

HUD Proposes New Rule To Ensure Equal Access To Housing

REGARDLESS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION
OR GENDER IDENTITY

WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has proposed new regulations intended to ensure that its core housing programs are open to all eligible persons, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

"This is a fundamental issue of fairness," said HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. "We have a responsibility to make certain that public programs are open to all Americans. With this proposed rule, we will make clear that a person's eligibility for federal housing programs is, and should be, based on their need and not on their sexual orientation or gender identity." HUD is seeking public comment on a number of proposed areas including:

Prohibiting lenders from using sexual orientation or gender identity as a basis to determine a borrower's eligibility for FHA-insured mortgage financing. FHA's current regulations provide that a mortgage lender's determination of the adequacy of a borrower's income "shall be made in a uniform manner without regard to" specified prohibited grounds. The proposed rule would add actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity to the prohibited grounds to ensure FHA-approved lenders do not deny or otherwise alter the terms of mortgages on the basis of irrelevant criteria.

Clarifying that all otherwise eligible families, regardless of marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity, have the opportunity to participate in HUD programs. In the majority of HUD's rental and homeownership programs the term "family" already has a broad scope, and includes a single person and families with or without children. HUD's proposed rule clarifies that families, otherwise eligible for HUD programs, may not be excluded because one or more members of the family may be an LGBT individual, have an LGBT relationship, or be perceived to be such an individual or in such relationship.

Prohibiting owners and operators of HUD-assisted housing, or housing whose financing is insured by HUD, from inquiring about the sexual orientation or gender identity of an applicant for, or occupant of, the dwelling, whether renter- or owner-occupied. HUD is proposing to institute this policy in its rental assistance and homeownership programs, which include the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage insurance programs, community development programs, and public and assisted housing programs.

Other actions:



HUD is conducting the first-ever national study of discrimination against members of the LGBT community in the rental and sale of housing. Every ten years, HUD does a study of the impact of housing discrimination on the basis of race and color. HUD undertook this important research in 1977, 1989 and 2000 and is currently undertaking this study again. It is believed that LGBT individuals and families may remain silent because in many local jurisdictions, they may have little or no legal recourse. While there are no national assessments of LGBT housing discrimination, there are state and local studies that have shown evidence of this sort of bias. For example, a 2007 report by Michigan's Fair Housing Centers found that nearly 30 percent of same-sex couples were treated differently when attempting to buy or rent a home.

HUD currently requires its recipients of discretionary funds to comply with local and state non-discrimination laws that cover sexual orientation or gender identity. In July, the Department issued new guidance that treats discrimination based on gender nonconformity or sex stereotyping as sex discrimination under the Fair Housing Act, and instructs HUD staff to inform individuals filing complaints about state and local agencies that have LGBT-inclusive nondiscrimination laws.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in rental, sales and lending on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability and familial status. Approximately 20 states, and the District of Columbia, and more than 150 cities, towns and counties across the nation have additional protections that specifically prohibit such discrimination against LGBT individuals. Under guidance announced last year, HUD will, as appropriate, retain its jurisdiction over complaints filed by LGBT individuals or families but also jointly investigate or refer matters to those state, district and local governments with other legal protections.

'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Policy Cost Pentagon More Than \$193 Million In Six Years, GAO Concludes

WASHINGTON – The U.S. military's "don't ask, don't tell" ban on gays serving openly in the military cost the Pentagon more than \$193 million over six years, the Government Accountability Office reported.

McClatchy News Services reports that in the first-ever public accounting of the cost of the Clinton-era policy, which remains in effect despite its December repeal, the GAO determined that the bulk of that expenditure, \$185.7 million, went toward recruiting and training replacements for the 3,664 gay service members expelled during those years. The Pentagon spent another \$7.7 million on administrative costs.

The report also suggested that the cost on military readiness of the policy had been high. It said 79 percent of soldiers expelled from the Army under "don't ask, don't tell" held jobs that were critical to military operations. In the Navy, 760 sailors expelled spoke languages considered critical to U.S. military operations, including Arabic, Serbian and Haitian Creole, the report said.

Advocates of repealing "don't ask, don't tell" hailed the report, saying it bolstered their position that barring gays and lesbians from serving openly in the military had been costly both financially and to the nation's military readiness. They urged the Pentagon to move quickly to certify that it was ready to lift the ban, something required by the repeal law President Barack Obama signed in December.

"Today's GAO report underscores that the 'don't ask, don't tell' law not only deprives the military of the qualified Americans it needs, but has also been a huge waste of taxpayer dollars on replacing patriots lost under this discriminatory law," Aubrey Sarvis, an Army veteran and executive director for Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, said in a statement. "These numbers remind us why it's time to move forward on certification so we can begin implementing repeal of 'don't ask, don't tell' and make a smooth transition to open service."

Rep. Susan Davis, D-Calif., who commissioned the GAO report as chairwoman of the House Armed Services subcommittee on military personnel during the last Congress, said the GAO report showed the importance of repeal. "Clearly this was the right thing to do," Davis said about repeal in a statement on the report's findings. "No longer will American taxpayers continue to pay to throw out patriotic service members who want only to serve their country."

The report said the military had been unable to determine the cost of "don't ask, don't tell" prior to 2004, because not all the services could provide information on training expenses. The majority of the approximately 13,500 service members expelled since the policy took effect in 1993 weren't included in the study.

The GAO said it had calculated the total cost of "don't ask, don't tell" for the six years – 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 – by determining the expenses associated with the initial training of a new recruit, then multiplying that cost by the 3,664 service members who were expelled during those years.

The average cost was \$52,800, but it varied widely by service, the GAO said. The Navy's cost was the highest, at \$103,000 per recruit.

