

# Illinois Gender Advocates



Advocacy for the Transgender and Gender Variant Community

Volume 2 Issue 1

January 2003

## Illinois Gender Advocates' Legislative Director Miranda Stevens-Miller Appointed to Blagojevich's Civil Rights Committee

CHICAGO — Miranda Stevens-Miller has been appointed to the Equal Protection Subcommittee of Governor-Elect Rod Blagojevich's Civil Rights Committee, one of a number of transition team committees.

The appointment came December 10 as Blagojevich moved forward with his transition efforts, naming individuals to the sixteen issues-based advisory panels that will present options to him and help him craft a detailed agenda as he prepares to take office.

The Equal Protection Sub-Committee is co-chaired by Steven Elrod, Holland and Knight, and Joanne Trapani, President of the Village of Oak Park. Members of the subcommittee include representatives from the ACLU, Lambda Legal, Equality Illinois, as well as elected officials and representatives from other human rights and immigrants rights organizations.

"Members of our subcommittee have an enormous task to accomplish in a very short period of time," Stevens-Miller said. "Besides the obvious issues with the rights of gender and sexual minorities, civil rights in Illinois have been under assault since 9/11, and the rights of many minorities are threatened. It is an honor to be able to serve on a subcommittee that will affect the lives of so many people throughout our state."

*(Continued on Page 2)*

**The Next Meeting of  
Illinois Gender Advocates  
Will Take Place at 7:30 p.m. on  
Thursday, January 9, 2003  
And Will Be Held at  
Transformations  
146 N. Oak Park Avenue  
In Oak Park**

### **Whatever**

---

*It's a New Year*

*By Beth Plotner*

Happy New Year to all our members, supporters, friends and allies. As we close out 2002 we can look back on the most successful legislative year for our community in history.

I'm not just talking about here in Illinois with protections being extended in Chicago, Cook County and Decatur but in

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## **Miranda Stevens-Miller Appointed to Blagojevich's Civil Rights Committee**

*(Continued From Page 1)*

Committee chairs and vice-chairs have been asked to build upon issues-based proposals that Blagojevich presented during his campaign for governor. Each committee will submit a report to the governor-elect prior to his inauguration in mid-January. The reports, according to the governor-elect's press release, "will address the immediate challenges that the state faces in each area, and options suggesting how the governor-elect can enact many of the policy goals he outlined during the campaign. The committees will also open a long-term dialogue between the administration and the policy and advocacy community throughout the state."

The 16 issue-based areas in addition to civil rights are committees on agriculture, consumer affairs and regulatory policy, crime, public safety and anti-terrorism, economic development, education (K-12), higher education, environment, energy and natural resources, ethics, health, higher education, housing, labor, local government, social services, streamlining government, and transportation and infrastructure.

(Portions of this article were borrowed from a press release from UPI Local 4100 about the appointment of UPI President Sue Kaufman to the Higher Education Committee.)

## **Whatever**

*(Continued From Page 1)*

jurisdictions all over the country. Literally from coast to coast. But as we said in our last newsletter our work even here in Illinois is just beginning.

2003 will be the first year that we start with so many people in Illinois being covered by anti-discrimination laws concerning gender identity. We're looking for statewide protections within a few months. We will move ahead and advocate, educate and spread the word in general to let people know of their rights.

This past year has shown that more and more Americans are actually tolerant of Transgendered folk. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) undertook a survey which showed what many of us knew for a long time that there is more tolerance than some would have us believe.

But we also need tolerance within our own community. I'm not just talking about the Transgendered community but the whole LGBT community. We are an extremely diverse community. Racially, ethnically, religiously etc. etc. etc. We are also diverse ideologically. Ideological diversity should be accepted just as anything else. We do not have to take viscous swipes at others within the community just because they support one organization but not another or one candidate over

another. I have been told many times over the years that there is room for everyone under our rainbow. So let's make sure there is room for everyone. Or are we going to be like some of our detractors and put words over deeds?

