



PFLAG-LA

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

P. O. Box 24565 Los Angeles, CA 90024 (888) PFLAG88 <http://www.pflagla.org>

2009 / Newsletter # 256

OUR MISSION

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) promotes the health and well-being of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered persons, their families and friends through: **support**, to cope with an adverse society; **education**, to enlighten an ill-informed public, and **advocacy**, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

Our meetings are always held on the **3rd Wednesday** of each month at the Westwood United Methodist Church, 10497 Wilshire Bl., NE corner of Wilshire and Warner. Take the 405 Freeway to the Wilshire Bl. East exit. Continue 1.5 miles. The entry on Warner has an elevator; another entry is through the sanctuary to the corridor, then upstairs to the Fellowship Hall - 3rd floor. There is also easy access from the north driveway. Doors open at 7:00 pm; general meeting begins at 7:30 pm.

Our meetings typically include rap groups where individuals can share their concerns, questions, and understanding about the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered person(s) in their families, and invited guest speakers on topics pertinent to our families. There is a short refreshment break between the rap session and the speaker(s).

For Upcoming Speakers, Please Check Our Website At
www.pflagla.org

NOTICE OF ELECTION

Notice is hereby given that an election of officers will be held at our next PFLAG meeting on Wednesday, November 18, 2009, at 7:30 pm.

Notice is further given that we also will vote to amend Article V of our by-laws.

(Please see page 8)

HELPLINES, CHAPTERS & CONTACTS 9AM-9PM
1-888-PFLAG88 or 1-888-735-2488 www.pflagla.org

West LA: 310-454-6681 (Liz)
 LI ZARM@aol.com

Pasadena: 626-797-1732 (Patti)
 ploitz@earthlink.net

Santa Clarita: 661-254-2177 (Dave)

San Fernando Valley: 818-788-8678 (Lynette)
 lynettesperber@yahoo.com

South Bay: 310-546-2721 (Dick)

Long Beach Chapter: 562-403-1234
 pflaglb@yahoo.com

Hablamos español!

Leonor 818-956-7533
<http://www.pflagla.org/Home-Espanol.html>

Julio 310-500-8645
 espanol@pflagpasadena.org

PFLAG/LA Speakers Bureau:
 Ron & Andy, andynron@gmail.com

Asian Pacific Islander:
 Harold Kameya, HKameya@gmail.com,
 818-368-2008
 Bev Toyama, btoyama@ca.rr.com

Transgender: 818-985-9319 (Chris)

LA Gay & Lesbian Center:
 323-993-7400
www.lagaycenter.org

The TREVOR PROJECT
 24-hour nationwide suicide prevention line for
 GLBT and Questioning youth.
 866-4 U TREVOR / 866-488-7386
www.thetrevorproject.org

PFLAG National
 (202) 467 8180 www.pflag.org

Need to get in touch with the editor? Send an email to Chris at haichi87@sbcglobal.net

Officers:

President: Mariette Sawchuk
 Vice President: Stuart Huggins
 Secretary: Karen Mason
 Treasurer: York Knowlton
 Past President: Steve Krantz
 Regional Director: Steve Krantz

Board Members and Committee Chairs:

Advocacy Chair: Steve Krantz
 Chapter Liaison for
 Conference Calls: Carol Cox
 Communication: Mariette Sawchuk
 E-Mail Mailings: Barry Mason
 Facilities Coordinator: Sandy Sawchuk
 Greeter: Maurie Davidson,
Additional greeters needed

Helpline Coordinator: Open
 Hospitality: Open
 Library: Open
 Newsletter Editor: Chris Haiss
 Newsletter Mailing: Open
 Membership/
 Outreach: Stewart Huggins,
 Sylvia Weisenberg

Programs: Stewart Huggins
 Speakers Bureau: Andy Birnbaum, Ron Elecciri
 Web Master: York Knowlton

**When you don't need
 PFLAG any more
 that is when PFLAG
 needs YOU!**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

General Election Meeting and Get-together

Every month for more than 30 years there's been a PFLAG Los Angeles meeting helping LGBTQ persons and their families and friends cope with the difficulties of living in a homophobic society. People come at many stages on their journey, and all receive a warm welcome and a safe place to talk. We've cried together, laughed together and formed lasting bonds.

Maybe you've been coming to our meetings regularly or perhaps you've only been once. Maybe you were a regular, but it's been a while since you've attended. Whatever your situation, if you've got a warm spot in your heart for PFLAG Los Angeles, put our November 18th meeting on your calendar. It's our biennial election meeting, and a great time to see old friends and make new ones.

