

Illinois Gender Advocates



Advocacy for the Transgender and Gender Variant Community

A §501(c)(3) Charitable Organization

Volume 2 Issue 7

July 2003

A New Approach on ENDA: HRC Joins Other Groups in Insisting That Transgenders Be Included in Fair-Employment Legislation

By David Webb, Staff Reporter, Dallas Voice

June 20, 2003 – Inclusion of gender identity and expression in proposed federal nondiscrimination legislation appears unlikely in Congress, but transgender activists say they are far from discouraged.

This year marks the first time for the entire gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender activism community to stand together in the quest for equality, said Paisley Currah, a board member of the Transgender Law and Policy Institute. National, state and local organizations sought inclusion for everyone in the proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act, he said.

Currah said that transgender activism is at a “watershed moment.”

“We believe that this has forever altered the political landscape of our national movement,” Currah said. “We believe it is only a matter of time before any federal legislation dealing with gay rights will as a matter of course also include transgender people.”

(Continued on Page 2)

No Meeting in July!

**The Next Meeting of
Illinois Gender Advocates
Will Take Place at 7:30 p.m. on
Thursday, August 7, 2003
And Will Be Held at
New Spirit MC Church
542 S. Scoville Avenue
In Oak Park**

Whatever

IGA Needs You

By Beth Plotner

We may not be your Auntie Samantha but IGA needs you. There are several positions we need to fill. If you look at where we list our officers etc. you'll notice some changes.

First off, after her many years of service Miranda has stepped
(Continued on Page 2)

A New Approach on ENDA: HRC Joins Other Groups in Insisting That Transgenders Be Included in Fair-Employment Legislation

(Continued from Page 1)

During a conference call with the gay media this week, transgender activists announced a new initiative to “create a new legislative vehicle that will include both sexual orientation and gender identity.” Twenty-four national advocacy groups, including the Human Rights Campaign, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the American Civil Liberties Union, will assist the effort, they said.

“We are now at the point in our national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender movement where we are no longer fighting each other for transgender inclusion,” said Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality.

“We attribute the growing support to a better understanding among all of us of our similarities. Not only is there tremendous overlap between transgender people and gay, lesbian or bisexual people, but we have the same goals, the same friends, the same enemies.”

Forty state organizations have signed on in support of the effort, said Miranda Stevens-Miller, youth advocacy director for Illinois Gender Advocates.

Gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., who previously raised concerns about the inclusion of transgenders in the federal legislation is “now agreeable to the language,” said Jennifer Levi, senior staff attorney for Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders.

“Any remaining concerns with him are political ones,” Levi said.

Congressional sponsors of the proposed legislation protecting the employment rights of gays are pessimistic about its chances of passage. So “transgender inclusion cannot possibly hinder [its] prospects,” Keisling said.

Transgender Law and Policy Institute board member Kylar W. Broadus attributed the Human Rights Campaign’s late emergence as a supporter of transgender rights to its size. “It took a while to get all of the ducks in a row,” said Broadus, a former employee of the Human Rights Campaign. “I don’t think that’s atypical of an organization that size.”

Keisling noted that transgender activists made great strides in 2002 with 14 jurisdictions – including Dallas – adding anti-discrimination protection based on gender identity and expression. Six localities in New Mexico have added similar protection so far this year, she said.

“The greatest strength of the transgender movement is local activism,” Keisling said. “So we expect that any federal effort would rely heavily on grassroots activists getting involved and educating their members of Congress about the need for transgender rights.”

Keisling said that Dallas Transgender Alliance President Tylana Coop and her organization work last getting gender identity included in the new nondiscrimination ordinance was “extremely helpful not only in Dallas itself but around the country as an example.” She also praised the work of other national transgender leaders such as Vanessa Foster of Houston for their “great work” in Texas.

“Dallas may not be known as a hotbed of liberalism, but the work of Tylana and others shows that it is becoming a hotbed of tolerance and fairness,” Keisling said. “And that is a great example for other large cities that protecting people’s rights is something Texans believe in.”

Coop said that local transgender activists currently visit employers, schools and organizations to educate about gender identity, expression and orientation in an effort to show the importance of gender-related protections for not only transsexuals, but for everyone who is gender-variant. Although the transgender alliance is not a political organization, it does urge transgenders to contact their elected representatives, she said.

“It’s through this education that we open people’s minds to considering gender-related protections both locally and nationally,” Coop said. “We feel that by drawing attention to issues like high unemployment, job discrimination, homelessness, and HIV rates among transgenders, that this will help demonstrate the need for gender-friendly legislation.”