So we're starting a New Year. A new slate. Time for reflection time for new starts. Our work is far from done. We need each other. We can have differences of opinions. We don't have to lower ourselves by name-calling and infighting that will only hurt us. If this is supposed to be the season of good cheer than let's make it so and keep the spirit year round.

## ***How to contact us...***

### **Illinois Gender Advocates**

47 W. Division St., #391  
Chicago, IL 60610

### **Telephone Hotline:**

(312) 409-5489

Please leave a message. We will get back to you as quickly as possible.

### **E-Mail:**

[ItsTimeIL@ItsTimeIL.org](mailto:ItsTimeIL@ItsTimeIL.org)

### **Web Site Address:**

<http://ItsTimeIL.org>

## **Miranda Writes...**

### ***The Big Picture***

*By Miranda Stevens-Miller*

So often we get caught up in our own little world that we fail to see the big picture that is unfolding around us. The passage of transgender rights in Chicago and Cook County was an important step. If you look at the number of people who are protected by these laws, it is huge. There are only two states that have laws protecting people on the basis of gender identity: Minnesota and Rhode Island. Turns out that Chicago has almost three times the population of Rhode Island, and Cook County has more people than the State of Minnesota. So it was a big step!

But Chicago and Cook County become even more important as part of the national movement to acknowledge transgender rights. From coast to coast, there are now 53 jurisdictions that have laws like the ones just enacted here. This year alone, many major cities passed these laws. There are now 34

million people in this country that are covered, with 19 million that were added in 2002.

In each of these jurisdictions there are activists and advocates, just like here in Chicago, who made these laws happen. The laws didn't just happen by themselves. Up and down the coasts, from Tacoma, Salem and San Jose on the West Coast, to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore on the East Coast. It is a national movement, and I am proud that our city and our county on Lake Michigan's coast are among them.

Of all the cities that added gender identity this year, none is more surprising than Dallas, Texas. Surely if transgender people can get protection in one of the most conservative states in our nation, the state that gave us the Bushes, this is not the big deal that some people have made it out to be. And with Boston, Massachusetts, home of Congressman Barney Frank, joining the list of jurisdictions, it is becoming increasingly more puzzling why the sponsors of federal legislation still choose to exclude gender identity from anti-discrimination and hate crime laws. In fact, it should be downright embarrassing to keep gender variant people out of ENDA.

It is a well-known fact that state and local laws are always way out ahead of the federal ones. But with all the momentum currently behind the national transgender rights movement, it will be interesting to see how many more local laws it takes before we are deemed worthy of inclusion at the national level.

---

Last month I wrote an article thanking several very key players in the transgender rights victory in Chicago and Cook County. Although I mentioned that it would be impossible for me to acknowledge everyone, I neglected to mention some of the most vital contributors to this success... the leadership and board of Illinois Gender Advocates.

Beth Plotner has been constantly at my side for the past five years at least. She served as Vice Chair for two years, and is currently in her third year as Chair of the organization. She has done outreach and trainings all over the state, and has represented the interests of the Illinois Gender Advocates among her many associates in the legal profession. She was responsible for getting the much-appreciated backing of the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago. Her stewardship of the organization has not only allowed it to survive, but also to grow and evolve from the ad hoc group called It's Time Illinois, to the new 501(c)(3) organization with a vision way beyond the previous single-minded legislative focus. But most important, Beth has been my friend and support through all the years of working on the gender identity ordinances. Thank you, Beth. This wouldn't have happened without you.

And to Marsha Jackson, one of the founding members of the organization, your quiet determination has been a source of inspiration to me. And to Diana Williamson, who for years

served as secretary and newsletter editor, and is now Vice Chair of the Gender Advocates, your can-do attitude and willingness to do some of the less glamorous work has carried us through for years. And to the outgoing board, Lisa Scheps, Tina Sievers, Carole Abrams, thank you for all the work that you did in the background with the organization of the vigils and Pride celebrations that both sustained us and kept us visible in the community. Thank you all!