"Our calculations for the services' replacement costs amount to about \$19.4 million for the Air Force, \$39.4 million for the Army, \$22.0 million for the Marine Corps, and \$104.9 million for the Navy," the GAO report said.

The majority of those expelled had already served at least two years in the military, the report found.

The report showed little sign of racial discrimination – 70 percent of those expelled were white, and 18 percent black, roughly equivalent to the percentages of blacks and whites in the military.

But enforcement fell disproportionately on women, with the report saying that women made up 34 percent of those forced out. Women make up only about 14 percent of the number of people in the military.

Among the critical job specialties affected by "don't ask, don't tell," the report said, were many for which the military had paid recruiting bonuses,

UPDATE

LGBTQ Couples Celebration

TUCSON (Observer Update) - To all our heart-connecting enthusiasts: It is time once again to honor our GLBTQI couples! We have set aside Wednesday, February 2, to celebrate the love that connects (or has connected) many of you to a very special person.

Everyone is invited, whether in a relationship or not. This just might be the time when "opportunity knocks" for our singles! Please join us to share in a heart-filling evening. We will meet from 7 - 9 P.M. at our regular PFLAG meeting place -Ward 6 Office, 3202 E. 1st Street, Tucson.

As always, there will be a banquet of refreshments, provided by our PFLAG members, and wonderful "how-we-met stories" to entertain us. We hope you will invite friends to join you on this occasion, as well. It is, after all, a celebration to be shared by lots of heart-connecting enthusiasts!

Please RSVP to Karen/Jack at 520-207-9120 (leave message) or Email us at karenj7@cox.net.

2011 Fabulous Faygeleh Film Series & Sponsor Reception

TUCSON (Observer Update) - It's back! Come out and join us for another year of outstanding LGBT Jewish Film in Tucson at the Grand Cinemas Crossroads 6 (Grant & Swan). Film times are 1pm for "Tell Them Anything You Want" and "Walk on Water" and 3:30pm for "Gay Days" and a couple of fabulous shorts! General Admission is \$8/per film \$7/Students and Seniors.

LGBT Jewish Inclusion Project Sponsor Reception at Buddy's Grill 5:45pm*** Come celebrate and shmooz with us as we celebrate another year of award winning LGBT-Jewish Film in Tucson. \$20.00. All LGBT-Jewish Films & Reception Pass or \$36.00 for 2.

For more information visit jewishtucson.org/lgbt.

Event Details: Jan 30, 2011, 1:00 - 8:00pm, 4811 E. Grant Rd. (At Rear of Plaza) Reception: 4821 E. Grant Rd. (Buddy's Grill).

For more information, contact Marc Paley, 520-306-0157, lgbtinfo@jfsa.org.

Project PREP To Tutor & Empower GLBTQ Youth

TUCSON (Observer Update) - Wingspan's EON Youth Program recently received a grant of more than \$3,500 from the Alliance Fund to launch a new tutoring program for GLBTQ youth - Project PREP (Positive Respectful Educational Possibilities).

"Education is important, yet statistics show that nine out of ten GLBTQ are harassed in school," says Youth Outreach Specialist Zami Hyemingway. "They suffer from higher dropout rates, lower GPAs and lower overall test scores because they're often exposed to a hostile environment based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. "This unfortunate reality, coupled with his own witnessing of its effects on GLBT youth drove Zami to make securing funding and developing a tutoring program for EON a top priority. "I've seen youth who visit the Lounge who lack the basic reading, writing and math skills they need to succeed, but it goes deeper than that," he says. The basis of EON is to help GLBTQ youth feel empowered not just in the group but in the larger world. Education is an important part of that empowerment.

To further that objective, PREP and its volunteer tutors will help students not only with academics but also with developing the skills that will help them cope with the difficulties they face back in school.

"All youth have a right to an education taught in a safe environment. We'll teach PREP participants techniques for dealing with pressures from students and indifferent instructors so they can begin to advocate for themselves."

Tutoring will begin in February and PREP is looking for volunteers. "We have a start with five great people who've already volunteered to tutor," says Zami, "but we're aiming to have at least 10 dedicated tutors, so there's still a need. You don't need a degree in a subject, just an aptitude or interest in it and a desire to help our GLBTQ youth."

Volunteer tutors will undergo a specialized orientation, separate from the regularly scheduled EON volunteer orientation that takes place this month. In addition, volunteers will participate in a tutor training that will provide them with specific information and skills necessary to build safe, trusting relationships with GLBTQ youth.

Zami explains: "Tutoring can be intimidating for both the learner and the tutor, so we want to equip volunteers with relationship-building skills that will help them contribute to EON's goal of building a safe environment for the youth who use the Lounge." The special volunteer orientation and tutor training are scheduled to begin late in January. If you would like to be a volunteer tutor or find out more information about PREP, e-mail Zami Hyemingway at zhyemingway@wingspan.org

Don't Ask, Don't Tell

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

including infantrymen, mental health specialists, chemists, biologists, military policemen and nuclear specialists.

The report also suggested that the expulsions probably hurt service members even after they left the military. The report said that only 57 percent of those expelled for being gay received an honorable discharge, compared to a military wide average of 74 percent.

Those who didn't receive an honorable discharge were likely to face a more difficult job market and were also likely to have lost some veterans benefits.

Read more: <http://miamiherald.typepad.com/gaysouthflorida/2011/01/dont-ask-dont-tell-policy-cost-pentagon-more-than-193-million-in-six-years-gao-concludes.html#ixzz1BotpBuK7>

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Justice Department Outlines Anti-G/L Marriage Case

BOSTON (Observer Update) - The U.S. Department of Justice has filed its opening legal brief for its appeal of a decision by a judge in Massachusetts who concluded that a portion of a federal law banning recognition of same-sex marriage is unconstitutional, reports 365Gay.com.

given to heterosexual married couples.