Stevens-Miller said that transgender activists from around the country participated in a conference call to discuss strategy last week. A network of activists is expected to begin contacting U.S. Congress members. “It’s very high on the radar screen,” Stevens-Miller said. “Everyone is aware of it, and the whole transgender community is behind us.”

Questions about transgender rights are expected to increasingly be asked of candidates on all political levels, said Shannon Minter, legal director for National Center for Lesbian Rights. “They are going to have to develop a response, because it is something that the entire community cares about very deeply,” Minter said.

Whatever

(Continued from Page 1)

down as our legislative advocate to become our youth advocate. Until we find a replacement I’ll serve as acting legislative advocate. For those of you who are interested in this position the qualifications are as follows: The desire and

drive to work on legislative matters that affect our community. No experience necessary. We're not just going to throw you in the deep end. Miranda and I will be willing to help you. This is a great opportunity for someone who wants to get involved.

For the past couple of years we have held a vigil in the plaza of the State of Illinois Building to remember the members of our community who have lost their lives. Lisa Scheps has done a standout job doing this. Now Lisa has moved down to Austin, Texas. If you're the kind of person who likes to plan events this could be the position for you.

Are you more of a computer person? Like to work on web sites? Want to work on our site? We could use another person to help out. Miranda could use a break.

We need people with other talents as well. Like to write? You can submit topical articles to the newsletter. Every 4th Friday we have a live TV call in show on Chicago Access cable. Have an idea for a show? Want to get involved? Let us know. You don't have to be on camera; somebody has to answer the phone and screen the calls.

The list above is by no means complete. Come to a meeting. Give us a call. Send an email.

We still have lots of work to do and we need your help in doing it!

Miranda Writes...

Community United, but Congress Not Delighted

By Miranda Stevens-Miller

Several very interesting letters reached the desks of the lead sponsors of ENDA in the beginning of Pride Month. Letters from the executive directors of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, PFLAG, and Pride At Work... and from the executive director of the Human Rights Campaign. Letters saying the same thing. Letters making the same request. Letters speaking with one voice. Letters saying that the LGBT community is united behind inclusion of transgender in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act!

There is a lot of history behind this momentous occurrence... not the least of which is the revolutionary change in the LGBT community itself since the introduction of ENDA in 1994. It is almost unheard of today to leave out the "T" in LGBT. Inclusion of transgender in the struggle for human rights is standard. And it is definitely not cool to leave out gender identity and expression in legislation. Just look at the controversy over SONDA, the non-transgender-inclusive New York gay rights bill, and contrast that to the universal accolades heaped upon New Mexico when they passed their trans-inclusive nondiscrimination and hate crimes bills a few months ago.

So when several dozen national human rights advocacy organization, and 40 or more statewide LGBT advocacy organizations all signed on to a pledge to support the reintroduction of ENDA with language to protect the entire gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community, it was indeed the culmination of many years of advocacy and education. If one part of the community is left unprotected, then none of us can feel that we are protected. If one person is denied freedom, then none of us can be truly free.

The Board of Directors of the Human Rights Campaign is to be commended for giving the strong mandate to the staff of HRC to openly and actively advocate for transgender inclusion in federal legislation. Many of us might be tempted to add "What took you so long?" NGLTF, PFLAG and other national organizations have been there for years, and have actually pulled their support from ENDA because it was not inclusive. And Lisa Mottet from NGLTF has been one of the key organizers at both the local and national levels who have made this happen.

Make no mistake; this is a major milestone in our struggle for equality. For once the community is united.

For those of you who have not been involved in this process as I have, there might be a temptation to pooh-pooh the whole thing. In fact, I have already seen that exact sentiment, not

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.

TYRA Youth Hotline:

312-217-1120

E-Mail:

IGA@genderadvocates.org

Web Site Address:

<http://www.genderadvocates.org>

phrased so politely, expressed by a leading gay political activist in Chicago. But I've been there, folks. I've been privileged to be working with HRC along with transgender leaders from the National Center for Transgender Equality and the Transgender Law and Policy Institute and other groups. I have been witness to the negotiations that have taken place between HRC and the lead sponsors. There is no doubt in my mind that HRC is committed to transgender inclusion in federal legislation.

But what is the response from Congress? One would think that they would be excited that they are finally getting clear direction from the LGBT community and that their LGBT constituency is finally working together toward the goal. Unfortunately they have been slow on the uptake. It is likely that ENDA will be introduced in the same form that it had been introduced in the previous Congress.

There is serious talk now about a new legislative initiative. This would be the inclusive bill that everyone in the community wants and has been advocating for. It would include both sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. It would be an opportunity to go back and restore the scope of ENDA to the way it had originally been envisioned, before it was stripped down to an employment-only bill during the Clinton years. It is an opportunity to make it a better and stronger bill to protect all of us.