*Miranda Stevens-Miller welcomes your comments at [MirandaSt1@aol.com](mailto:MirandaSt1@aol.com), and invites you to visit the IGA website at [www.itstimeil.org](http://www.itstimeil.org).*

## ***Feedback...***

Problems? Questions? Disagreements? Want to submit an article? Please write to us. We love to get mail.

### **Board Members of Illinois Gender Advocates:**

#### **Chair:**

Beth Plotner  
[BethJD@earthlink.net](mailto:BethJD@earthlink.net)

#### **Vice Chair:**

Diana Williamson  
[DianaAW@aol.com](mailto:DianaAW@aol.com)

### **Staff Directors of Illinois Gender Advocates:**

#### **Director of Youth Advocacy:**

Josephine Christopher  
[Jostime@earthlink.net](mailto:Jostime@earthlink.net)

#### **Legislative Director:**

Miranda Stevens-Miller  
[MirandaSt1@aol.com](mailto:MirandaSt1@aol.com)

## **Notes from the Scullery**

*Whose Rights? Our Rights! Well, not really...*

*By Diana Williamson*

I recently received a form letter soliciting contributions from a local activist organization. That's not unusual, of course; I receive lots of them every month. What caught my attention about this particular letter, however, was the opening sentence, which said, "As essential to American freedom as our right to think, vote, worship, marry and work, is our right to privacy."

Whoa! I have no disagreement about the other rights mentioned in that sentence, but since when is the right to marry an essential American freedom? Maybe it is for you, honey, but it sure isn't for me. And that's not because I'm not an American; I am. The problem is that I just happen to be an American transsexual. And, therefore, my right to marry is very much in question... and perhaps non-existent.

The problem, of course, stems from the mass phobia suffered by many Americans regarding same-sex marriages. That widespread irrational fear has resulted in so-called "Defense of Marriage Acts" (DOMA) at both federal and most state levels, which prohibit all marriages except those between one man and one woman. The primary purpose of DOMA was to defend "traditional marriages" against the onslaught of fairness, justice, equality, and common sense that would surely result if gay men and lesbian women were permitted to participate in the many advantages of marriage enjoyed by straight people. (Exactly how traditional marriages would suffer under those circumstances has never been made particularly clear, at least not to me. But I guess that is the advantage of irrationality. It's not expected to make sense.)

The heavy hand of DOMA has fallen with particular severity on transsexuals, regardless of their sexual orientation. To illustrate, let's examine the situation of a male-to-female transsexual whose birth certificate has been corrected to show her post-operative status as a female. If our hypothetical transwoman identifies as a lesbian, can she obtain a marriage license to marry another woman? DOMA (in its infinite wisdom) would seem to prohibit that. If she identifies as straight, on the other hand, can she legally marry a man? Provided she doesn't reveal her transsexual status, she can probably obtain a marriage license. Experience shows, however, that her marriage will remain subject to collateral attack – often at the very times when she is most vulnerable.

Two recent court decisions – one in Texas (Littleton) and one in Kansas (Gardiner) – have held that a marriage between a man and a post-operative transsexual woman is invalid because it is actually a marriage between two men, and therefore prohibited under DOMA. Such a conclusion was reached in both cases, despite the fact that the transwomen in question had undergone sex reassignment surgery, that their birth certificates had been corrected to show that they were female, and that all of their state-issued identification showed them to be female. The fact that they had also obtained valid marriage licenses in the states where they were married was not deemed to be significant. The knowledge and intent of the husbands (both of whom were deceased) was apparently irrelevant to the courts. Sex and gender were held to be fixed and immutable at time of birth in accordance with a person's chromosomes (even though the chromosome distribution of any of the parties was never actually tested by scientific means).

So under what circumstances can a transsexual exercise that "fundamental American freedom" to marry, and still have confidence that the marriage will withstand legal challenges at

a later date? Unfortunately, under the current status of the law, such circumstances simply may not exist at all. In Texas, for instance, the county in which the Littleton case was decided felt obliged to issue a marriage license to a male-to-female transsexual and a genetic woman (on the theory that the transwoman was actually still a male). But other Texas counties have refused to do the same. Besides, as both Christie Littleton and J'Noel Gardiner discovered to their dismay, obtaining a valid marriage license is no guarantee that the marriage will survive subsequent legal challenges by third parties.

