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How long before LGBT
athletes will be accepted?
5 years . 10 years
. 25 years
. not in this lifetime

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US Supreme Court will hear "Homosexual Conduct" case

A ruling which could effect all states who impose sodomy laws, among them, North and South Carolina



Tyron Garner

John Lawrence

NEW YORK — The US Supreme Court announced it will hear Lambda Legal's case challenging the constitutionality of Texas's "Homosexual Conduct" law, which criminalizes oral and anal sex by consenting gay couples and is used widely to justify discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

"This is a significant step forward because it means the court has seen the serious constitutional problems with these laws and is willing to look at them closely," said Ruth Harlow, Legal Director at Lambda Legal. "We now have an opportunity to convince the court to remedy the widespread harms to lesbian and gay people caused by Texas's law and others like it."

Lambda Legal represents John Lawrence and Tyron Garner, who were arrested in Lawrence's Houston home and jailed overnight after officers responding to a false report from an acquaintance found the men engaged in private, consensual sex. Once convicted, they were forced to pay fines and are now considered sex offenders in several states.

"The state should not have the power to go into the bedrooms of consenting adults in the middle of the night and arrest them," said Harlow, who is the lead attorney in the case.

see CONDUCT on 4

New York State finally says, "No"

... to discrimination of lesbians and gays, but not transgenders

ALBANY, NY — Thirty-one years after first being introduced, a measure outlawing discrimination against gays in workplaces, education, housing and public services won final approval in the NY State Senate.

The Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act was hailed by gay rights groups who say the measure, signed into law by Gov. George E. Pataki, will give homosexuals protection against employers, landlords and others who discriminate.

Religious and conservative groups have criticized the bill, claiming it carves out an unneeded special protection for sexual practices they consider immoral and will lead to political momentum at the Capitol for other gay rights measures, such as legalizing homosexual marriages.

The measure, which passed 34-26 in the Republican-controlled Senate and was approved last January by the Assembly, makes New York the nation's 13th state to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Strong religious pressure

The measure has been a political football for years, always dying in the more conservative Senate, where pressure from religious groups kept it from ever being considered on the floor.

But Pataki, during his recent re-election campaign, fought hard to get backing from gay rights groups, in particular the Empire State Pride Agenda. In October, shortly after Pataki persuaded Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno to bring the long-stalled measure to the floor, the 25,000-member gay organization endorsed the governor.



George Pataki
New York
Governor



Matt Foreman
Empire State
Pride Agenda



Thomas Duane
New York State
Senator

The measure, which takes effect in 30 days, adds sexual orientation to the state's human rights law, which already bans from discrimination in housing, employment and other settings based on race, sex, creed, color, national origin, disability, age and marital status.

"Gay and lesbian New Yorkers will no longer have to risk losing their basic necessities based just on who they are," Sen. Thomas Duane, D-Manhattan, an openly gay lawmaker said.

In an unusual coalition, the liberal Democrat was joined by Bruno, a conservative Republican who for years publicly dismissed the need for the bill. He said he voted for the measure "to express tolerance" and "just to recognize that people are free to live their lives as they see fit."

A great opportunity — missed

Transgender people accused gay rights groups, specifically the Empire State Pride Agenda, of abandoning them by not pushing hard enough to be covered by the bill's protections.

see SONDA on 4

First online help site for HIV in NC

Positive Living unveils North Carolina's first HIV web resource directory

BURLINGTON, NC — For the first time, people living in North Carolina who are affected by HIV can find out where they can locate help, in their communities or across the state, with just the click of a mouse. The North Carolina Council for Positive Living (Positive Living) recently unveiled its website, featuring the state's first and only user-friendly online resource directory for HIV-related services in North Carolina.

Positive Living was awarded a contract from the North Carolina HIV/STD Prevention and Care Branch to develop and publish the state's first online HIV/AIDS resource directory.

The launch of the directory means people from across the state can get information on HIV-related resources ranging from testing and counseling to food pantry locations. The site can be navigated in both English and Spanish.

Positive Living is North Carolina's only statewide consumer based program providing education, leadership development, and advocacy for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). The organization works to encourage the active and meaningful involvement of PLWHA at every level of planning and delivery of HIV-related services and to advocate for policies that provide necessary prevention and care resources and protect the right of PLWHA.

According to Patrick Lee, the program director for Positive Living, the directory serves two purposes. The first is to provide a practical tool for individuals and organizations to use to help people who are infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS. "In the twenty plus years we have been dealing with this epidemic, not one person has been cured but many have had prolonged lives because they know how to access care," said Lee. "That is what this is all about — getting people into care." The second purpose is to raise the awareness about HIV/AIDS. "In this period of rapid increases in infection rates and limited funding for services, it's more important than ever that people know that HIV has not disappeared," Lee said.

info:
www.ncpositiveliving.org