But ENDA has not yet been introduced in this Congress. There still is time to convince the lead sponsors to introduce an inclusive bill. It ain't over till the fat lady sings, and lead sponsor Barney Frank has yet to sing his final aria. I would urge those of you who have connections in the Boston area to contact Frank's office to urge him to include the entire community when he introduces ENDA this year.

Miranda Stevens-Miller welcomes your comments at MirandaSt1@aol.com

The Transgender Community and ENDA

By Elizabeth Birch, Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign

WASHINGTON, DC, June 16, 2003 – One of the most intricate, important and challenging issues to ever face the Human Rights Campaign is how to grapple both legally and authentically with the issue of “gender identity and expression.”

Transgender people have always been part of our community. We have marched together, been brutalized together and embraced each other in the hardest of times. Usually it is transgender people – both transitioning individuals and gender nonconforming gay and lesbian folks – who are on the front

lines. They are the first to be fired, the first to be rolled into a ditch for kicks, the first to be humiliated in ways large and small each day.

For years transgender leaders have been adamant that protection based on “gender identity and expression” be incorporated into the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA). There have been a number of challenges in this regard. First, many of us actually believed there was a better and faster way to achieve protection for gender identity and expression under gender protection laws. The challenge on that front stems from concern about opening up Title VII of the Civil Rights Act – which some feel is the logical route to achieve such protection.

Second, with the near passage of ENDA in the Senate in 1996, we hoped against all odds we could pull it through before President Clinton left office. That was then, this is now.

Two years ago our Board voted to include transgender Americans in our mission. In December of 2002, the HRC Board of Directors voted to support inclusion of protection based on gender identity and expression in ENDA. They reaffirmed that vote unequivocally just two weeks ago.

Since December our team of professional lobbyists has done yeoman's work, advocating with everything they've got to make this specific change to ENDA. This work has been done passionately, using every imaginable moral and legal argument that was developed by a working group of transgender leaders, community litigators and HRC staff.

Make no mistake, in our hearts and minds, the boards and staff of HRC are committed to including and protecting the transgender community. We will leave no one behind. As we continue on this odyssey, we are searching for a pragmatic, just and timely key that will unlock the door for transgender civil rights and protections.

It took decades to educate the country on gay issues, and we must now educate America about the bias and discrimination facing our transgender brothers and sisters. HRC – working with transgender and community leaders – is opting to work with members of Congress to educate them and to develop a new strategy for a fresh unified bill that will address the discrimination faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans. In this way, we will have an opportunity to reposition the issues, and redouble our efforts to provide the extensive education that will be required to make progress.

A dual track will not satisfy the hearts of those who have focused on ENDA only as a solution. Some will be angry, and we respect that anger. But, the reality of the current situation is clear: at this point, we cannot get where we need to through that one narrow tunnel.

This new bill approach may not feel as pure, or as noble, or as emotionally satisfying to some, but we believe that the broader

path we are pursuing is the best course of action for our entire community.

The simple truth is that this is not an ideal solution, but it is the best and brightest work of a group of idealists working within an imperfect system. HRC is committed, heart and soul, to achieving equality for the entire GLBT community. It will take time and hard work – and we will have to bring out nation along slowly. But make no mistake, history is unfolding before us, faster than ever before, and we will not stop our pursuit of equality for all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans until victory has been won.

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 and Acting Legislative Director:

Beth Plotner
BethP@genderadvocates.org

Vice Chair, Newsletter Editor, Acting Volunteer Coordinator, and (oh, why not?) Scullery Maid:

Diana Williamson
DianaW@genderadvocates.org

Secretary:

Rebecca Davis
RebeccaD@genderadvocates.org

Treasurer:

Marsha Jackson
MarshaJ@genderadvocates.org

Development Director:

Jacob B. Mueller
JacobM@genderadvocates.org

Directors at Large:

Sara Fenwick
fenwick87@attbi.com

Toni Monzo
msanthonia@yahoo.com

Staff Personnel of Illinois Gender Advocates:

Youth Coordinator:

Miranda Stevens-Miller
MirandaM@genderadvocates.org

No Meeting in July; Be Sure to Attend Our August Meeting

Because the date normally scheduled for our July meeting conflicts with the Independence Day weekend, that meeting has been canceled. There will be no meeting in July.

Our next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, August 7, 2003, at 7:30 p.m. at the New Spirit Metropolitan Community Church, located at 542 S. Scoville Avenue in Oak Park. Please enter by the side door on Adams Street, then go up the stairs and turn right to the meeting room. Ample free parking is available on the street.