The Justice Department argued in a brief filed that the law was Congress' "reasonable response" to a debate among the states on same-sex marriage. In its brief, the Justice Department said the federal government has the right to define marriage differently than individual states.

The appeal is expected to be heard by the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston.

The appeal follows two rulings in July by U.S. District Judge Joseph Tauro, who said the federal Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional because it interferes with a state's right to define marriage and denies married gay couples an array of federal benefits

AROUND THE GAY GLOBE...

The Conservative government in Ottawa continues to shortchange frontline Canadian HIV/AIDS service organizations, according to numbers released to the Commons Health Committee by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). While funding to the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada will increase this year to \$72.6 million, it is still far below the \$84.4 million originally planned for the program when the Liberals introduced it in 2004.

In its first year, funding for the Federal Initiative stood at \$42.2 million, with a plan to double it within five years. It was on track until 2007/8 when the Harper government redistributed \$10.2 million to the Canadian HIV Vaccine Initiative (CHVI). The CHVI is billed as a partnership between the government and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, with \$139 million planned spending between 2007 and 2017. Of that amount, \$111 million is to come from the government, with the remaining \$28 million from the Gates Foundation. But part of the deal with the Gates Foundation stipulates that Canada's contribution should be new money, rather than funds diverted from other HIV programs. ...

A Retford (UK) councillor's request for a flag marking gay pride to fly from town halls in Bassetlaw has been declined. East Retford West Councillor Ian Campbell enquired about flying the rainbow flag emblematic of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community at Retford and Worksop town halls next month to mark LGBT History Month. The request was rejected by the council, which has a policy of not accepting requests to run flags, and Cllr Campbell was instead offered an internal display. A council spokesman said although the authority did not accept requests to fly specific flags, it was keen to work with Cllr Campbell to raise awareness of LGBT issues. ...

Remember when Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad addressed a crowd at Columbia University in 2007 telling them the following ridiculous statement? "In Iran, we don't have homosexuals like in your country. We don't have that in our country. In Iran, we do not have this phenomenon. I do not know who has told you that we have it."

Ahmadinejad is at it again, responding to the very justified backlash he received back then: "They asked me (at Columbia) why you crack down on homosexuals in Iran? I answered we don't have so many homosexuals in Iran because we believe this act is against the human spirit and humanity."

Obama Hospital Visitation Rights For G/L Couples Goes In Effect

WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - A memo signed in April by President Obama that bans hospitals from discriminating against gay men and lesbians went into effect on January 18.

forward," Evan Wolfson, executive director of Freedom to Marry, said in a statement. "It addresses one of the many ways same-sex couples and their loved ones are made vulnerable and harmed by the denial of marriage and the safety-net of protections marriage brings - in this case, the assurance that a spouse can be by a loved one's hospital bedside and participate in medical decision-making at a time of great need."

The order prohibits hospitals that accept federal funding from Medicare and Medicaid, the government's elderly and poor health care programs, from discriminating on the basis of a variety of characteristics, including sexual orientation and gender identity. It also prevents hospitals from denying visitation rights to the partners of gay men and lesbians, and requires officials to honor patients' wishes of who can make medical decisions on their behalf.

"Without marriage equality, this memo is absolutely critical for ensuring that the federal government is protecting the medical rights of all families and not discriminating against certain classes of citizens," New York Representative Jerrold Nadler said in a statement.

LGBT rights groups have called the new rules a small but significant contribution towards equality in the absence of the legal right to marry in most jurisdictions. "The president's directive is a small, but welcome step

"LGBT families need and deserve the same civil rights as other American families, and I applaud this progress in that long struggle," he added.

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G/L Marriage Debate Begins In Maryland

ANNAPOLIS (Observer Update) - The debate on whether to legalize gay marriage in Maryland began with the introduction of a bill in the Senate, reports ontopmag.com. Senate Majority Leader Rob Garagiola and Senator Rich Madaleno are behind the bill that seeks to legalize gay nuptials.

Lawmakers in the House will introduce their version next week to expedite the process during Maryland's brief 90-day session, which began 2 weeks ago. Madaleno told On Top Magazine during a brief telephone interview that the chances of passage are "the best it's ever been."

"We had a very successful election in Maryland on this issue. We brought in a number of new people who are committed to this issue in both chambers. In the state Senate we enlarged the Democratic majority, which is a rarity in 2010." "It was a transformative election in Maryland on this issue," he added.

Democratic Governor Martin O'Malley has pledged to sign a gay marriage bill into law if approved by lawmakers.

Gay marriage is legal in five states - Connecticut, Iowa, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Vermont - and the District of Columbia. Legislation that would legalize gay marriage has already been introduced in Rhode Island. Hawaii lawmakers are set to consider civil unions. New York State Senator Thomas Duane has promised to introduce a gay marriage bill "within weeks."

Iowa House Republicans Unite Against G/L Marriage

DES MOINES (Observer Update) - Fifty-six Republican members of the Iowa House have joined an effort to end gay marriage in the state. The effort to put a question on the 2013 ballot that would define marriage in the Iowa Constitution as a heterosexual union - and thereby reverse the 2009 Iowa Supreme Court ruling that brought gay marriage to the Midwest - is expected to win committee approval, reported ontopmag.com.

"I don't think we'll dawdle," House Speaker Kraig Paulsen, a Republican, told ABC affiliate KCRG in reference to when the measure is likely reach the floor for a vote. Fifty-one votes are needed for passage in the chamber and supporters claim all 60 Republicans will likely vote for the measure, which has little - if any - support among Democrats.

A similar resolution, however, faces a much steeper incline in the Democrat-controlled Senate, where Majority Leader Michael Gronstal has vowed to block the measure from reaching the floor. Governor Terry Branstad has previously called Gronstal a "dictator" for his opposition.