All dues paying members will have an opportunity to vote for President, Secretary, and Treasurer. We'll also be voting on an amendment to the by-laws clarifying the role of the Board of Directors. (The full text of the amendment appears at the end of this newsletter.) If you'd like to become a member or renew your membership, please use the enclosed envelope. On-line donation is coming to our website by the end of the year!

We'll have our regular support groups, a "State of the Chapter" report, and opportunities to meet the slate of officers and the current Board Members. There will also be coffee, refreshments and time to share news and ideas informally. Looking forward to seeing you then.

Mariette Sawchuk
msawchuk-pflag@earthlink.net

Agenda of the November 18, 2009 Meeting

- 7:30-8:30 Support Groups
- 8:30-8:45 Refreshments and Conversation
- 8:50-9:00 State of the Chapter and Future Goals
- 9:00-9:15 Meet the Slate
- 9:15-9:30 Meet the Board and Volunteer Opportunities
- 9:30-9:45: PFLAG in the Region and the Nation

Slate of Officers

- President: Mariette Sawchuk
- Vice President: Stuart Huggins
- Secretary: Karen Mason
- Treasurer: York Knowlton

LEGISLATIVE CORNER

CA Governor Signs Three LGBT Rights Bills Into Law!

Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law three historic LGBT rights bills sponsored by EQCA:

- **The Harvey Milk Day bill** (SB 572), authored by Senator Mark Leno, to designate May 22, Milk's birthday, as a special day of recognition for the late San Francisco supervisor, who was the nation's first openly gay elected official.
- **The Family Protection and Marriage Recognition Act** (SB 54) also authored by Senator Leno, requires that California recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states during the five-month window in which such unions were legal in California.
- **The LGBT Domestic Violence Programs Expansion Bill** (AB 1003), authored by Assemblymember John A. Pérez, will increase and expand services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) survivors of domestic violence. The bill will go into effect on January 1, 2010.

www.eqca.org

DOMA Repeal Introduced in Congress

On September 15, lawmakers introduced legislation to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), a law that discriminates against lawfully married same-sex couples. Through DOMA, the federal government selectively denies same-sex couples more than 1,100 federal protections and responsibilities, including Social Security and immigration benefits, that apply to all other married couples.

The Respect for Marriage Act was introduced in the House by Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Chair of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties; Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin (D-WI); and Congressman Jared Polis (D-CO). The bill has 91 co-sponsors.

DOMA is discriminatory and harmful to families. Married same-sex couples pay taxes, serve their communities, struggle to balance work and family, raise children, and care for aging parents like other Americans. Their contributions and needs are no different than anyone else's and their relationships deserve the dignity and protection of federal recognition.

The Respect for Marriage Act would repeal both sections 2 and 3 of DOMA. Section 2 creates an exception to the full faith and credit clause for married same-sex couples. The Respect for Marriage Act would eliminate that provision, but it would leave each state free to decide whether to recognize marriages of same-sex couples from other states. Section 3 excludes same-sex spouses from all federal benefits and protections, including Social Security survivor benefits, the right to file joint taxes, and the right to petition for permanent residence for a foreign spouse. The Respect for Marriage Act would require that the federal government treat all married couples equally.

House Votes to Expand Hate Crimes Definition

WASHINGTON/DC — On October 8, the House voted 281 to 146 to expand the definition of violent federal hate crimes to those committed because of a victim's sexual orientation, a step that would extend new protection to lesbian, gay and transgender people. The measure was named in part for Matthew Shepard, a gay Wyoming college student murdered in 1998.

Under current federal law, hate crimes that fall under federal jurisdiction are defined as those motivated by the victim's race, color, religion or national origin.

The new measure would broaden the definition to include those committed because of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

2009 National March on Washington for LGBT Equality

October 10 was very special. President Obama attended the Human Rights Campaign's 13th Annual National Dinner and reiterated his commitment to the LGBT community in his keynote address to the annual dinner of the Human Rights Campaign, in front of 3,000 attendees at the Washington Convention Center. He told a part of the PFLAG story, the story of Jeanne Manford walking alongside her son Morty in a parade. This is where the story began, the story that the President called "the story of America." In telling this story, the President signaled his continuing support of the LGBT community and of the issues in which all Americans have a stake.