It seems that any solution to the marriage quandary faced by transsexuals will necessarily involve some kind of legislative clarification. Ideally, the archaic concepts contained in DOMA can someday be eliminated altogether by the repeal of that hateful legislation. Short of that, however, there is a need for some legislative acknowledgment of marital rights and obligations that specifically addresses the situation faced by transsexuals. That way, a marriage can be based on what is in the hearts of the parties, rather than what is in their chromosomes.

## **Be Sure to Attend Our Next Meeting; Guest Speaker to Be IGAs Director of Youth Advocacy**

---

---

The next regular meeting of Illinois Gender Advocates will be held on Thursday, January 9, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. in the lower level of Transformations, located at 146 N. Oak Park Avenue in Oak Park.

Our guest speaker for the evening will be our recently appointed Director of Youth Advocacy. She will discuss the plans, goals, and strategies for the youth advocacy program.

## **Thanks to Our Contributors:**

A big thank you goes out to those who contributed articles to the newsletter this month. It is really appreciated from month to month. Thanks!

- Beth Plotner
- Diana Williamson
- Donna Cartwright
- David Crary, AP
- Miranda Stevens-Miller
- GenderPAC News
- 365Gay.com

## **U.S. Supreme Court Rejects Gardiner Case**

---

*By GenderPAC News*

WASHINGTON, DC (Oct. 8, 2002) The U.S. Supreme Court recently rejected an appeal by J'Noel Gardiner. The Kansas Supreme Court ruled on March 15 that Gardiner, a post-operative male-to-female transsexual, is not legally female under Kansas law. Since same-sex marriage is illegal in Kansas, the court found that she has no right to collect half of her late husband's \$2.5 million estate. GenderPAC strongly denounced the state court's ruling and filed an *amicus* ("friend of the court") brief in support of Gardiner. The ruling reversed an appellate court ruling that directed the lower court hearing the case to consider a number of social and biological factors when determining a person's legal sex. "We are very disappointed that the U.S. Supreme Court decided not to hear J'Noel Gardiner's case," said GenderPAC Executive Director Riki Wilchins. "The courts are lagging behind social and medical realities. This decision continues to deny full equality and social participation to transgender Americans."

## **MA Judge Finds Sex, Disability Discrimination**

---

*By GenderPAC News*

BOSTON, MA (Nov. 15, 2002) A transgender woman who claims she was fired for not dressing like a man can argue that her former employer's actions constitute unlawful sex and disability discrimination, according to a landmark ruling issued on Oct. 7 by Superior Court Justice Linda E. Giles.

Allie Lie claims that when she transitioned on the job in May 1998, after four years at Sky Publishing Corporation as a male editorial assistant, the company harassed and eventually fired her for not dressing as a man.

The company claims that Lie was fired for sending an insubordinate email to two supervisors. Even if Lie was fired on account of her gender, said the company, Massachusetts law does not include gender expression and identity.

According to the Judge's ruling, Lie can also claim unlawful disability discrimination because she has been diagnosed with "gender dysphoria," a psychiatric diagnosis for individuals who want to change their gender.

## **New York's SONDA - In Pride and Sorrow**

---

*By Donna Cartwright, Gender Rights Advocacy Association of New Jersey*

December 17, 2002

As many of you have undoubtedly heard by now, SONDA (Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act) -- unamended, non-inclusive -- passed the New York Senate this afternoon, 34 to 26. Governor Pataki will undoubtedly sign the bill soon, and the long, difficult struggle for trans civil rights in New York State will have to start again. More than 30 years after trans people stood and fought against oppression at Stonewall, we have again been treated as the forgotten, poor relations of the LGBT community.