"Just because you're a leader in the Legislature, doesn't mean you're a dictator," Branstad said, a clear reference to Gronstal.

Republicans increased their numbers in the Legislature and took over the Governor's Mansion on November 2. Voters also ousted three out of the seven Iowa Supreme Court justices who unanimously legalized gay marriage.

Court Rejects Appeal Over DC Marriage Law

WASHINGTON, DC (Observer Update) - The Supreme Court has rejected an appeal from opponents of same-sex marriage who want to overturn the District of Columbia's gay marriage law, reported advocate.com.

The court did not comment on turning away a challenge from a Maryland pastor and others who are trying to get a measure on the ballot to allow Washingtonians to vote on a measure that defines marriage as between a man and a woman.

Bishop Harry Jackson led a lawsuit against the district's Board of Elections and Ethics after it refused to put that initiative on the ballot. The board ruled that the ballot question would in effect authorize discrimination.

Washington began issuing marriage licenses for same-sex couples and in 2009, it began recognizing gay marriages performed elsewhere.

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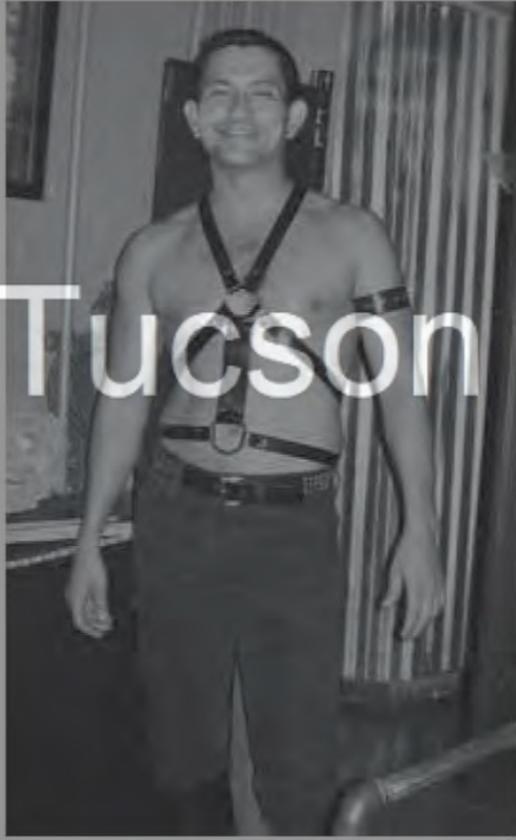
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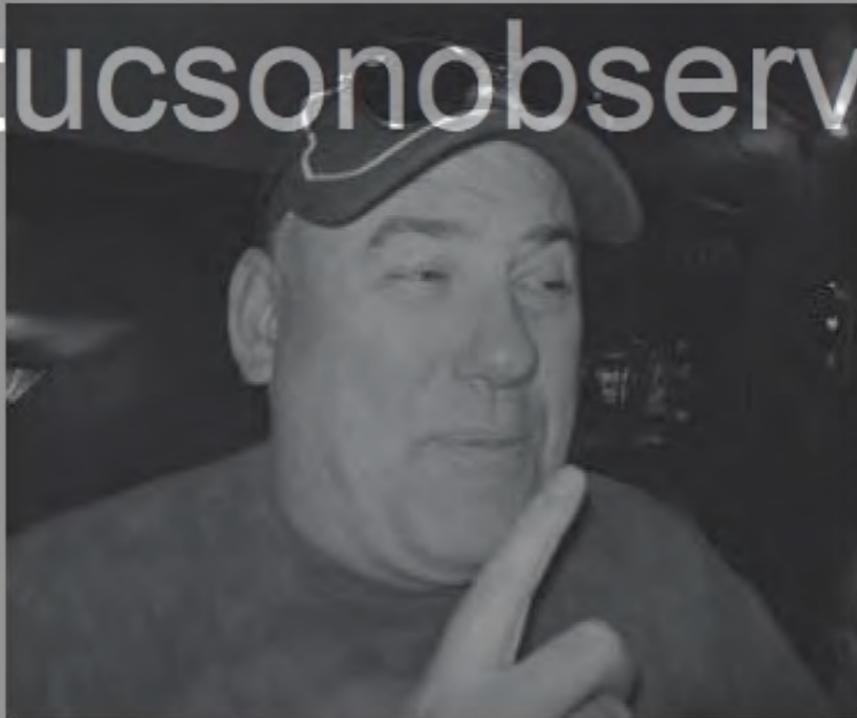
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A WILD TIME IN THE OLD TOWN AT BRODIES THIS NIGHT



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“Glee”, “30 Rock”, “Howl”, Among GLAAD Nominees



LOS ANGELES (Observer Update) - The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation is honoring movies, musicians TV shows and other media properties that offer fair and inclusive representations of the gay community, 365Gay.com reported.

GLAAD announced nominees for its 22nd annual Media Awards, which will be presented during a series of ceremonies in the spring. Film nominees include the lesbian family drama “The Kids Are All Right,” the musical “Burlesque,” high-school romp “Easy A,” crime thriller “The Girl Who Played With Fire” and the video-game-inspired “Scott Pilgrim vs. the World.”

TV drama series nominated for telling stories about the gay community are: ABC’s “Grey’s Anatomy” and “Brothers & Sisters,” HBO’s “True Blood,” ABC Family’s “Pretty Little Liars” and TeenNick’s “Degrassi.”

Comedy series nominees are: Showtime’s “Nurse Jackie” and “United States of Tara,” Fox’s “Glee,” ABC’s “Modern Family” and ABC Family’s “Greek.”

Individual episodes of “30 Rock,” “Drop Dead Diva,” “Bored to Death” and “Law & Order” were also nominated.

