other basic protections. The state is expected to appeal the case to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals.

The anti-gay-union law was passed in Nov. 2000 in a heavily debated election. Promoted to voters simply as protection of marriage, the law went far beyond restricting the right to marry to heterosexual couples. The law explicitly bars any legal recognition of a same-sex couple in a "civil union, domestic partnership, or other similar same-sex relationship."

New Jersey's 'Marriage' Case Goes to State Supreme Court

[Excerpted from lambdalegal.com 6/14/05]

A New Jersey appeals court issued a 2-1 ruling in favor of the state in Lambda Legal's case seeking marriage equality for same-sex couples. The ruling clears the way for the case to move to the New Jersey Supreme Court for a final ruling.

"We are disappointed but not discouraged," said the lead attorney on the case. "In cases of this magnitude, much like our landmark victory in the U.S. Supreme Court striking down sodomy laws nationwide, losses at the lower court levels are typical and we have seen that the opinion of the dissenting judge often later becomes the law of the land."

In his dissent, Judge. Colleser said, "By prohibiting them from a real right to marry, plaintiffs as well as their children suffer the real consequences of being 'different.' While the Domestic Partnership Act gives many, but not all, of the benefits and protections automatically granted to married persons, we have learned after much pain that 'separate but equal' does not substitute for equal rights."

The lawsuit is based solely on the New Jersey Constitution, which means that the New Jersey Supreme Court will have the last word on the case.

Anti-Gay Action in Massachusetts

[Excerpted from, PlanetOut Network 6/16/05]

Conservatives in Massachusetts have changed tactics, announcing a petition drive to amend the state Constitution in the 2008 election.

This will be the third attempt to outlaw same-sex marriage by constitutional amendment, and the announcement indicates that marriage opponents have essentially abandoned their effort to amend the Constitution in 2006.

That effort began last year when the joint Legislature passed a measure that would reserve civil marriage for heterosexual couples, but create civil union status for gay men and lesbians. In order to advance, the proposal must pass in its identical form this year, and would go to the voters in 2006.

The new petition drive is for an amendment to undo the legalization of same-sex marriage and prevent the emergence of any similar status. A prominent backer is Gov. Romney, who said, "I'd rather have civil unions than gay marriage, but I'd rather have neither."

For the new, harsher amendment, petitioners must gather 66,500 names between Sept. 21 and Nov. 23. Subsequently, the amendment must win the support of 25% of the joint Legislature in two successive sessions, and proceed to the ballot for ratification by majority vote.

The first effort to promote an anti-gay marriage amendment was killed by a parliamentary tactic in 2002.

APA Endorses Same-Sex Marriage

[Excerpted from Associated Press 5/22/05]

An assembly of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) has voted to support same-sex marriage. In a statement passed by a majority of the assembly's 250 members, the body urged legal recognition of same-sex marriage and benefits "in the interest of maintaining and promoting mental health." The APA voted to approve the statement on May 22, the first day of an annual, weeklong conference in Atlanta.

The American Psychological Association adopted a similar position last year. That group stated that research showed discrimination based on sexual orientation "detrimentally affects the psychological, physical, social and economic well-being of lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals."

First Disney, Now Ford

[Excerpted from glaad.org 6/1/05]

After ending a failed boycott against the Walt Disney Company, an anti-gay lobbying group called the American Family Association has called for a boycott of Ford Motor Company because of its family-friendly policies. Among AFA's complaints is that Ford's corporate policies pledge not to discriminate against LGBT employees, and that Ford provides equal benefits for all its employees.

Ford--like other major corporations--understands that not only are these policies good for their business, but they're the right thing to do. Non-discrimination policies and equal employee benefits help recruit and retain the best talent. More than 80 percent of Fortune 500 companies have sexual orientation non-discrimination policies and almost half provide domestic partner benefits. Non-discrimination policies covering gender identity and expression are also expanding rapidly. Ford's policies are in line with mainstream corporate America, while the American Family Association continues to attack from the fringes.

GLAAD and HRC are urging people who wish to express their support for Ford Motor Company's inclusive policies to call Ford's Customer Relationship Center at 800-392-3673 or e-mail crcredir@ford.com.

Civility in Connecticut

[NY Times 4/23/05]

A new Connecticut law, signed by the Republican Governor, law firmly extends to gay couples the same rights and protections guaranteed to married heterosexuals, including tax and insurance benefits, family leave, hospital visits, and more.

