

National News

compiled by Q-Notes staff

Prez signs onto U.N. declaration

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Obama administration has formally endorsed a United Nations declaration calling for an end to discrimination and other human rights abuses based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The move is a reversal of the Bush administration's refusal to sign the statement, which made the U.S. the only western nation not to support the measure when presented by the U.N. General Assembly in December.

"The United States supports the U.N.'s statement on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity and is pleased to join the other 66 U.N. member states who have declared their support of the statement," the State Department said in a statement. "The United States is an outspoken defender of human rights and critic of human rights abuses around the world. As such, we join with other supporters of this statement, and we will continue to remind countries of the importance of respecting the human rights of all people in all appropriate international fora."

LGB poverty is an invisible issue

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — The Williams Institute at the University of California-Los Angeles School of Law has issued a first-of-its-kind report that shows LGB Americans are as likely, and in some cases more likely, to be poor than their heterosexual counterparts.

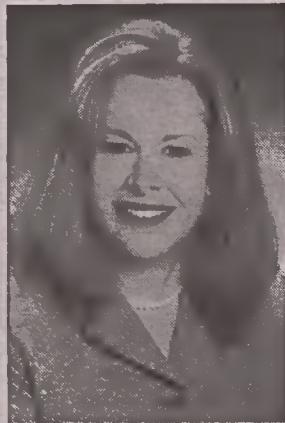
Because the U.S. Census Bureau does not explicitly ask questions about sexual orientation, LGB adults and families have been invisible in poverty statistics.

"The report highlights a significant segment of the poor and low-income population that has largely been ignored," said M.V. Lee Badgett, research director at The Williams Institute and an author of the study. "The data clearly undermine the persistent myth that the gay community is monolithically affluent. As a group, quite the contrary is true."

The authors of the study, "Poverty in the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community," suggest that unique social and political aspects of LGB life play a role in contributing to higher rates of poverty in this community, including vulnerability to employment discrimination, inability to marry and higher numbers of uninsured.

Voters uphold anti-bias measures

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — On March 24, voters rejected a proposed amendment to the city charter that would have repealed existing laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Amendment 1, which would have repealed ordinances prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, was defeated 58 percent to 42 percent.



Gainesville, Fla., Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan.

Gainesville ordinances have prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation since 1998. Discrimination based on gender identity has been prohibited since January 2008. A petition drive last year placed Amendment 1 on the ballot.

Gainesville Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan said, "As Mayor, I am extremely pleased that Gainesville voters chose to reaffirm that discrimination has no place in our city. Many thanks to Equality is Gainesville's Business and the hundreds of tireless volunteers who represented the true values of Gainesville. These volunteers demonstrated the diversity and expertise within our community, representing such groups as the NAACP of Alachua County, the

Human Rights Campaign, the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, the University of Florida Student Senate and others."

GLSEN at work, part one

NEW YORK, N.Y. — According to a new Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) study, transgender youth face extremely high levels of victimization in school, even more so than their non-transgender LGB peers. At the same time, they are also more likely to speak out about LGBT issues in the classroom. The study, "Harsh Realities: The Experiences of Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools," is the first comprehensive report on transgender students.

The findings showed that nearly nine out of 10 transgender students experienced verbal harassment at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation and gender expression, more than half experienced physical harassment because of their sexual orientation and gender expression and more than a quarter experienced physical assault because of their sexual orientation and gender expression. These levels of victimization were higher than those faced by the non-transgender LGB students who participated in the 2007 National School Climate Survey, GLSEN's biennial survey of LGBT students.

GLSEN at work, part two

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In an historic first, GLSEN Executive Director Eliza Byard and a delegation of students and teachers met with Education Secretary Arne Duncan March 23 to discuss the importance of anti-bullying efforts to the Administration's education reform agenda. Secretary Duncan affirmed a commitment to make schools safe for every student, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

"It was moving to witness these students and teachers sharing their personal stories of pain, rejection, resilience and hope with the nation's top education official," Byard said. "Secretary Duncan showed great compassion for their experiences, respect for their perseverance and dedication to identifying effective responses to school climate issues. I am confident that we will see growing engagement with these issues at the Department of Education and truly positive change." ▀



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