



freedom.

## 08/06 Member eNews

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**In Brief**  
by Kevin Cathcart  
Lambda Legal  
Executive Director

In 1948, the California Supreme Court became the first high court to strike down laws against interracial marriage. Before that, lawsuits challenging interracial marriage bans in 14 other states had been unsuccessful. But people whose rights were trampled did not give up. They continued to chip away at these discriminatory laws state by state, and almost two decades later, the U.S. Supreme Court wiped out all remaining laws banning mixed-race couples from marriage.

It's important to understand the struggle to eradicate three centuries of American laws banning interracial marriage as the LGBT community faces its own backlash on the marriage front. No doubt it's been a tough summer, as Lambda Legal and our sister organizations have been hit with a number of high-profile losses. But losses of this kind are expected in a civil rights movement, particularly one that aims to change not only the law but also public opinion.

For perspective, remember that as little as 10 years ago, few people could have imagined same-sex couples would be allowed to marry anywhere in the world. Today, four countries (and a fifth, South Africa, by the end of 2006) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are marrying same-sex couples. In terms of civil rights movements, we've actually come quite far, quite fast.

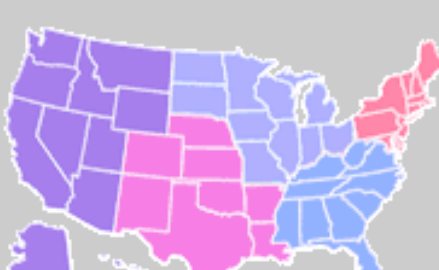
Though we may lose in court, Lambda Legal's work on the ground and in the media helps educate people about the hardships same-sex couples face — hardships acknowledged by the trial courts where we initially won these marriage cases, as well as by the high courts in New York and Washington even as they denied same-sex couples the right to marry. Let's hope the high court in New Jersey does them one better, when it rules later this summer.

### Help Desk Q&A

**Q:** I am a caseworker for youth in foster care, and I work with several young people who are questioning their sexuality. I want to be able to support them, but I don't know how. What would you recommend?

**A:** Lambda Legal and the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) recently published "[Out of the Margins](#)," a report that compiles the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth in care, as well as the experiences of the caretakers and professionals who work with them. This book can help you better understand the challenges that LGBTQ youth face, and also provides concrete steps you can take to create a safe, supportive environment for the youth in your care. "Out of the Margins" stems from Lambda Legal and CWLA's [Listening Forums](#), which took place in 13 cities across the country with over 500 youth and adult participants. We sought to hear firsthand from LGBTQ youth about their experiences in the child welfare system, and to work together with child welfare professionals to find solutions to the gaps and barriers to providing more competent care. Download "[Out of the Margins](#)," or [contact Lambda Legal](#) to request a free copy, and check out other resources available through our [Foster Care Project](#).

### Events Around the Country



### Lambda Legal Newsroom

In a statement called "Beyond Marriage" released last week, some activists, allies and community members have suggested that national LGBT organizations have placed too much emphasis on the fight for marriage equality. Hear how Legal Director Jon Davidson responds to their criticisms on [Gay.com](#).

### Support Lambda Legal today.

Make a donation and support Lambda Legal's groundbreaking impact litigation, public education and advocacy work.

In the years ahead, the struggle for LGBT equality will continue to take place in the courts. Yet our ability to get a fair hearing will be threatened if President Bush appoints extremists to fill judicial vacancies. That's why Lambda Legal is gearing up to make sure all supporters of justice know what's on the line. [Make a donation today](#) and help us defend the fairness of the courts.

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### A Chorus Line

**New York, NY \* 10/18/06, 5:30-10:30 p.m.**

Visit NY this fall and join Lambda Legal on Broadway for the highly anticipated revival of *A Chorus Line*! [Purchase tickets and sponsorships online](#) or contact [Koren Manning](#) at 212-809-8585, ext. 231, for more information.

### No Wedding Bells in Washington

Last week, the Washington State Supreme Court upheld the state's so-called "Defense of Marriage Act," [denying same-sex couples the right to marry](#) in the Evergreen State.

Over the weekend, many of our plaintiff couples joined other citizens of Washington to protest this ruling. At the Marriage Equality NOW rally, plaintiff couple [Beth Reis and Barbara Steele](#) spoke to the crowd. Beth said, "You don't have to be the one to cross the finish line to make history. All you have to do is be one of the ones who passes the baton. Well, our incredible volunteer lawyers at the Northwest Women's Law Center, Lambda Legal and the ACLU have passed us a baton this week and we'll damn well run with it." [Find out more about what you can do to help carry the baton.](#)



### Antigay Extremists Play Hardball with Our Rights

Ohio state legislator Thomas Brinkman, along with the antigay Alliance Defense Fund, is doing all he can to strip health care benefits from gay and lesbian domestic partners at Miami University.

He says he's simply trying to enforce the state's amendment banning same-sex couples from marrying. How we got from marriage to health care, and how one employer's benefits could possibly affect a state legislator at all, are challenges Lambda Legal is making in court. Last week, [we asked the court to dismiss Brinkman's suit](#) against Miami University, and we'll keep you posted as [this case unfolds](#).

### Throw a Curve Ball Back at Extremists

Our opponents claim that LGBT civil rights don't matter. And with budgets and memberships 10 times the size of ours, they have the power to spread their message widely and attack us in court. But we know there are millions of people who disagree. Please help us stand against them in court and combat their lies and half-truths. [Your contribution to Lambda Legal today](#) will show the strength of your commitment to civil rights and help us win the battle for equality.



### No Access in Nebraska

Early last month, a three-judge panel in a federal appeals court upheld [Nebraska's constitutional amendment](#). This amendment is the most extreme in the nation, banning same-sex couples from receiving any recognition for their relationships or from

advocating for change in the legislature. Lambda Legal and the ACLU have continued to challenge it by [asking the full Federal Court of Appeals of the 8th Circuit to reconsider the decision](#). We're arguing that the scope of this amendment is so far reaching that it blocks gay and lesbian Nebraskans from the political process and violates the U.S. Constitution's equal protection guarantee.

### Sign the Contract for Equality

For more than 30 years, Lambda Legal has delivered groundbreaking court victories for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and HIV-affected people. We pledge to continue fighting on behalf of our communities in courtrooms across the country — and in the court of public opinion. You can show your commitment to LGBT/HIV civil rights by signing the [Contract for Equality](#). You'll be counted among thousands of other Lambda Legal supporters, and we'll contact you about other actions you can take to help us achieve full equality.



Organization	Budget
<b>Focus on the Family</b>	\$136,611,180
<b>Alliance Defense Fund</b>	\$17,921,146
<b>Lambda Legal</b>	\$10,000,000

[Please join Lambda Legal today.](#)