Nevertheless, there's some good news to report. Senator Tom Duane's inclusive version, S1985, made it to the Senate floor. Senator Duane offered it as an amendment to the Republican leadership's bill, and it got 19 votes, representing perhaps two-thirds of the Democratic caucus in the Senate, plus a Republican or two. Senator Duane spoke with great eloquence in support of transgender civil rights; I am not ashamed to say that I wept as I listened to his speech on streaming audio. And several other senators -- Schneiderman, Hevesi, and at least one Republican -- also spoke up for trans inclusion.

The few Senators who opposed SONDA in the debate didn't address the issue of trans inclusion. They concentrated their attacks on religious issues, homosexuality etc., and never raised the spectre of "men in dresses."

And there was good news outside the chamber too. While the New York Times supported SONDA in an editorial, it specifically noted the lack of trans-inclusion as a deficiency; it used such words as "narrow" and "narrow-minded" to describe the bill that passed. I think that this was a thinly veiled slap at the Empire State Pride Agenda (ESPA), the LGBT lobbying group that fought to keep us out of the bill, and which engaged in a mean and abusive campaign against Senator Duane for daring to champion our cause.

Indeed, ESPA may have won this round, but I think they paid a big price in terms of respect. Their sleazy hired-gun consultants and planted media columns (like the one that described trans people as representing the "murkiest depths" of human sexuality) did them no credit.

I believe we in the trans community turned a corner today, when a body as conservative as the New York Senate listened to transgender people defended insistently and with great passion. If our name can be spoken on the floor of the Senate in Albany, it can be spoken in Washington. It also seems clear to me that if we could get 19 votes in the Senate today, in such unfavorable circumstances, we may well be able to win an

## GLBT Activists Sponsor Anti-War Ads

---

By *365Gay.com*

Full-page ads begin appearing this week in the Illinois gay press criticizing the Bush administration for an impending war with Iraq.

The ads, signed by dozens of well-known GLBT activists, were proposed at a Chicago Anti-Bashing Network (CABN) meeting Dec. 4, and within eight days fund-raising was completed and the ads submitted.

Signers to the strongly worded ad include a cross-section of left and moderate community leaders, including the state's only openly gay state representative, Larry McKeon; the state's foremost transgender activist, Miranda Stevens-Miller; the co-pastors of Church of the Open Door, the city's black GLBT congregation; and leading activists with the state's main GLBT lobbying group, Equality Illinois, signing on in a personal capacity.

The ad not only denounces the loss of life a full-scale war would bring, but says GLBT people in particular would be hurt.

In part, the ad says: "A new U.S. war will indirectly kill people in our community here at home by diverting necessary funds away from already scaled-back social service programs. For example, programs that prevent HIV+ people from losing their homes and provide other life-saving services are already facing severe cutbacks during the current recession as a bloated military budget is given precedence over everything else. Just this year we've seen huge cutbacks at Horizons Community Services and the Howard Brown Health Center, while three AIDS service agencies collapsed into one in order to save money, and the entire \$2.5 million state of Illinois budget for AIDS minority outreach was wiped out."

CABN spokesperson Andy Thayer said, "The community's passion about the issue was demonstrated by the speed of its response (in supporting) the ad.

"A generation before, Dr. Martin Luther King realized that his choice was to support his community by winning desperately needed anti-poverty programs at home, or support the U.S. war in Vietnam," Thayer said in a statement. "Today, we in the LGBT community have a similar obligation to support our community, and other communities at home and abroad, by opposing Bush's war on Iraq."

inclusion bill in some reasonable time frame. Although the average lapse of time between passage of non-inclusive legislation and the eventual inclusion of trans people is still more than 13 years, I would venture to guess that we might be able to win inclusion in New York State in four or five years.

Today's events also support our longstanding position that trans inclusion could have been achieved now, not in four years, or five, or 15, if only ESPA and the Assembly leadership had shown more vision and less complacency. Since the Assembly version passed earlier this year was non-inclusive, passage of the Duane version today would have meant either that the Assembly would have had to come back into session to bring its version into conformity with Duane's, or that the legislation would have died. And it still got 19 votes.

