

north  
& south  
CAROLINA



# Notes

noted . notable . noteworthy GLBT issues

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Celebrating  
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Do you believe that anti-gay  
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potential threat to the future  
of the LGBT community?  
. yes . no

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## November election results a mix of good and bad

Texas marriage amendment may  
backfire on sponsors

by Donald Miller and Steven Fisher

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Election Day 2005 produced solid and crucial victories for equality with defeat of an anti-gay ballot measure in Maine, the ousting from office of one of the most viciously anti-gay legislators in America and the victory of the first-ever openly gay city council person in Columbus, Ohio.

Many openly gay candidates and officials also won election or re-election across the nation on Nov. 8. These victories were won despite passage of a discriminatory constitutional amendment in Texas.

"Fairness took a step forward, with voters securing equality in the law, in the statehouse and in city hall," said Human Rights Campaign (HRC) President Joe Solmonese. "Standing shoulder to shoulder with our partners in the states, we mobilized and educated voters and equality triumphed."

The Maine victory was an historic win. The ballot measure defeated Nov. 8 would have repealed a non-discrimination bill that passed both houses of the Maine Legislature in March 2005 with strong bipartisan support and was signed into law by Democratic Gov. John Baldacci. This was the third attempt to repeal the measure and the first time voters approved the law.

In Virginia, 32nd District Delegate Richard Black (R-Loudoun County), one of the most anti-gay legislators in America was defeated by David Poisson. Delegate Black has a long

tradition of anti-gay votes and proposed legislation, including one that would have required social workers to determine if parents seeking to adopt a child are gay.

In crucial electoral battleground state Ohio, Mary Jo Hudson was elected as the first openly gay member of the Columbus City Council. Hudson's victory was particularly gratifying for HRC — she is a former board member with longtime involvement in the organization.

Despite a strong fight waged by LGBT advocates, voters approved a sweeping constitutional amendment banning not just marriage equality but also civil unions, domestic partnerships and even the most basic arrangements to secure fairness for Texas families

"The amendment will hurt thousands of men, women and children in Texas, denying them basic rights and responsibilities provided to every Texas family," added Solmonese. "The battle for equality is often two steps forward and one step back and sadly that proved true."

One bright side to the Texas loss — although the amendment passed, the wording of the bill may prove to be difficult to defend in court.

Known as Section 32, the amendment reads as follows:

(a) Marriage in this state shall consist only of

the union of one man and one woman.  
(b) This state or a political subdivision of this state may not create or recognize any legal status identical or similar to marriage.

It's that "B" in Section 32 that's got some activists scratching their head. Is it just a subtle — but potentially radical — cry for equal-



ity? If gays can't marry or enter into legally recognized domestic partnerships, then neither can heterosexuals? What could be more identical to marriage than marriage?

By approving Section 32, Texas has effectively outlawed domestic partnerships for gays and heterosexuals alike. The poorly worded part "B" — theoretically — could make it all too easy for divorce lawyers to argue that their clients can't be granted a divorce because, well, they were never married in the first place.

## CDC releases report on STDs

Study shows that syphilis cases among gay men grew from five percent in 1999 to 64 percent in 2004

by Sara Satinsky

ATLANTA — Five years ago, the national syphilis rate reached an all-time low and the disease seemed well on its way to elimination in the U.S. But outbreaks of syphilis among gay and bisexual men in several cities marked the start of a challenging new



Sexually active men and women with multiple partners need to make STD screening a priority.

see STD on 15

## Notes from a gay soldier

### Local soldier makes it to Kuwait

Editor's Note: These are the thoughts of a gay soldier — a North Carolina native — who has been deployed to Iraq. Because of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, he must remain anonymous.

The weather here is as fickle as the most frigid to hot gay man you could ever meet. I got off the plane in Kuwait to cold weather and the smell of jet fuel nearly knocked me over. The drive from the airport to the camp where I'm currently stationed took about two hours and the charter buses driven by the locals was like riding on one of the roller coasters at Carowinds. The drivers are crazy and drive with a reckless abandon, like a bat out of hell. I thought at points we would have an accident.

After arriving at camp things have been okay. The smells of the porta potties will knock you over — it's not the best of smells to wake up to. Especially after a great work out or morn- see NOTES on 22