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!!

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| - Miranda Stevens-Miller | - Beth Plotner |
| - David Webb | - Elizabeth Birch |
| - NTAC | - GenderPAC News |

Special thanks to the Dallas Voice.

Senate Tables General's Promotion, NTAC Asks for Withdrawal of Consideration

From The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC)

For the second time, Senator John Warner (R-VA), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee has delayed consideration of the promotion of an Army general who commanded a base where one soldier beat an fellow soldier to death. The decision drew praise from the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC), which also requested that the general's promotion be pulled from further consideration.

Maj. Gen. Robert T. Clark, up for consideration to receive his third star, was commander of Fort Campbell, KY, in 1999, when Pfc. Barry Winchell, 21, was bludgeoned to death in his barracks at the base. In March, President re-nominated Gen. Clark for promotion. Possibly feeling pressure from calls for an open hearing, the Senate Armed Services Committee delayed further consideration fo the general's promotion last week.

"We're pleased that the Senate Armed Services Committee has reconsidered voting on Maj. Gen. Clark's promotion," said

NTAC chair, Vanessa Edwards Foster, “but we’d much prefer seeing the promotion withdrawn altogether.” Foster added that, “Gen. Clark has been widely maligned and with good reason.”

Clark had been subject of much controversy for his apathy toward the homophobic harassment that Barry Winchell faced in the weeks leading to his death. Winchell fell in love with a pre-operative transsexual, Calpernia Addams, who performed at the Connection – one of Nashville’s famed nightclubs known for its drag performances just an hour down the road from the army base. After a night of drinking, Pvt. Calvin Glover beat Winchell to death as Pvt. Justin Fisher egged Glover on.

On May 12 Patricia and Wally Kutteles, the parents of Barry Winchell, finally met with Maj. Gen. Clark; the man whom they say allowed a “tyrannical, homophobic atmosphere” to fester at the base where their son was stationed. The Servicemembers’ Legal Defense Network (SLDN) reported that Clark never offered an apology to Winchell’s parents during the meeting.

The Kutteleses contend that during Clark’s command at Fort Campbell he failed to address anti-gay harassment. In a recent interview on CNN, Mrs. Kutteles added that Clark offered “no teaching on ‘Don’t Ask Don’t Tell’ until ordered by the Pentagon.”

The Kutteleses alleged that Clark also initiated an investigation into Winchell’s sexual orientation, against military policy, while ignoring threats to Winchell’s safety.

“I wonder if General Clark has ever publicly addressed the major problems occurring on his watch,” asked Calpernia Addams, Winchell’s girlfriend at the time: “How and why so much underage drinking was going on at Fort Campbell; why his officers were unschooled in the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy; why violations of this policy were permitted; why complaints of harassment went unheeded?”

“It really is a shocking list of failures that would be individually problematic,” Addams added, “and I don’t recall a good explanation from anyone, much less the man in charge.”

Clark was also criticized for his treatment of Winchell’s loved ones as well as his lack of communication.

“He didn’t apologize for the way Barry’s things were sent back,” Mr. Kutteles said in an interview with SLDN. “They didn’t send any dress uniforms, only fatigues [and] one boot. The inside of the box looked like someone emptied their trash.”

“We called down there but no one responded,” Mr. Kutteles added. “Why wouldn’t you want to meet us as a sign of courtesy?” Kutteles asked Clark. “He didn’t answer.”

“I asked him, ‘Why did you wait four years to meet with us?’” said Mrs. Kutteles during the CNN interview. “He said, ‘Well, you could’ve called me.’”

Addams stated flatly that, “[Neither] General Clark, nor anyone from the military, has ever acknowledged me in any way.”

The Kutteleses said that Clark told them that he would likely retire if he does not receive the promotion, and added that he knew the meeting was necessary for his confirmation. Mrs. Kutteles felt, “this meeting was clearly more important to Maj. Gen. Clark than to us.”

“Clearly with all of the missteps and problems under his command, offering a promotion to Gen. Clark distinctly sends the wrong message,” added Foster of NTAC. “Regardless of whether he is contrite about it now, why reward a poor track record?”

“These failures [at Fort Campbell] allowed the murder of Barry Winchell to take place,” said Addams, now living in California. “In the end, nothing anyone does makes up for a lost life.”

Illinois Gender Advocates Announces

The logo for TYRA (Trans Youth Resource and Advocacy) features the letters 'TYRA' in a large, stylized, serif font. The 'Y' and 'R' are particularly prominent, with the 'A' having a decorative flourish.