Now consider what would have happened if the Assembly had amended its version to be trans inclusive when it was introduced this year. The Assembly leadership had ample votes to pass any version it wanted (the non-inclusive version has passed for 10 years in a row, and had more than 80% of the votes this year). So if the Senate had been voting to bring its version into conformity with an inclusive Assembly-passed version, I think it's quite likely that sufficient votes could have been found to pass the Duane amendment.

I think our community owes a large debt of gratitude to Senator Duane, and to Housing Works, which campaigned incessantly for trans inclusion, and even ran radio ads on the issue in the Albany area. All honor to them, to our friends in the Assembly like Richard Gottfried, and to non-transgender people of conscience who spoke up for us.

It is sometimes fashionable to offer cynical explanations for why politicians take a stand for justice. It seems that some of us feel compelled to suggest that those who do the right thing, do so for reasons that are base or self-serving. In particular, Senator Duane, who showed great courage and integrity in standing up for our community, took a lot of abuse for it.

The inclusive Duane version of SONDA was sometimes derided in trans circles as a "vest-pocket" bill, intended only for show. Today's events should put that slander to rest, once and for all. The Duane version may have started out with no one's support but his, but by today it got us further in the New York Legislature than we've ever been before. I think all of us who pitched in and worked for an inclusive SONDA can be justly proud of our efforts. Those who preferred spreading defeatism to picking up an oar and rowing with the rest of us, should do some real soul-searching now.

Best to all,  
Donna Cartwright

# Despite Setbacks, Transgender Activists in U.S. Make Headway in Their Battle Against Bias

---

By David Crary, AP National Writer

NEW YORK, NY (Dec. 17, 2002) Violence against their disparate community persists; so do legal setbacks. Yet these are heady days for transgender activists as they strengthen their lobbying efforts and gain civil rights protections in city after city.

“We have a lot of work to do, but we are winning,” said Mara Keisling, an activist from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, who is helping establish a new transgender-rights center in Washington.

The past year for the movement has been one of pronounced highs and lows.

On the downside, transgender people last month commemorated 25 members of their community killed during the previous year in what activists considered to be hate crimes. Among the latest victims was a 17-year-old Californian born as Eddie Araujo but buried as Gwen, in makeup and black lace gloves, after being beaten and strangled at a party in October.

Activists also seethed over a federal judge’s ruling in September that a trucker fired because he wore women’s clothes after hours was not protected by the federal law against sex discrimination. The married trucker, Peter Oiler, was dismissed by the Winn-Dixie grocery chain after telling a supervisor he occasionally went out in public dressed in wig, makeup and women’s clothes.

Offsetting those developments, transgender-rights advocates won an unprecedented series of political victories this year. The governing councils of 14 cities and counties – including Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, New York and Philadelphia – voted to include transgender people among the groups protected by local nondiscrimination laws.

In no previous year had more than six jurisdictions taken such action, according to the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition. It says seven counties, 44 cities and two states – Minnesota and Rhode Island – now have explicit civil-rights protections for transgender people in housing, employment and other areas.

“This is the best year we’ve ever had,” said Sarah DePalma, a Houston-based activist. “Where we are still lacking is at the state level, but it’s always been our goal to work from the local level up.”

Despite defeat in the Oiler case, transgender people are making gains in the workplace. One notable example: Lt.

Brianne Lunan, formerly Brian Lunan, remains an officer in the Bexar County sheriff’s department in San Antonio, 20 months after the sheriff said Lunan’s male-to-female transition would not jeopardize her job status.

Another positive development, transgender activists said, is improved relations with major gay-rights organizations.

“Some in the gay community still think they should have nothing to do with us, that we hurt their cause, but they’re becoming few and fewer,” DePalma said.

One of the most influential gay-rights groups, the Washington-based Human Rights Campaign, bolstered its standing with transgender activists this year by commissioning what it said was the first national survey of public attitudes toward transgender people.

The survey found majority support for the rights of transgender people to attend school and hold most jobs, but not jobs as elementary school teachers or day-care workers. Roughly one-third of the respondents said being transgender is morally wrong.

Human Rights Campaign spokesman David Smith said he was optimistic that gay-rights and transgender activists – though sometimes differing on tactics – could work in tandem to increase public understanding of their causes.