Chely Wright and Scissor Sisters are among nominees in the music category.

GLAAD also honors theater performances, comic books, blogs, talk shows, documentaries, newspaper and magazine articles and reality shows.

Elton John Reverses Course On Gay Marriage

BEVERLY HILLS (Observer Update) - The Rocket Man singer and new dad performed a concert for the American Foundation for Equal Rights (AFER), a group formed specifically to support a challenge to California’s gay marriage ban, Proposition 8, at the Beverly Hills estate of Ron Burke. The 90-minute concert reportedly helped raise more than \$3 million for the group.

“I think I have it all,” Sir Elton told the 750-person crowd. “I have a wonderful career, a wonderful life. I have my health, I have a partner of 17 years, and now I have a son. I don’t have everything because I don’t have the respect of the church or like politicians who tell me that I’m not worthy, that I’m lesser because I’m gay. Well, fuck you!”

“Here I am sitting with a wedding ring and I’m with my partner and we have a son, but we couldn’t get married,” he added. Sir Elton two years ago denounced the institution. He bitterly chided gay marriage backers after voters approved Proposition 8. “What is wrong with Proposition 8 is that they went for marriage,” Sir Elton told USA Today. “Marriage is going to put a lot of people off, the word ‘marriage’ ... I don’t want to be married. I’m very happy with a civil partnership. If gay people want to get married, or get together, they should have a civil partnership ... Heterosexual people get married. We can have civil partnerships.”

Sir Elton and David Furnish entered a UK civil partnership in 2005.

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Two LGBT Non-Profits To Share Harvey Milk's Old Store

SAN FRANCISCO (Observer Update) - The nation's largest gay rights group announced Tuesday that it plans to share the San Francisco storefront where Harvey Milk waged his historic political campaign with a nonprofit that provides suicide prevention services for gay youth, reported 365Gay.com.

The deal is aimed at quelling a tempest over the slain gay rights leader's old stomping grounds. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) said it would donate \$10,000 a year and space inside the site of Milk's old Castro Camera to The Trevor Project, which plans to run a crisis hotline there. The deal will continue for as long as the Washington, D.C.-based organization leases the store. "We are honored to partner with The Trevor Project in offering this important resource for LGBT youth across the nation from such a historic location," HRC President Joe Solmonese said.

Milk became the first openly gay man to win political office in a major U.S. city when he was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977. In the more than three decades since he was assassinated at City Hall along with Mayor George Moscone, the building also has housed a clothing store, a beauty supply shop and a housewares emporium.

Court Hears Gay Dad's LA Birth Certificate Case

NEW ORLEANS (Observer Update) - A federal appeals court will consider whether Louisiana must put both fathers' names on the birth certificate of a child adopted by a gay couple, 365Gay.com reported.

A full panel of 16 judges on the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals was set to hear arguments in the case of parents Oren Adar and Mickey Ray Smith of San Diego.

Their son was born to a Shreveport woman in late 2005. He was adopted by them in April 2006 in New York state.

Adopted children get birth certificates bearing their new parents' names. Louisiana contends that because state law lets only married couples or single individuals adopt, only one man's name may go on the boy's birth certificate.

Underscoring the tensions within various factions of the gay rights movement, some of Milk's friends and admirers had complained last month when the Human Rights Campaign announced it was opening a gift shop and information center at the retail site where Milk worked during the 1970s.

They said the organization's philosophy of incremental progress ran counter to Milk's uncompromising message of gay pride. AIDS Memorial Quilt founder Cleve Jones, who

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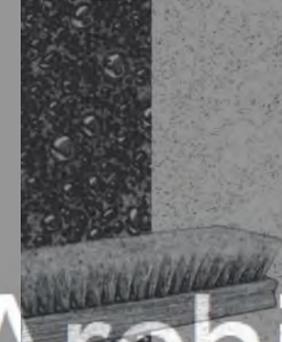
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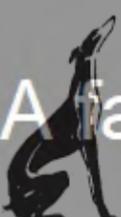


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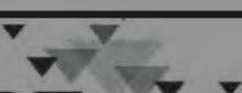
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Anti-Gay Homeless Shelter Receiving Government Funds

COLUMBUS (Observer Update) - A church-run homeless shelter in Columbus, Georgia, kicked two women out because they thought they were gay. While the shelter denies her story, the director is perfectly willing to admit that gay people aren't welcome at that homeless shelter, reported Alex Blaze of Bilerico.com.

I would consider that story bad enough, especially director Bobby Harris complaining that some people only want to be helped "in their way" (because charity should totally be a means for the helper to control the helpee). He seems to be saying he stalks the people staying at his shelter and then uses the threat of discharge to keep them in line. I'm not sure that's what Jesus calls on people to do, but then I'm not the one with the title of "elder."

What hasn't been reported about this story is that House of Mercy is probably partly funded by the government. From their 990: (For those of you who can't see the pic, there's an "X" in the box that says that this organization "normally receives a substantial part of its support from a government unit or from the general public," and refers to "section 170(b)(1)(a)(vi).")

House of Mercy got over \$326,000 in revenue in 2009 (their most recent 990 filing) from unspecified sources. A "substantial amount" (one-third, according to the Nonprofit Law Blog) had to come from a government body or the general public for them to have checked that box on the 990. Also, in the FY2011 budget signed by Georgia's governor, the Georgia legislature is looking to give House of Mercy a \$75,000 grant (this is from the section of non-binding allocations):

Section 16, pertaining to the Department of Community Affairs, page 31, line 906: The General Assembly seeks to earmark \$75,000 for the House of Mercy in Columbus in the Special Housing Initiatives program. The department is authorized to operate the program in accordance with the purpose of the program and its general law powers of the Department. I'm not in a position to investigate this any more than what I can find on the internet, but perhaps an enterprising journalist in Columbus, Georgia, would want to look into this?