In the past 15 years, Connecticut has protected gays and lesbians under hate-crime, employment, and housing laws, and allowed unmarried couples to raise adopted children. Just as civil union was the next logical step, so may marriage be finally extended some day.

Other states are heading in a different direction. Fourteen have banned gay marriage in the last year, with Kansas going further and outlawing civil unions

Interesting Tidbits

[PFLAG Alert 5/12/05]

Kraft Foods is under fire from the religious right for supporting the 2006 Gay Olympic Games.

Microsoft has reversed its decision and is again supporting anti-discrimination laws in Washington state.

PFLAG hosted its first table at the California State PTA Convention held in Sacramento April 28-30. The Sacramento Chapter hosted the table, but it happened only with the financial aid and support of many chapters and individuals. It was a success, a positive experience having very little negativity.

Gays on TV Reduce Prejudice

[Excerpted from glaad.org 6/1/05]

New studies by University of Minnesota researchers have found that watching positive portrayals of gays on television can reduce anti-gay prejudice. In three separate studies, researchers measured the attitudes of a total of 475 college students toward gay men before and after watching episodes of Bravo's "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," NBC's "Will & Grace" and HBO's "Six Feet Under." In all three instances, exposure to portrayals of gays resulted in a significant reduction in prejudice, the university reported. The amount of change was greatest among those with little or no prior interpersonal contact with gay men.

Ex-Gay Ministry Picketed

[Excerpted from PlanetOut Network 6/16/05]

Sixteen-year-old "Zach" is apparently enduring a rite of passage still too common for gay youth: his parents say he must change. When they enrolled him in a Christian camp-like program to turn him straight, he documented his fears in his online diary, or blog.

The PlanetOut Network could not confirm Zach's identity or his story, but the blog has sparked a firestorm of protest against the program, known as *Refuge*, and renewed scrutiny of similar "ministries."

A residential program run by Memphis-based Love in Action (LIA), *Refuge* "ministers to adolescents struggling with broken and addictive behaviors, such as promiscuity, alcohol and drug addiction, and homosexuality," according to its Web site.

An estimated 150 people--including parents, children, psychiatrists and other concerned Memphis residents carrying signs that have slogans such as "This is Child Abuse"--gathered outside LIA headquarters to picket *Refuge* for actions described on Zach's blog.

For LIA, homosexuality is not an orientation but a set of behaviors that lies at the root of all dysfunction. And homosexual desires can supposedly be reprogrammed, through *Refuge*, at a cost of \$2,000 for two weeks, or \$4,000 for six weeks.

Exodus International, an umbrella organization for nearly all regional "ex-gay" ministries, provides funding and marketing support for groups such as LIA, Lifeguard Ministries, New Hope Ministries, and others. Although "reparative therapy" for homosexuality has been denounced by the mainstream psychological community as tantamount to abuse, "ex-gay" ministries offer hope to conflicted parents (usually devoutly religious and conservative) who are unwilling or unable to accept their kids' sexuality or seek traditional counseling.

Youth (and adults) who enter "ex-gay" programs may suffer from genuine self-destructive behaviors that go far beyond their struggle with same-sex attraction, said Wayne Besen, who wrote the book *Anything But Straight* about the "ex-gay" movement.

Ex-gay programs are a pawn in the culture war. They support the idea that homosexuality can be changed; therefore, it is a lifestyle and not worthy of civil rights legislation.

“Abstinence Only” Ineffective

[Excerpted from Executive Director, PFLAG Alert 6/1/05]

We are not surprised to hear of the recent *Mathematica* Policy Research findings that “Abstinence Only” sex education programs are not as effective as proponents had hoped they would be.

Having spent 11 years working in the field of HIV/AIDS, this is not a big surprise to me. As the report acknowledges, the programs are clearly not helping young people develop the critical-thinking skills that can help them negotiate and manage peer pressure. Instead, what is too often the case is that overly zealous teachers use a religious backdrop to instill fear and guilt about sexual activity. And for most young people, this proves to be ineffective and counterproductive.

The Bush Administration has invested nearly one billion dollars of taxpayer money into these programs while young people are missing out on life-saving information to protect them from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Simply stated, it is never appropriate to use fear and shame to control young people’s sexual attitudes and behavior and, furthermore, there is no evidence that these messages lead to responsible sexual behavior.

