

## National News Notes

by David Stout . Q-Notes staff

### Victory Fund readies 2008 slate

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund has already endorsed a slate of 29 candidates seeking office in 2008. According to a press statement they plan to endorse more than 100 candidates, a new record, before Election Day (Nov. 4, 2008). In 2007, the Victory Fund endorsed 71 candidates and 43 won their races.



"We are heartened not only by the increasing number of out individuals seeking to represent their communities, but by the public's willingness to elect them," said Chuck Wolfe (pictured), president and CEO of the Victory Fund. "Many of our endorsees are either seeking re-election or aspiring to higher office — a sure sign that members of our community are credible leaders and concerned citizens. When they win, we all do, because they help change the face of American politics."

Among the 29 newly-endorsed candidates are two from North Carolina. John Arrowood is seeking election to the Court of Appeals after being appointed by the governor to fill an open seat; well-liked Julia Boseman will be stumping for a third term in the state Senate.

### Marriage hearings wrap up

MONTPELIER, Vt. — The last of six pub-

lic hearings to discuss marriage for same-sex couples took place Dec. 18 at the Vermont Statehouse. At each of the events, members of the Vermont Commission on Family Recognition and Protection found substantial public support for marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples. In fact, officials were surprised by the change from seven years ago, when hearings on recognizing civil unions generated far more divided opinions.

The legislature legalized civil unions for same-sex partners in 2000. Now, they are considering full marriage equality. The Commission on Family Recognition and Protection is scheduled to report on their hearings to the full legislature in April. The earliest the legislature would move on same-sex marriage is 2009.

A justice of the peace spoke at the final hearing to support gay marriage. She noted that officiating a recent civil union ceremony for a same-sex couple felt the same as officiating a wedding for an opposite-sex couple. "I had two people before me who loved each other very much... and I was lucky enough to have the honor to be officiating at their ceremony."

### School anti-bias law in court

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Equality California and the Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSAN) filed a motion Dec. 21 in federal district court to defend a California statute that bars discrimination and harassment in publicly-funded schools. The groups are seeking to counter a lawsuit filed by Advocates for Faith and Freedom and the Alliance Defense Fund that

would prevent enforcement of the recently-passed *Student Civil Rights Act, SB 777*.

"We're intervening in this lawsuit because our student members advocated for SB 777 and are eager to defend it," said GSAN Executive Director Carolyn Laub. "Thousands of our members have endured daily harassment at school based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. It's a shame there are adults who don't think all students deserve to have a safe place to learn."

According to the 2001 California Healthy Kids Survey, nearly 30 percent of California youth in grades seven to 11 report experiencing harassment or bullying based on their actual or perceived race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation.

### Lawsuit filed over prom exclusion

GARY, Ind. — Lambda Legal has filed suit in Northern District Court of Indiana claiming that West Side High School violated Kevin "K.K." Logan's First Amendment rights when it barred him from his prom for wearing a dress. On May 19, 2006, Principal Diane Rouse turned Logan away for violating a school policy that prohibits any "clothing/accessories that advertise sexual orientation, sex, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, profanity, negative social or negative educational statements."

"The fact that sexual orientation is lumped in with drugs and profanity in the school's dress code is just plain offensive, but even more troublesome is that the whole policy is in violation of students' First Amendment rights," said James P. Madigan,

staff attorney in Lambda Legal's Midwest Regional Office in Chicago.

Logan attended West Side High during his junior and senior year. Both classmates and teachers supported him in his daily dress — clothes typically associated with girls his age. His peers and friends also rallied to his defense at the prom, to no avail.

### Homeless youth often LGBT

NEW YORK, N.Y. — A new study commissioned by the New York City Council has found that almost one-third of New York's homeless youth identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, confirming the findings of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's national study, *LGBT Youth: An Epidemic of Homelessness*, released in December 2006. The latter report noted that between 20 and 40 percent of homeless youth nationwide are LGBT.

"We applaud the City Council for committing the resources to uncover and address this tragedy," said Matt Foreman, executive director of NGLTF. "While LGBT people make up about five percent of [New York City's] population, our youth constitute an overwhelming and disproportionate percentage of those navigating the dangers of life on the street."

Trans youth face particular challenges if they land on the streets. They are more likely to face discrimination in the traditional shelter system, more likely to find it difficult to obtain and hold meaningful employment and are subsequently far more likely to engage in survival sex or other risky behaviors. ▀

## Are you GLBT and Catholic?

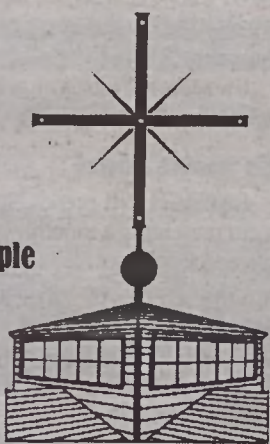
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