

new package does not include domestic partners of opposite-sex couples.

Jeffrey Montgomery, head of the Michigan-based Triangle Foundation, said, "It is particularly significant that all three companies, along with the UAW have made this great commitment. We're proud that the industry most closely identified with Detroit and Michigan has taken such an important and empowering step forward."

But Ned McGrath, a spokesman for the Detroit Catholic Archdiocese told the *New York Times* the church objects to the benefits program saying that "anything that compromises or erodes the traditional shape of the family tears at the very fabric of moral relationships that the church seeks to uphold."

Ithaca NY adds transgender to hate crimes statutes

ITHACA, N.Y. (Jun 8) — The Ithaca, N.Y., Common Council has unanimously approved a measure making bias-based crimes against transgendered individuals

illegal. According to activists the move is the first time any city in the state has included protections for the transgender community.

Mayor Alan Cohen quickly indicated he would sign the measure into law.

"We're proud that Ithaca is again on the forefront of civil rights in New York," said Roey Thorpe of the Empire State Pride Agenda. "This real victory paves the way to covering transgender persons under our local non-discrimination law."

The hate crimes measure makes offenses punishable by fines of up to \$1,000 and jail sentences of up to one year.

Gay Pride at CIA/NSA

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Jun 8) — The *New York Times* reports that some one hundred gay and lesbian employees of the nation's top security agencies — the CIA and the National Security Agency — attended an unprecedented gay pride observance at the CIA's Langley, Va., facility.

In addition to the gay and lesbian security employees attending were CIA Director George Tenet and openly gay Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.).

Frank credited the Clinton administration for the progress made in the federal government. "The fact that I would be speaking at Gay and Lesbian Pride Month at the CIA — yeah, that's a sign of real progress," Frank said. "I think it's indicative of the improvement of the atmosphere that Bill Clinton has ushered in."

Sinead O'Connor: 'I'm a lesbian'

LOS ANGELES (Jun 8) — In a revelation that perhaps surprised few people, pop singer Sinead O'Connor has acknowledged she is a lesbian in *Curve* magazine.

"I'm a lesbian," O'Connor told the magazine. "I haven't been very open about that, and throughout most of my life I've gone out with blokes because I haven't necessarily been terribly comfortable about

being a lesbian. But I actually am a lesbian."

The controversial singer's latest single is aptly titled, "No Man's Woman."

Some parents upset after teacher tells kids he's gay

BOSTON (Jun 8) — Some Newton, Mass., parents say they're upset that David Gaita, a 1st grade teacher at Burr Elementary, told students in his class that he is gay.

One mother told the *Boston Herald* that Gaita's disclosure "takes away the rights of parents, their duty to explain to a son or daughter what these things mean."

Other parents defended Gaita, saying the teacher was "not discussing sexuality, he's discussing what he's like as a person."

According to reports, Gaita told his class he is gay after a student asked him during a lesson about biographies if he had a wife.

In a letter to parents Cynthia Bencal, Burr's principal, wrote: "The students were asking Mr. Gaita about his family and who lives with him. One student asked him if he had a partner. In response to that question, Mr. Gaita told the students that he was gay, and he explained the term by saying that if he had a partner, it would be a man."

She said when a student asked Gaita if he liked being gay "he said he was proud of who he was and that he knew that he was a good person."

The school district has said it would have been improper for any teacher to discuss intimate details with students, and Newton Superintendent Jeffrey Young said, "Merely stating that if one had a partner he would be a man is not, in my view, tantamount to intimate details."

NY OKs hate crimes bill

ALBANY, N.Y. (Jun 7) — The New York state Senate has, after 11 years of trying, approved a hate crimes measure that includes sexual orientation.

An Assembly-Senate conference committee has to work out a compromise measure to reconcile some differences between the versions approved by the two houses of the state legislature, but Gov. George Pataki, a Republican, quickly issued a statement praising lawmakers for passing the bill and promised to sign the bill into law.

"Assaulting a man or a woman because they are a member of a particular ethnic group or religious minority or because of their sexual orientation is an attack on all New Yorkers," Pataki said. "People who act on hate need to know their punishment will be swift, severe and just."

Update: Primary election losses

SANTA FE, N.M. (Jun 7) — Liz Stefanics has lost her bid for a seat in the state legislature from the 39th state senate district to Phil Griego, the incumbent who unseated her four years ago.

Stefanics appeared to be losing by some 200 votes in the close race.

Flyers from a group known as La Alianza Catolica (The Catholic Alliance) urged voters to cast ballots against Stefanics because she is an open lesbian and charged she was a "one-issue, one-constituency candidate" representing "militant gays and lesbians of Santa Fe."

Stefanics served in the state Senate from

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