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freedom

Lambda Legal Member 02/07 eNews

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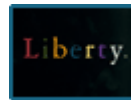
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2007 Liberty Awards National Dinner

New York, NY * 5/7/07

Join Lambda Legal supporters from around the country for our annual Liberty Awards. Plan a weekend in New York City — including a special showing of "Legally Blonde" on Broadway to benefit Lambda Legal. [Purchase your tickets online](#) or contact [Koren Manning](#) at 212-809-8585 for more information and special travel discounts for Lambda Legal members.



In Brief

by Kevin Cathcart
Lambda Legal
Executive Director

Last week, Mary Cheney made news again. She felt compelled to defend

her father's right not to respond publicly to reporters or to conservative extremists who have condemned her pregnancy — and to defend her right to have this child. On this last point, we couldn't agree more.

"Every piece of remotely responsible research that has been done in the last 20 years on this issue has shown there is no difference between children who are raised by same-sex parents and children who are raised by opposite-sex parents," she told the audience gathered for a panel at Barnard College. "What matters is that children are raised in a stable, loving environment."

Again, we couldn't agree more. But what about all of the gay and lesbian would-be parents without rich relatives or political connections?

At Lambda Legal, we hear from people

Parent-Child Relationships Rule the Day

When Therese and Denise Fairchild broke up, Therese never thought that her role as a parent would end as well. But that is exactly what Denise has tried to claim ever since. Denise refused Therese, the nonbiological parent, contact with their son and argued that Ohio's antigay constitutional amendment banning marriage between same-sex couples invalidated the shared custody agreement that Denise and Therese had agreed to in 2001. [Lambda Legal took Therese's case](#), and last month a judge ruled that the custody agreement was valid despite the constitutional amendment, reinforcing a prior ruling in the case that the antigay amendment concerns only the relationship between two adults and not the relationship between a parent and child.



Clock In, Speak Out

Of the 5,000-plus calls that came into Lambda Legal's [Help Desks](#) last year, the majority involved the workplace rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender and HIV-affected employees. While some states and towns prohibit discrimination, there is still

all over the country who have experienced difficulty in their efforts to become parents. Whether it's the financial burden of creating numerous legal documents that "prove" parental rights or barriers in the adoption or conception process, gay and lesbian parents are forced to jump through bureaucratic hoops that other people couldn't imagine. And those are the best circumstances — when there's no outright discrimination as in the states that prohibit gay people from adopting or the much longer list of states that don't recognize second-parent adoptions, prohibiting many gay people from legal relationships with the children they're raising.

Our clients may not be the offspring of the vice president or have the kind of political baggage that makes great headlines, but their stories are no less important. So for the time being, let's say enough about Mary and hear more about *all* of those parents who are providing "stable, loving environments" for their children.

Help Desk Q&A

Q: I just read that you won asylum for one of your clients after he was persecuted because he's gay. Does this mean that anyone who is harassed or persecuted because they're gay will be given asylum in the United States?

A: If you fear persecution in your home country because of your sexual orientation, you may be eligible for asylum in the United States. Asylum requests are considered on a case-by-case basis, so there is no guarantee that asylum will be granted. To claim asylum you must be physically present in the United States. You must prove that you are unable or unwilling to return to your home country due to past persecution or well-founded fears of future persecution based on your sexual orientation. You can claim asylum on more than one ground at the same time — for example, fear of persecution because you are gay and HIV positive. Persecution is different from discrimination. To find out more about what is considered persecution, consult an immigration lawyer familiar with sexual orientation issues. You must file an application for asylum within one year of your entry into the United States or show an extraordinary reason for missing the deadline.

no federal law specifically forbidding sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace. On May 15, 2007, people across the country will join together to support workplace rights for LGBT people and those with HIV in Lambda Legal's "[Clock In for Equality](#)," a national day of action for workplace fairness. We kicked off "Clock In for Equality" at an event last week in Dallas...and we'll be bringing you more news and information about the big day soon!

Say "I Do" Again for Marriage Equality

Different-sex couples throughout America are standing up and speaking out for marriage equality. [Lambda Legal's "I](#)



[do" campaign](#) gives them a chance to be heard. "Denying marriage equality to same-sex couples is just plain unfair," says Susan Sommer, Senior Counsel at Lambda Legal. She and her husband, Stephen Warnke, have joined the "[I do" campaign](#). They've signed the "[I do" pledge](#) and are telling all of their friends why they believe marriage equality is an issue for different-sex couples too.



Fighting HIV in the Black Community

Yesterday marked the seventh annual National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. [Lambda Legal issued a statement](#)

acknowledging the importance of addressing the epidemic in the black community and a [report](#) on the stigma and discrimination still associated with HIV. In the United States, black Americans account for more than 49 percent of the more than 1 million AIDS cases that have been diagnosed, though they make up only 13 percent of the population. [Lambda Legal's report](#) outlines existing evidence that stigma and discrimination affect all people with HIV and supports the need to make addressing stigma a priority. The statement and report are part of an ongoing effort by [Lambda Legal's HIV Project](#) to fight HIV discrimination, promote effective prevention policies and eliminate barriers to treatment.

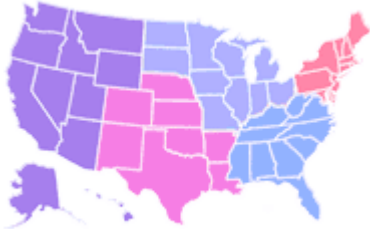
No More Waiting Game

Last week, [Lambda Legal asked the Polk County Court in Iowa to rule](#) on behalf of six same-sex



Read [Lambda Legal's Sexual Orientation & Immigration](#) publication or contact an immigration attorney with experience handling asylum cases for more information.

Events Around the Country



Lambda Legal Newsroom

The connection between LGBT rights and reproductive freedom is inextricably linked — both politically and legally. Read what Marriage Project Director David Buckel had to say about the future of these hot-button issues to the [Billing's Gazette](#).

couples who were denied marriage licenses. Many of these couples have been waiting years to get married and should not have to endure a long legal process to get the protections and security that only a marriage can provide. Lambda Legal and cocounsel Dennis Johnson of Dorsey & Whitney LLP submitted affidavits from all 12 plaintiffs and 10 expert witnesses in support of the right for same-sex couples to marry. [In our case](#), launched in December 2005, we argue that denying marriage to same-sex couples violates the equal protection and due process guarantees in the Iowa State Constitution.



What's So Funny About Fair Courts?

This month in Lambda Legal's "[Life Without Fair Courts](#)" a [state forbids all legal protections for gay men and lesbians](#) and [people are kept from voting in school board elections](#) if they don't have children. See the second installment of our alternate reality cartoon series depicting what life could be like if courts had not upheld the Constitution in past landmark cases. What would your life be like without fair courts? Enter Lambda Legal's "[Life Without Fair Courts](#)" [illustration contest](#) with [Prism Comics](#) and media sponsor [The Advocate](#) to show off your talent. You'll have an opportunity to win great prizes, have your work looked at by [celebrity judges](#) and the chance to support Lambda Legal's [Courting Justice](#) campaign.



Say It With Love and Pride

This Valentine's Day, tell that special someone how you feel with [Love and Pride](#).

Lambda Legal members [save 20 percent](#) off every item* at [www.loveandpride.com/LL](#), and 10 percent of every purchase goes to Lambda Legal and its fight for equality.**

* The discount does not apply to the Love and Promise Collection.

** Use code VLOVE20LL at checkout, valid thru February 20, 2007.

Support Lambda Legal today.

[Make a donation](#) and support Lambda Legal's groundbreaking impact litigation, public education and advocacy work.

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