

study by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute reveals that 82 percent of LGBT Asian Americans experienced discrimination based on their sexuality in the past year — with the same percentage facing racial or ethnic discrimination.

The findings, based on survey data from phase one of the largest study of LGBT Asian Americans ever undertaken, also show that 96 percent of respondents believe homophobia and/or transphobia is a problem within the Asian American community, and over 80 percent think LGBT Asian Americans experience racism within the larger queer community.

"Asian Pacific American LGBT people are often at the margins, experiencing discrimination in both the LGBT communities and the Asian Pacific American communities, said Alain Dang, an NGLTF Policy Analyst and the study's lead researcher. "The Queer movement must combat racism and the Asian Pacific American community must combat homophobia to create truly inclusive movements for social change."

Gay military discharges down

WASHINGTON, D.C. — For the fourth year the number of service members discharged under the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy declined. According to Department of Defense figures, 700 personnel were discharged for violating the gay ban in 2004, a 15-percent decrease from 2003.

By branch, The number of those separated from the military in 2004 includes 325 from the Army, 92 from the Air Force, 59 from the Marines and 177 from the Navy. These figures are the second lowest amount of discharges in 20 years.

"The continued drop in 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' discharges at a time of war clearly shows that "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is a law we don't need," said Kathi Westcott of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network. "Who can support a law that is irrelevant, unnecessary and harmful? The fact is that gay and lesbian service members don't harm unit cohesion, and the continuing decline in discharge numbers clearly illustrates this fact. 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell's days are numbered."

TS denied child custody

CHICAGO, Ill. — The Illinois Court of Appeals ruled that Sterling Simmons, a 46-year-old female to male transsexual, has no claim to custody of his 10-year-old son because he wasn't legally a man when he married Jennifer Simmons, who became pregnant through in vitro fertilization during their marriage.

Although Sterling Simmons has changed his birth certificate to reflect his male identity, he has not completed the change surgically. Since he has breasts and a vagina, the Appeals Court determined that he is a woman. Based on that fact, they ruled that his marriage was never valid and he has no rights with regard to the child.

The Appeals Court's decision upheld a Cook County judge's earlier finding against Simmons. Testimony in the case showed that the boy had been raised by both parents and he wanted to live with his father.

International >

TS golfer ok'd for British Open

LONDON, England — Mianne Bagger

(pictured), 38, made history last year when she became the first transsexual golfer to compete at the Australian Open. Her participation was made possible when the Australian Ladies Professional Golf tour abolished its rule requiring players to be female at birth.

Now, thanks to a similar decision by the Ladies' Golf Union, the transplanted Aussie is joining the Ladies European Tour. She has accepted an invitation to compete in the Women's British Open in late July. The event is one of the most respected tournaments in women's golf.



Rules barring transsexuals from participating in various sports have been falling since the International Olympic Committee made the decision to allow transsexuals to compete at the Athens games.

Bagger is still waiting to learn of her standing with the American Ladies Professional Golf Association. The ALPGA was to scheduled to vote late last year on her membership application, but there's been no word to date.

Gay couple's 'escape' questioned

LAGOS, Nigeria — Government officials tell human rights activists that the recent "escape" from police custody of two gay Nigerian men charged with violating the country's "crimes against nature" law is under investigation.

Ogudu Emmanuel and Odjegba Tevin

were arrested January 15 after neighbors contacted police with their suspicions that the men were lovers. When authorities questioned the men in their home, they acknowledged their relationship and were taken to the Rumuokoro Police Station. Homosexual activity carries a mandatory 14 year prison term.

While the couple was in jail awaiting trial, they disappeared. Police say they do not know what happened to the men but "it appears" they escaped. Gay rights activists fear they may have been killed by other inmates or by police.

The government says it is proceeding on the belief that an unnamed official may have let the men go.

Cop rehired after TS snafu

LIMA, Peru — A national police officer who was fired in 1996 because his superiors felt he tarnished the department's image by marrying a transsexual was reinstated by Peru's highest court.

The Constitutional Tribunal ruled, "What is judged unconstitutional is that, interfering in a sphere of human freedom, a sexual choice and preference of a person is considered illegitimate and from there susceptible to sanction."

In an odd twist, Officer Jose Antonio Alvarez testified that he did not know his wife was a post-operative transsexual when he married her. Alvarez's attorney told a local television station that one of his client's former girlfriends, who was pregnant with his child at the time, let the cat out of the bag.

Alvarez's marriage was later annulled and he reunited with the gossipy girlfriend, with whom he now has a second child.

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