"PFLAG is honored that President Obama recognized the very personal and powerful beginning of our organization," said PFLAG National President John R. Cepek. "It's awe-inspiring to consider that PFLAG began as one woman's show of support for her son and has grown into an international network of activists from all walks of life."

In 1972, it was a bold statement of solidarity when Jeanne Manford marched alongside her gay son in a New York parade. The unconditional love and support she demonstrated that day touched onlookers and led Jeanne to reach out to other parents. What started with 20 people in a church basement in 1973 has grown into more than 200,000 people in chapters across the world who still work to make sure their LGBT loved ones have the same rights and opportunities as their straight friends and family members. In addition to providing a framework for local and regional support networks, PFLAG also implements national education programs and mobilizes a strong grassroots network to advocate at all levels of government. In 2007, PFLAG launched the Straight for Equality project, which focuses on encouraging straight allies to come out in support of LGBT people and their rights.

On Sunday, October 11, tens of thousands participated in the National Equality March, one day after President Obama pledges to end the military's 'don't ask, don't tell' policy and repeal the Defense of Marriage Act.

After marching through D.C. and before the White House, participants converged on the U.S. Capitol, where a series of high-profile LGBT speakers energized the crowd and urged them to action. Cleve Jones, a longtime gay activist and one of the chief organizers of the march, urged attendees to fight for their rights and not accept any compromises or delays proposed by public officials. "If you believe we are equal, then it is time to act like it," he said. "A free and equal people do not tolerate prioritization of their rights. They do not accept compromises. They do not accept delays. And when we see leaders and those who represent us saying, 'You must wait again.' We say, 'No! No! No longer will we wait!'"

Read our **newsletter online** at http://www.pflagla.org/PFLAGLA_Newsletters.html
and check out our **MYSPACE** page at <http://www.myspace.com/pflagla>

Please help us reduce costs
by signing up to receive our newsletter
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Just send an e-mail to Barrybarrym@yahoo.com, list name and address under which you currently receive our newsletter by snail mail so that we can delete that address from our mailing list, and we'll make sure that you'll receive the next newsletter by e-mail.

We'd like to ask for your
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to ensure that if we ever have
an event on short notice
YOU WILL hear about it.
Please email your
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Barrybarrym@yahoo.com

T r a n s A c t i o n

Committee on Education and Labor Hears Testimony on Workplace Discrimination

(September 24, 2009, Washington, DC)-The House Committee on Education and Labor, led by Chairman George Miller (D-CA), heard testimony yesterday morning about the devastating impact of workplace discrimination faced by gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. The hearing was part of the Committee's work on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), HR 3017.

One witness, Vandy Beth Glenn, had worked for the Georgia state legislature for a number of years until the day she informed her supervisor that she was transitioning from male to female; she was immediately fired from her job. Her experiences, unfortunately, are not unique. The recent National Transgender Discrimination Survey led by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) found that 26% of the 6,450 transgender people surveyed had faced an adverse job action, such as losing their jobs, being denied a promotion or not being hired because of their gender identity or expression. Almost every person who responded to the survey-a staggering 97%- had experienced harassment or discrimination on the job because they are transgender.

"Now is the time that we must pass legislation designed to protect Americans from this kind of blatant and unfair discrimination," commented NCTE's Executive Director, Mara Keisling. "Every single day, transgender people are being fired for being who they are, even when they have excellent work records and skills. As a result, their families struggle and often fail to make ends meet, people lose their homes, and careers end, all because someone's supervisor decided that it was okay to discriminate. That is not the American way. This legislation is absolutely needed to make it clear that discrimination is never acceptable."

Several committee members were visibly moved by Ms. Glenn's testimony and expressed concern at the way she was treated. They also asked detailed questions of the witnesses and many cited their support for ENDA's passage. NCTE is very grateful for her courage in speaking out and her willingness to stand up for transgender rights.

From: National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)

TSA Secure Flight

Secure Flight is a program implemented by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to check passenger identities against federal watch lists.

To find out how this impacts transgender people, please go to the National Center for Transgender Equality's website at <http://transequality.org> and click on "FAQ on the new Secure Flight regulations (updated)" on the left-hand side under the header "Learn More."

Get your 2010 "Angels of Change" Calendar!

The sale of "Angels of Change" raises funds for Children's Hospital Los Angeles' transgender clinic to continue to provide medical and hormonal treatment to transgender youth who don't have insurance or means to pay for their services.