While it's easy to see this as a discriminatory use of government funds, it's part of a larger war on the government that's been waged for decades now. Instead of the government building homeless shelters and shelters for battered women and their children to escape to, they've privatized much of the money and given out contracts to religious organizations to do the work.

That was the basic principle behind the federal government's faith-based initiatives. While conservatives think that the entire government should be privatized with the government itself acting as a giant checkbook that gives out money for all of its basic functions, some jobs can't be assigned to the for-profit businesses. The non-profit sector, though, is more than happy to help out for a price, and this is a way of throwing some cash at churches. But this is also a way of privatizing public money and reducing access to that money. The woman who got kicked out of that shelter because she violated curfew so that she could get her children's legal documents (how early is this curfew anyway? Or did Harris just suspect she was out doing something that he wouldn't approve of and considered it a curfew violation?) found out that some people will use that money for their own ends and cut entire classes of people off from its benefits.

At the federal level, Obama has allowed churches that receive public money to discriminate when it comes to employment, effectively cordoning off certain government-sponsored jobs for heterosexuals only. My guess is that there are states and municipalities with even less restrictive regulations when it comes to their money, but it doesn't make it any more right.

LGBT people work in this country and their labor and creativity make the country wealthy and we have just as much a claim on that wealth as anyone else does. Homelessness is a problem that the government should be taking care of, completely, with churches helping out on the fringes with their own funds collected from their congregations. Housing the homeless is too important a task to be left to the private sector.

"I'VE NEVER BELIEVED IN NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS"

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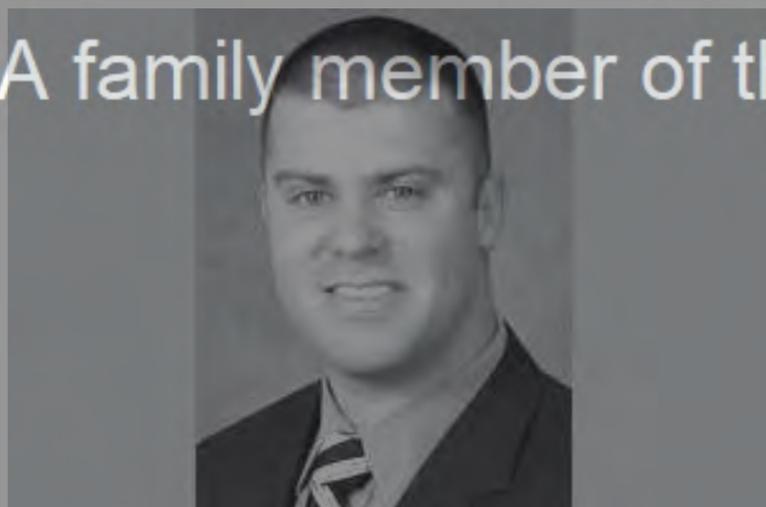
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New Hampshire's D.J. Bettencourt Wants G/L. Marriage Repeal Effort Delayed Til 2012



DAVID J. (D.J.) BETTENCOURT

CONCORD (Observer Update) - New Hampshire House Majority Leader David J. "D.J." Bettencourt wants an effort to repeal gay marriage delayed until 2012. The Republican told the Associated Press that he plans to ask the committee responsible for the repeal bill to shelve it until next year for the presidential election.

Bettencourt raised the ire of the National Organization for Marriage (NOM), a group that has won repeal battles in Maine and California, when he said the issue was not part of the House Republican agenda. NOM responded by blanketing his district with mailers saying he doesn't support traditional family values.

"This assault on our agenda has the potential to take important focus and energy

away from our focus on the budget," Bettencourt wrote in a letter to House Speaker William O'Brien. "Therefore, it is my belief that the same-sex marriage repeal must be retained in the Judiciary Committee this year so that our full and undivided attention is focused on New Hampshire's outstanding financial issues."

The bill's main sponsor, Rep. David Bates, a Republican from Windham, disagreed, saying the budget is not the only important issue on the legislative agenda. "As much as we're making that a priority, there are all kinds of things going on," Bates said. Democratic Governor John Lynch has vowed to veto any attempt to repeal the law but Republicans hold veto-proof majorities in both chambers.

Poet's Corner

THE GENE POOL

by Ron Rose . Tucson

Two genes went to a party
 Dressed in swimsuits oh so arty,
 And jumped into the gene pool for a swim.
 Now the one who looks like Venus
 Admires her new penis
 While the gene who looks like Popeye
 Is called Kim.



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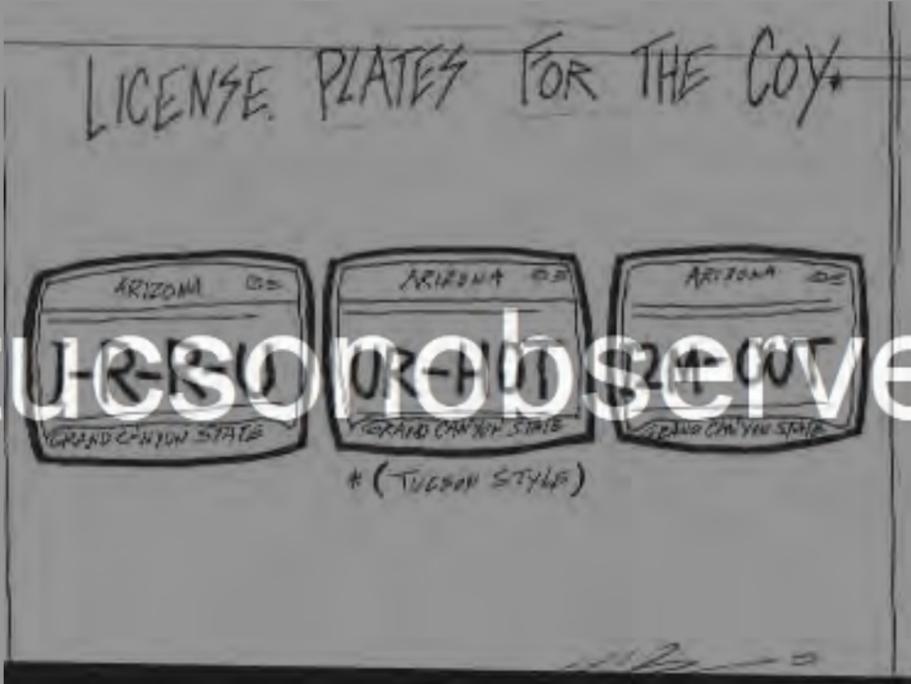
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The Way I Saw It. . .by Gary Clark