Trans Youth Resource and Advocacy Youth Drop-In Center

**Every Wednesday from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.
At Holy Covenant UMC (the Mural Church)
925 W. Diversey, Chicago
Near the Diversey Brown Line L Stop**

**For Transgender Youth Ages 14-20
Call the Youth Hotline, 312-217-1120
for more information**

TYRA drop-in center is a safe and confidential place for young transgender people between the ages of 14 to 20 to come and meet other youth who also identify as transgender, or are questioning their gender identity.

GPAC Applauds KY Non-Discrimination Order

From GenderPAC News

WASHINGTON, DC (June 17, 2003) The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition applauded Kentucky Governor Paul Patton today for signing an executive order prohibiting discrimination against state employees on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

The order made Kentucky the first state to use the executive order to protect its public employees from discrimination based on gender identity.

“Governor Patton took the state of Kentucky a step forward in the struggle for gender rights,” said GenderPAC Executive Director Riki Wilchins. “We thank the Kentucky Fairness Alliance for their years of hard work in making this a reality.”

The order, which Patton signed on May 20, covers 30,000 employees of the governor’s executive cabinet agencies, according to the Associated Press. It follows recent passage of non-discrimination laws in several Kentucky jurisdictions, most recently Covington, KY.

A Democrat, Gov. Patton leaves office in December, 2003. His potential successor, Republican nominee Rep. Ernie Fletcher, has not said if he would continue or rescind the order. However, Rep Fletcher has told the Associated Press that he was opposed to “special rights” as well as discrimination.

The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition works to end discrimination caused by gender stereotypes by changing public attitudes, educating elected officials and expanding legal rights.

GenderPAC Condemns Murder of African-American JN Teen

From GenderPAC News

NEWARK, NJ (May 11, 2003) Sakia Gunn, a 15-year old lesbian, died today after a man stabbed her in the chest during an early morning confrontation in downtown Newark, N.J. The victim and her friends were reportedly “dressed like boys,” according to Gunn’s mother.

“We condemn Sakia’s murder, and offer our condolences to her family and friends,” said GenderPAC Executive Director Riki Wilchins. “With six murders in two years, it is becoming clear that minority teens who cross gender lines are increasingly at risk.” Richard McCullough, 29, allegedly stabbed Gunn after she and her friends rebuffed his sexual

advances. The scuffle ended with the assault on Gunn and reportedly included one of the girls telling McCullough that she was gay. McCullough surrendered to police on May 15 and was reportedly charged with murder, a weapons offense and bias intimidation.

The same day of McCullough’s surrender, about 300 people – including Gunn’s family – demonstrated in front of city hall to condemn the alleged hate crime and demand increased police presence in downtown Newark.

Important Dates!

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend as many of these events as possible.

July 3, 2003 (Thursday) – Regular monthly meeting of Illinois Gender Advocates **CANCELED** due to conflict with the Independence Day weekend.

July 18, 2003 (Friday) – Illinois Gender Advocates Television, part of the LGBT consortium on Hotline 21, Channel 21 Cable Access TV, Chicago, starting at 6:30 p.m. Scheduled guest: Ambi Tolley from Illinois DCFS.

August 7, 2003 (Thursday) – Regular monthly meeting of Illinois Gender Advocates, at the New Spirit Metropolitan Community Church, 542 S. Scoville Ave. in Oak Park, from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

August 15, 2003 (Friday) – Illinois Gender Advocates Television, part of the LGBT consortium on Hotline 21, Channel 21 Cable Access TV, Chicago, starting at 6:30 p.m. Guest to be announced.

August 9 & 10, 2003 (Saturday and Sunday) – Northalsted Market Days, Chicago.

September 4, 2003 (Thursday) – Regular monthly meeting of Illinois Gender Advocates, at the New Spirit Metropolitan Community Church, 542 S. Scoville Ave. in Oak Park, from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

September 12, 2003 (Friday) – Illinois Gender Advocates Television, part of the LGBT consortium on Hotline 21, Channel 21 Cable Access TV, Chicago, starting at 6:30 p.m. Guest to be announced.

October 2, 2003 (Thursday) – Regular monthly meeting of Illinois Gender Advocates, at the New Spirit Metropolitan Community Church, 542 S. Scoville Ave. in Oak Park, from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

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):

(_____) Student/Youth - \$10

(_____) Regular Membership - \$30

(_____) Supporting Member - \$100

(_____) Benefactor - \$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: _____

Have you ever been a victim of a hate crime or discriminated against because of your gender identity, expression, or image? Yes / No (circle one)

If yes, may we document your case for our report? Yes / No (circle one)

Please mail, along with your check or money order, to:

Illinois Gender Advocates, 47 W. Division St., #391, Chicago, IL 60610