For order information, please contact:

Bamby Salcedo
Transgender Harm Reduction
Project Coordinator
Children's Hospital Los Angeles
Ph. (323) 361-5983
Fax. (323) 913-3614
bsalcedo@chla.usc.edu

Transgender Day Of Remembrance

The *Transgender Day of Remembrance* was set aside to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held in November to honor Rita Hester, whose murder on November 28th, 1998 kicked off the "Remembering Our Dead" web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil in 1999.

The *Transgender Day of Remembrance* serves several purposes. It raises public awareness of hate crimes against transgendered people, an action that current media doesn't perform. Day of Remembrance publicly mourns and honors the lives of our brothers and sisters who might otherwise be forgotten. *Day of Remembrance* gives our allies a chance to step forward with us and stand in vigil, memorializing those of us who've died by anti-transgender violence.

Please check local listings for event date.

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/216910> Oct 8, 2009
By Brent Childers | Newsweek Web Exclusive

A Step in Faith

Evangelical Christian Brent Childers explains his journey from believing that homosexuality was an abomination to marching in a pro-gay march on Washington.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans are a diverse, extraordinary, resilient, and passionate group of forgiving men and women. I wouldn't be standing beside them demanding full and equal treatment under the law and speaking out against the harm caused by religion-based bigotry at the National Equality March in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 11 if I thought they were not created in God's image the same as myself, same as my family, as we all are—we are all God's children.

And I know better than anyone, since six years ago I was one of those bigots. At that time it would have seemed abominable to even consider attending a "gay-rights" event. To me, these would have been the people tearing apart the very seams of our culture and our country. Today, it is a natural expression of who I am. Some might call that a miracle.

So what it is that would bring someone from a place where he once declared himself a "Jesse Helms Republican," a man who condemned homosexuality as a threat to children and society, told his own son that being gay is a ticket to hell, to travel from Hickory, N.C., to the West Lawn of the Capitol building on Oct. 11, 2009? How can one travel from the seemingly impossible road of bigotry to one of acceptance and love for our LGBT brothers and sisters? The answer is one that I hope religious leaders such as Pat Robertson and James Dobson (and most importantly, their followers) will hear.

It's because something deep inside told me that I needed to step out in faith onto a bridge of knowledge and understanding. I didn't know where this bridge would take me but something was telling me it was a path I needed to walk. My own mother challenged me in 2003 to look at my beliefs and the true intent behind the teachings I held in blind faith. "Do you think your views are Christ-like?" she asked me. Her question was dead on: once I walked away from the Church's teachings of rejection and condemnation, my relationship with God transcended to a higher spiritual plateau. I realized an unparalleled sense of spiritual clarity when I opened my heart and mind to a genuine expression of love, compassion, and acceptance of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

This new voice—Christ's voice—became the core principles of my faith: love, compassion, and respect. That voice I now realize was desperately wanting to be heard, a voice no longer comfortable with the place in which I had chose to confine it for so long—a place of bigotry, prejudice, fear, and misunderstanding.

The walk across that bridge wasn't very strenuous but it was at times painful. The pain came as I began to realize for the first time that I had been using my faith to bring harm to others. That's not a pleasant realization for anyone who marches under a Christian banner of love, respect, and compassion.

During the past four years I have looked into the faces of those I once caused harm to with religion-based bigotry and prejudice. And while I may have never inflicted a physical blow, I know today that my words indeed caused deep wounds—perhaps at some point deeper than I care to dwell upon.

They are the faces of individuals like young Sean Kennedy, who died in Greenville, S.C., in 2007 after being struck by a person who considered Sean a "faggot"; Pat and Lynn Mulder of Auburndale, Fla., whose gay son also died as a result of a hate crime; Jared Horsford of Texas who carved derogatory words into his flesh because he thought it would help control the demon he was told lived there; Nicholas White who was relentlessly berated by fellow 4-H peers at camp this summer as other 4-H campers stood behind the tormentors in silence; or the mother I met recently in North Carolina who grieved over her dead son—a child that had been rejected because he was gay and thought peace could only come through suicide.

There are many, many others I have met in my work with Faith in America, as we try to bring awareness and understanding to the pain and trauma caused to LGBT people, especially youth, when church teaching is misused to justify and promote a societal climate of rejection, condemnation, and discrimination. This environment fosters suicide, hate crimes, an epidemic of antigay bullying in our schools against all kinds of children gay and straight, legal workplace discrimination against LGBT citizens in 20 states, military service members forced to serve in silence or discharged for being honest about who they are, lesbian and gay parents unable to protect their children without the legal structure of federally recognized civil marriage, and lesbian and gay couples unable to provide security for their partners in the absence of federally recognized civil marriage. This is what we march for on Oct. 11 and every day. Every person coming to Washington—whether they are religious or not—does share one faith, and that is faith in America. As the progress of history has shown, Americans will prove themselves able to see beyond religion-based bigotry to the promises of equal treatment for all. Those who use religion-based bigotry to persecute and discriminate against LGBT people are on the wrong side of history, just as they were with slavery, interracial marriage, the treatment of women, and so many other issues.