NOTE: Before his untimely death, Gary Clark had worked on this newspaper for nearly 40 years as graphic artist and Entertainment Editor. Part of his heritage was producing a weekly humorous drawing of life 'as he saw it'. It is amazing that most of these drawings are as funny and entertaining today as they were in past years. We have decided to open the 'vaults' on these faultless viewpoints. Enjoy!

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French Constitutional Council Will Debate G/L Marriage

PARIS (Observer Update) - A lesbian couple challenged the ban on gay marriage in France last May and expects to hear a statement from the French Constitutional Council by the end of January, according to Pink News.

building a family."

Corinne Cestino and Sophie Hablau entered into a civil union 10 years ago and now have four children. They live in a village outside of Reims, reports 365Gay.com. Lawyer for the couple Emmanuel Ludor said "They want to get married because they consider it an essential tool for

The high court said gay marriage is "now the subject of wide debate in society, in particular because of the evolution of manners and recognition of marriage between same sex legislation in several foreign countries," and suggested the case to be forwarded to the Constitutional council, according to Pink News.

Currently in France, gay couples can get a form of civil union called "Pacte Civil de Solidarité" (PACS) or "Civil Solidarity Pacts."

Marriage Debate, Frank Peasley Likens Unions To Smoking Bans

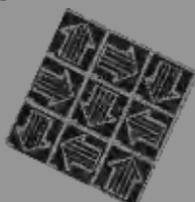
CASPER (Observer Update) - A Wyoming lawmaker has compared gay unions to smoking bans. State Representative Frank Peasley, a Republican, was arguing in favor of a House bill that would outlaw the recognition of out-of-state gay marriages, reported ontopmag.com.



Wyoming bans gay and lesbian couples from marrying but state law also recognizes any valid marriage performed outside its borders. Social conservatives worry that a legal challenge could use the loophole to legalize gay marriage. Peasley rejected arguments that gay marriage was a civil rights issue, saying it was wrong for the government to intrude into longstanding traditions, the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle reported.

"I think all this is, is an outpost in culture that says, 'Listen, I feel like you're destroying everything else that I have,'" Peasley told lawmakers on the House floor. "You've got involved in the raising of my children, the way I discipline them, the way I feed them, whether or not I can smoke in the car, whether or not I have them properly equipped; you've just gotten into my life so much, let's just let me define the relationship I'm in, OK?"

The House gave an initial nod to the legislation. The bill must now pass two additional votes before heading to the Senate. Lawmakers are also expected to debate a bill that would place a gay marriage ban in the Wyoming Constitution.



Gay Florida Couple Who Fought Adoption Ban, Adopts Two

MIAMI (Observer Update) - A gay Miami man has officially adopted two brothers after he successfully fought to overturn Florida's three-decade old ban on gay adoptions, 365Gay.com reported.

Martin Gill and his partner were the boys' foster parents for six years before the adoption was finalized. Gill and the American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit against the state, calling the ban unconstitutional. The 3rd District Court of Appeal agreed in a ruling last year. The state decided not to appeal.

Gill says he is thrilled they are "officially a family in the eyes of the law."

The prohibition was enacted in 1977 and court records indicate it's the only law of its kind in the United States. The Department of Children and Families changed its forms so adoptive parents aren't asked if they're homosexuals.



DAILY BAR CALENDAR

SUNDAY

THE BIZ - Closed Sunday , Monday, Tuesday

BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Happy Hour 4-7.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 11am. Beer Bust Sunday - \$1 draft beers (12 oz), domestic only; \$2.25 domestic long necks. Hair of dog special \$1.50 well bloody mary, screwdriver,,Cape Cod, salty dog or margarita.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm \$2 Well or Domestic Beer. Karaoke on the Patio 4-8:30pm. Burger BBQ 5-8pm + \$1 pint draft. 9pm-close Karaoke inside with Troy & \$1.50 Well or Domestic Beer, \$2.50 Call or Premium Beer. DJ Hurricane on the Patio.

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am. Beer specials and Trailer Trash Martini's All Day. Check our Ad for Special Events or Parties

MONDAY

THE BIZ - Closed Mondays

BRODIES - Open 10am-2am. Happy Hour 4-7.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 8pm.- 1am

IBT's -Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm \$2 Well or Domestic Beer. 8pm-close \$5 Scratch Long Island Varieties. 9pm-close DJ Hurricane with "All Request Music".

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am. Service Industry Night - Employee prices all day..

TUESDAY

THE BIZ - Closed Tuesdays

BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 4pm - 1am. Happy Hour 4-8. \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. Girlz Nite .75 for your favorite well drink or domestic drafts 6-8pm. Ladies only Texas Hold 'Em Poker 6 p.m. Y-Not Karaoke with Anna at 8pm. - Drink specials during karaoke \$1 Michelob Ultra or Bud Light.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, \$2 Well or Domestic Beer. 8pm-close "2'sDay" - \$2 Well or Domestic Beer. DJ Q 9pm-close.