“We’re all united about what the goal is, and that’s equality under the law,” he said.

The public understands more and more clearly that we exist,” said Keisling, a male-to-female transsexual who co-chairs the Pennsylvania Gender Rights Coalition. “What they don’t see is that there is still a lot of violence towards us, and a lot of discrimination. Most people mistakenly think almost everybody is protected by nondiscrimination laws.”

The transgender community is diverse, with the common denominator that its members, by and large, feel they were born the wrong sex. It encompasses transsexuals, cross-dressers and people who live as members of the other gender but – unlike transsexuals – don’t undergo surgery.

Conservative groups opposed to gay-rights legislation also oppose moves to codify transgender rights, but they do not equate the two movements.

John Paulk, gender-issues analyst for the Christian ministry Focus on the Family, said transgender people have a treatable mental disorder and don’t constitute a group that merits specific civil-rights protections.

“Where do you close the door to other mental problems?” Paulk asked. “Can someone say, ‘I’m schizophrenic, I should have my own bathroom’?”

Use of public bathrooms and showers is a perennially thorny issue for transsexuals; opponents of transgender rights often raise the specter of men dressed as women using women's bathrooms. Numerous businesses and colleges have addressed the matter by providing some on-person, unisex bathrooms.

"It's frustrating that this issue has become so prominent," said Paisley Currah, a Brooklyn College political science professor who heads the Transgender Law and Policy Institute.

"Some politicians will support a transgender rights law, and yet don't want a transsexual in their bathroom," she said. "There's this absurd fear there will be men who cross-dress to go into bathrooms and rape women."

Transgender activists are tackling an array of other challenges. Among them:

- Uncertainty about the validity of marriages involving transsexuals. Some courts have recognized such marriages, but the Kansas Supreme Court ruled this year that the marriage of a male-to-female transsexual and her husband was invalid, even though the wife had changed gender many years before the marriage.

- Parental rights. Some courts have terminated the parental rights of transgender people, or denied them visitation rights following a divorce. Though transgender people are not prohibited from adopting, they sometimes find their sexuality is viewed negatively by adoption agencies.

- Risk of violence against transgender convicts who are placed in prisons according to their gender at birth, rather than the gender they identify with. In August, a Canadian filed an \$18 million lawsuit against U.S. and Montana officials for abuse allegedly suffered when sent to Montana's prison for men while in the process of transforming into a woman.

- Difficulties changing the sex designation on birth certificates and driver's licenses. In Bedford, Pennsylvania, a truck driver who changed from female to male last year was rebuffed by a judge in November when he sought to change his birth certificate and license. "Every time I get stopped for safety checks... they pick up on the fact that my license says I'm a female and I look like a male," said Daniel MacNeal.

---

---

## Application for New or Renewal Membership

YES, I would like to join (\_\_\_\_\_) or renew (\_\_\_\_\_) my membership in Illinois Gender Advocates.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name to Be Used on Mailing Label (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Level (check one):

(\_\_\_\_\_) Annual - \$15      (\_\_\_\_\_) Supporting - \$35      (\_\_\_\_\_) Household - \$50      (\_\_\_\_\_) Sustaining - \$75  
(\_\_\_\_\_) Benefactor - \$150      (\_\_\_\_\_) Lifetime - \$250      (\_\_\_\_\_) Other - \$ \_\_\_\_\_

How would you like to be involved with Illinois Gender Advocates? (Please check all that apply.)

(\_\_\_\_\_) Keep informed by newsletters      (\_\_\_\_\_) Participate in monthly meetings  
(\_\_\_\_\_) Participate in actions      (\_\_\_\_\_) Join a working group or committee  
(\_\_\_\_\_) Liaison with other human rights groups. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_  
(\_\_\_\_\_) Do you have any special skills that could help us out? (legal / legislative, artistic / design, technical / computer) Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail, along with your check or money order, to:  
**Illinois Gender Advocates, 47 W. Division St., #391, Chicago, IL 60610**