At PFLAG, we believe that abstinence should be a component of all sex education programs. But we think that no program is complete unless it includes a comprehensive, medically accurate, age-appropriate discussion about condom use and ways to protect oneself should one decide to engage in sexual activity.

Should we need any more evidence of why abstinence only programs are irresponsibly lacking in substance and why we must advocate for comprehensive education about HIV and other STD prevention, a rather sobering statistic that was released this week provides another clarion call. The number of Americans living with HIV is now estimated to be over a million. And according to Dr. Carlos del Rio of Emory University, the number of new cases each year has increased to an all time high of 60,000, up 50% from previous estimates.

1st Gay Wedding on Military Base

[365Gay.com 6/14/05]

A gay couple was married May 3 at Canadian Forces Base Greenwood in what may be the first gay wedding on any military base in North America. One man was a sergeant and the other a warrant officer.

The Canadian Forces in January approved a policy that calls on military chaplains to formally bless same-sex marriages or in cases where their religions do not permit them to marry gay couples to arrange an appropriate substitute pastor. The policy also restricts gay weddings to bases in areas where same-sex marriage is legal.

Same-sex marriage became legal in Nova Scotia last year.

CIGSYA House

A Safe Place for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender,
Questioning and Straight Youth

508-778-7744 for recorded information or www.cigsya.org

Gay Runs for NY Atty General

[Excerpted 365gay.com 6/17/05]

The highest-ranking openly gay man to ever serve in the White House is running for New York State Attorney General. Sean Patrick Maloney, a former senior advisor to President Clinton, will make a formal announcement of his candidacy June 21.

Maloney and his partner of 12 years have three adopted children.

Mass. Democrats Support Same-Sex Marriage

[Excerpted from PlanetOut.com 6/18/06]

Three days before the anniversary of the first legal gay weddings in the United States, delegates to the Massachusetts Democratic Party voted overwhelmingly to add same-sex marriage to their platform.

The gay marriage plank, approved in a voice vote during the Democrats’ convention, makes the Massachusetts Democratic Party the third in the nation to endorse same-sex marriage, after Iowa and Colorado Democrats approved similar measures last year. Previously the Massachusetts platform endorsed only civil unions.

The addition to the Democratic Party’s platform reads, “We affirm our commitment to the Massachusetts constitutional guarantee to same-sex marriage, and all of its rights, privileges and obligations, and reject any attempt to weaken or revoke those rights.”

One year after letting same-sex couples wed, Massachusetts remains the only state to achieve marriage equality. Civil union laws in Vermont and Connecticut, as well as a domestic partnership law in California, provide several marriage-like benefits for same-sex couples in those states.

The raucous convention of 3,000 Democrats featured speeches by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean, who as Vermont governor signed the nation’s first civil union law. In his new role as the head of the DNC, however, Dean refused to take a stand on the gay marriage platform, underscoring the nationwide rift over marriage and the belief of some analysts that say the issue helped return George W. Bush to the White House.

One prominent Democrat did take a strong stand against the Massachusetts platform. Anticipating the revised platform’s approval two weeks ago, Sen. John Kerry called it a “mistake.”

Kerry’s comments clashed with his fellow Bay State senator, Kennedy, who strongly favored including same-sex marriage in the platform.

Quote of the Day

“Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation; it cannot be classified as an illness.” Sigmund Freud, 9 April 1935; *The Letters of Sigmund Freud* (1961).

Letter from Randy

Dear PFLAG Members,

If you missed our April meeting, you missed a marvelously entertaining evening--a cabaret-styled performance by PAVIA with proceeds benefiting PFLAG's scholarship fund. The 53 people attending enjoyed a wide range of beautifully rendered songs in a cozy atmosphere with tasty refreshments. Thanks to everyone for contributing to this social evening.

As organizations mature, there are adjustments which need to be made, and PFLAG is not exempt from this inevitability. Witness the changes occurring at the state and national levels within PFLAG. Locally, as members of the board shift the focus of their efforts, I look forward to working with each of them in the capacity of coordinator. I extend a heartfelt thank-you to Pem for all her time, effort, and dedication to PFLAG over the years. She's an extremely tough act to follow, and we have been fortunate to have had her leadership and guidance. Please let her know how much she is appreciated by our PFLAG family when you get the chance.