I remember the first time I met Sean Kennedy's mother, Elke, sitting in her family's living room just months after she had lost her precious son as the result of a senseless and hate-filled act of violence. And I will never forget that momentary look on her face when I explained to her that I once was someone whose attitude had helped perpetuate the societal climate in which her son lived and died. It was a moment in which I realized the depths of the wounds I may have inflicted upon a gay teen contemplating suicide or a perpetrator looking to justify hate violence. It is a moment that commands me to continue to march, to speak out, and help others experience the spiritual blessing that comes from unshackling the chains of religion-based bigotry and prejudice.

Brent Childers is the executive director of Faith in America. After changing his views on homosexuality, he left the Southern Baptist Church and now attends both a local Pentacostal and a nondenominational church in Hickory, N.C.

Introduction: Traditionally, the day to day running of PFLAG Los Angeles has been done by a Board of Directors. The Chapter By-Laws, however, do not contain any policy guidelines for the operation of the Board. This amendment to the By-Laws that we are asking chapter members to approve at the general meeting spells out and clarifies the how the board has customarily operated.

ARTICLE V

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1 — Board role, size, and compensation: The Board is responsible for the overall policy and direction of the Chapter. Each member of the Board shall have responsibility for some part of the Chapter's ongoing activities. The Board shall be comprised of no fewer than five Members which include the offices of President/s, Treasurer and Secretary who are *ex officio* members of the Board. Board Members are volunteers and receive no compensation for their services.

Section 2 — Eligibility and Responsibilities: Persons appointed to the Board must be active members of PFLAG Los Angeles who are willing to take responsibility for some area of Chapter activities. Active members are defined as persons who have currently paid dues and have been involved in Chapter activities (monthly meetings, Speakers Bureau, outreach activities, etc.) for at least six months. Board Members are responsible for attendance at Board meetings, attendance at least twice a year at monthly meetings, and fulfilling the duties assigned them by the Board.

Section 3 — Board Appointments: Board Members shall be appointed by the elected Officers of the Chapter in consultation with the current Board. Chapter Officers will take into consideration dedication to Chapter activities and goals, special areas of expertise, and representation for the diverse constituencies of the Chapter.

Section 4 — Terms: All Board Members shall serve two-year terms, but are eligible for reappointment.

Section 5 — Meetings and Notice: The Board shall meet at least twice a year, at an agreed upon time and place. An official Board meeting requires that each Board member have notice at least two weeks in advance.

Section 6 — Quorum: A quorum must be attended by at least forty percent of Board Members for business transactions to take place and motions to pass.

Section 7 — Powers of the Board: The Board shall have the power to conduct the business of the organization including, but not limited to the conduct of the financial affairs of the organization, the planning and implementation of actions on behalf of PFLAG Los Angeles and oversight on all PFLAG Los Angeles projects.

Section 8 — Board Action Without a Meeting: Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Board at a meeting may still be taken if a majority of the Board members constituting a quorum of the Board gives their consent by mail, electronic mail, fax, or telephone call.

Section 9 — Removal and Resignation: Any Officer or Board Member may be removed, either with or without cause, by the Board of Directors, at any time. Any Officer or Board Member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors or to the President/s or to the Secretary of the Chapter. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of receipt of such notice or at any later date specified within the written notice, and unless otherwise specified, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. Officers and Board Members are required to transfer all materials pertaining to their Chapter work to their successor or to the President if the successor has not been named. In the case of the Treasurer, the Board may ask for an "exit audit" of all financial matters.

Section 10 — Vacancies: Any vacancy caused by death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise, of any Officer or Board Member shall be filled by the Board of Directors. In the event of a vacancy in any office other than that of President/s, such vacancy may be filled temporarily by appointment by the President/s until such time as a Member of the Board is appointed to fill the vacancy.

Section 11 — Terms of Successors: An Officer or Board Member appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve the unexpired term of the Officer's or Board Member's predecessor. The appointed Officer may be elected to a subsequent term as an Officer.