WOODY'S - Open 11am- 2am. 2-4-1 Night

WEDNESDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 5-9pm (2 for 1). College Night 18 & Over. Drink & Shot specials every half hour.

BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am.

COYOTE MOON PUB -Open 4pm - 1am. Happy Hour All Day \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints, \$3.50 sm. Pitcher/\$5.50 lg. Pitchers. Boyz Night - .75 for your favorite well drink or domestic draft beer for men 6-8pm. Karaoke with Anna at 8pm drink specials during karaoke \$1 Michelob Ultra or Bud Light..

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, \$2 Well or Domestic.. 11pm - -close "Reverse Happy Hour".

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am;. Happy Hour Prices all day.

THURSDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 5-9pm. 2 for 1 All Night Long.. Karaoke 9pm. Come out and play.

BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 4pm.- 1am. Happy Hour 4 - 8 pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints, \$3.50 sm. Pitcher/\$5.50 lg. Pitcher. Latin Thursday: Latin music 8pm to close. \$2,50 well margaritas. \$3 Mexican beers, \$3.50 Jose Cuervo.

IBT's -Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, \$2 Well or Domestic. 10pm-close "Boyz Nite Out" w/Bartenders in their underwear. DJ Hurricane spinning Top 40 & DJ Mike Lopez on the patio. \$1.75 Long Island, \$1.50 Tequila Shots, \$3 Skyy Cape Cods and \$4 Skyy Cosmos.

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am; Free pool and Happy Hour prices all day.

FRIDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm-2am. Happy Hour 5-9 pm (2 for1) Latino Night. \$2 Tequila, \$1.50 Tecate. \$5 Buckets of Beer.

BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Karaoke 9pm.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open 4pm. Happy Hour 3 - 8 pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. \$3.50 Sm. Pitcher/\$5.50 lg. Pitcher. Shots shot specials 8-close.. Dance lessons with Lawrence at 7pm \$5 per person, Country Dancing 8:30 p.m. to close with DJ Pat.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, \$2 Well or Domestic. 9pm -close DJ Hurricane inside. 10pm-close DJ Mike Lopez with "I'm a Sexy Bitch Night" on the patio.

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am; Happy Hour 11am-8pm (excl spec events). Full Menu Kitchen open 11am-11pm Back Pocket Patio Bar open 5pm-close. Enjoy the Live vocals and piano stylings of Susan Artemis 6-9pm. Tori Steele Show 10pm

SATURDAY

THE BIZ - Open 5pm - 2am. \$10 and drink for pennies. All night long.

BRODIES - Open 10am - 2am. Happy Hour 4-7.

COYOTE MOON PUB - Open at 2pm. Happy Hour 2-8pm, \$2.50 well, domestic longnecks & pints. \$3.50 sm. Pitcher/\$5.50 lg. Plus check out the bartenders choice of shot specials. \$5.00 cheeseburger & fries OR two chicken tenders & fries. Check our calendar for the Saturday Night Special Entertainment.

IBT's - Open Noon. Happy Hour Noon-8pm, \$2 Well or Domestic. 5-8pm Karaoke on the patio \$1Draft Pints. 9pm "Saturday Starrlett's" w/Bunny FuFu & Janee Starr. After the show, DJ Q spinning inside & 10pm-close, DJ Mike Lopez with the "Party on the Patio".

WOODY'S - Open 11am-2am; Happy Hour 10am-8pm (excl spec events); Full Menu Kitchen open11am-11pm. .

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NYC Health Department Defends HIV PSA



NEW YORK (Observer Update) - The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene continues to defend a controversial HIV/AIDS PSA that critics say stigmatizes gay men, reported 365Gay.com.

According to the Housing Works blog, Monica Sweeney, the assistant commissioner of the Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control at the department, credited the video with inciting necessary conversation about the disease, regardless of opinions. She spoke to more than 100 people gathered Thursday at a Ryan White Planning Council meeting in Manhattan.

"We need to think of all the possible ways . . . to get people's attention, because HIV definitely isn't

on the front page anymore, at least not until this ad came out," she said.

While some HIV/AIDS activists have expressed support for the PSA, a coalition of groups including Housing Works and Gay Men's Health Crisis has denounced the ad, which uses graphic imagery to scare young men into using condoms. The PSA premiered in December and runs through January.

Members of the planning council, which wrote to Sweeney asking for the ad's termination, also wanted to know why there were not consulted about the PSA, which the assistant commissioner said was in the making for more than three years.

Entertainment Weekly's Gay Teen Issue



LOS ANGELES (Observer Update) - Glee stars Darren Criss and Chris Colfer grace the cover of Entertainment Weekly's story on gay visibility on teen shows, reports ontopmag.com.

Colfer plays gay bullied student Kurt Hummel on the Fox musical comedy. Criss joined the show's cast in its second season. He plays out-and-proud student Blaine Anderson. The show has so far dodged escalating the choir boy's relationship from friendship to romance, but hints that the pair are headed in that direction have surfaced. For example, Kurt and Blaine will sing a duet on the show's February 8 Valentine's Day episode.

The issue focuses on "how producers and networks are making up for years of on-air silence and providing inspiration for real-life youth

(and parents) still searching for answers."

"People are going nuts over the Blaine and Kurt fiasco that's going on," Colfer, who recently won a Golden Globe for his role, said in a video clip to promote the issue. "Like they are nuts. I have never seen anything like it before."

Criss said the storyline has received "incredibly positive response both from the gay and straight community." "A lot of people have sent me letters where they've been really moved and kind of reevaluated the way they thought about things and that is really cool," Criss added.



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