Now is the time for all PFLAG members to feel empowered to share thoughts about programs, projects, and opportunities for promotion of PFLAG as an organization. Our challenges are changing, especially here in Massachusetts, and we need to think creatively as we plan future meetings and events. More than ever, we are in a position to listen to members who have ideas to share. Collectively, we may be able to tap into resources which are out of reach for individuals. Lets look again at the possibilities for PFLAG/Brewster and set some new goals.

Randy Lewis-Kendell

PFLAG Has New Nat'l Director

[From PFLAG Providence *News* April-May 05]

Jody Michael Huckaby became the Executive Director of PFLAG in March. Over the last 14 years, he has served as executive director of the Washington Humane Society, Bering Community Service Foundation, and New Mexico AIDS Services. Huckaby, who is gay and has three gay brothers, is the seventh of eight children. When appointed, he said, "PFLAG is the unique family voice on GLBT issues. Having been raised in a small town in Louisiana, I know the challenges that families face when coping with sexual orientation and gender identity. My family didn't have the resources of PFLAG to help us back them. But today more than 500 chapters across the country are essential in helping end discrimination and achieve equality for all."

Legal Advice for LGBT's

The following interesting and educational pamphlets are available for downloading from lambdalegal.org.

Bending the Mold: An Action Kit for Transgender Youth
Out at Work: A Guide for LGBT Employees
Changing Lives Changing Minds: 2004 Annual Report
Immigration Resources for LGBT's
People of Faith Speak Out!

GLBT Group Meetings

PFLAG/Brewster every third Monday, 7pm, 1st Parish Church
CIGSYA, 56 Barnstable Rd., Hyannis, 7pm Wed & Thur
Freedom to Marry Coalition of CC: ccftmc@yahoo.com

Lesbian Connections: 1st Fridays, 6:30-8pm, 1st Parish Barn

Metropolitan Community Church: 1st & 3rd Sundays, 6pm,
Chapel in the Pines, Eastham 508-398-6471 or 432-8361

Straight Spouse Group: 1st Tuesdays, 7pm, 1st Parish, 896-2620

Transgender Support: 2nd Sundays 3-5pm, 1st Parish, Winslow
House, across 6A on Harwich Rd., 362-4435

Dates to Remember

Jun 20, Jul 18, Aug 15: Brewster PFLAG, 7 pm

Jul 5, Aug 2, Sep 6: Straight Spouse Group, 896-2620

Jul 10, Aug 14, Sep 11: Transgender Support 362-4435

Jul 30-Aug 5: Family Week in Provincetown

Aug 14-20: Carnival Week in P'Town; "Heroes & Villains"

PFLAG/Cape Cod, Brewster

PO Box 1167 Orleans, MA 02653

MISSION: *Promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons, their families and friends, through Support, to cope with an adverse society; Education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and Advocacy, to end discrimination and secure equal civil rights.*

MEETINGS: 7 pm on the third Monday of each month at First Parish Church, Brewster; everyone is welcome. For information call 508-398-6471 or 508-240-2737 or 508-432-8119.

MEMBERSHIP: Dues-paying members support the efforts of PFLAG both locally and nationally. Ten dollars goes to PFLAG National (includes subscription to *Pflagpole*), and the balance is used for our own Newsletter and the purchase of pamphlets, books, and videos. Our fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

OFFICERS: Coordinator: Robert Lewis-Kendell; Treasurer, Martha Berndt; Corresponding Sec'y, Pem Shultz; Publicity, Joanne Hush & Pem Shultz; Newsletter, Joann Figueras & Doris Scherbak; Program, (vol. needed); Library, Randy Lewis-Kendell; Scholarship, Anne Toran (with Pem, Martha, and Doris). Additional Board member Doris Youngholm.

NEWSLETTER: Published four times a year. Send articles to PO Box 1167 or e-mail joann@pflagcapecod.org.

WEBPAGE: www.pflagcapecod.org

Membership Application

____\$35 Family ____\$25 Individual ____\$15 Limited income

\$_____Additional donation for local chapter

Name_____

Address_____

City_____State____Zip_____

Telephone_____

Please make checks payable to PFLAG/Brewster. Mail to Martha Berndt, 2 Englewood Dr. H-5, Harwich, MA 02645