

## ➔ the rest of our world

### ALABAMA

#### Voters Approve Anti-Marriage Amendment

Alabama voters approved a state constitutional amendment yesterday to prohibit same-sex marriage and other forms of family protections for unmarried couples, The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force said last month. Alabama is the 20th state in the past eight years to amend its constitution for the purpose of banning same-sex marriages, the Task Force said.

The vote was 81 percent to 19 percent (with 98 percent of precincts reporting). Voters in Alabama's neighbor state, Mississippi, passed a similar amendment in 2004 by an 86 percent to 14 percent margin.

"Equality Alabama vows to continue the long-term work of changing the hearts and minds of the people of Alabama. More than 170,000 Alabamians voted to not add discrimination to Alabama's constitution and stood with us in rejecting the amendment," said Howard Bayless, chair of Equality Alabama.

### INDIANAPOLIS, IN

#### Would Jesus Discriminate?

First there were full-page ads in the *Indianapolis Star* asking, "Would Jesus Discriminate?" Then yard signs with the same message began appearing all over Indianapolis. Then 25,000 door hangers were distributed with invitations to a Town Hall Meeting - one of which led to a lesbian's Indianapolis home being defaced with a swastika.

Now, major billboards across the city are also asking the question, "Would Jesus Discriminate?"

The \$100,000 media campaign in Indianapolis is the start of a national effort to lower hostility and tension around homosexuality and religion - and to initiate a dialogue that can lead to greater understanding on the subject.

The campaign is a joint project of openly gay East Coast business leader Mitchell Gold, founder of Faith In America, and Dr. Cindi Love, a former senior executive with the Toro Corporation and currently Executive Director of Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC), the world's largest gay and lesbian church group with congregations in 26 countries.

### JERUSALEM

#### City Must Pay LGBT Group

A District Court judge ordered that the city of Jerusalem must pay Jerusalem Open House (JOH), Jerusalem's leading LGBT rights organization, 350,000 shekels, the equivalent of about US \$77,000, Renna Communications said in May.

According to the court, the city

of Jerusalem illegally discriminated against JOH when it failed to allocate municipal funds to JOH in 2003, 2004 and 2005. Each year, the city of Jerusalem allocates millions of shekels annually to various community groups, according to the press release.

### SAN FRANCISCO

#### Out 4 Immigration Helps LGBT and HIV Positive Individuals

Out 4 Immigration is a new organization focused on providing empowerment, education, information, and awareness about the immigration issues faced by the LGBT and HIV-positive community. As these groups are limited under current U.S. immigration law in their options to keep their families together, Out 4 Immigration aims to make the American public aware of these conditions and bring the issue into the current national immigration debate. Out 4 Immigration also educates LGBT and HIV-positive immigrants and their partners about the unique challenges created by the law so they may better understand their rights and responsibilities and effectively respond to current legal requirements.

Bi-national same-sex couples, where one partner is a U.S. citizen and the other is not, are considered "legal strangers" under current U.S. immigration law. Many of these bi-national couples face extremely difficult choices when the non-U.S. partner's visa runs out because the LGBT U.S. citizen cannot sponsor their partner for a green card.

### OTTAWA

#### GLISA Works to End Homophobia in Sport

The Gay and Lesbian International Sport Association (GLISA) is pleased to be involved in the launch of "Seeing the Invisible, Speaking About the Unspoken," a position paper on homophobia in sport developed by the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS). This position paper discusses the problem of homophobia in sport and aims to spark dialogue and action towards ending homophobia in the Canadian sport system.

The official launch of the paper to the Canadian sport community took place in Ottawa, Canada in May. The launch was facilitated by Rachel Corbett, GLISA Executive Director, who is also the author of the paper. In addition to learning more about the issue of homophobia in sport, participants at the launch learned about resources, tools and best practices for making their sport more welcoming for all athletes, coaches, officials, and administrators. ▼

# national news

## MARRIAGE

### Remarks of President Bush on the Marriage Protection Amendment

#### CORRECTED AND ANNOTATED BY MARK AGRAST, SAM BERGER AND BRODIE BUTLAND

GWB: Good afternoon and welcome to the White House. It is a pleasure to be with so many fine community leaders, scholars, family organizations, religious leaders, Republicans, Democrats, independents. (...) You come from many backgrounds and faith traditions, yet united in this common belief: Marriage is the most fundamental institution of civilization and it should not be redefined by activist judges.

*FACT: Marriage is not being redefined by "activist judges." As a new Cato Institute report by Professor Dale Carpenter notes, "The 'threat' from courts is more imagined than real." Only one state has adopted same-sex marriage as a result of a court decision; 45 states have barred same-sex marriage by various means. The question isn't whether "activist judges" should redefine marriage, but whether the states should have the opportunity to settle this matter in their own fashion, without federal interference.*

GWB: You are here because you strongly support a constitutional amendment that defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman. And I am proud to stand with you.

*FACT: Clearly this is not a representative group. Recent polling shows that the country is closely divided over whether to support a constitutional amendment against same-sex marriage. In fact, a June 4 ABC News poll found that only 42% of the public supports such an amendment.*

GWB: This week, the Senate begins debate on the Marriage Protection Amendment. And I call on the Congress to pass this amendment, send it to the states for ratification, so we can take this issue out of the hands of overreaching judges and put it back where it belongs: in the hands of the American people.

*FACT: A constitutional amendment would not put power back "in the hands of*

*the American people;" it would all but permanently remove the issue from the democratic process by preventing states from allowing same-sex marriage if they choose to do so. As conservative scholar Bruce Fein states, "[The*

**After 20 hours of debate on the proposed constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, U.S. Senators on June 7th defeated the measure 49 for to 48 against - 11 votes short of the required 60 votes required to push the legislation forward.**

*Federal Marriage Amendment] precludes legislative bodies from recognizing same-sex unions irrespective of majority sentiments."*

GWB: America is a free society which limits the role of government in the lives of our citizens. In this country, people are free to choose how they live their lives.

*FACT: People should be free to choose how they live their lives, including choosing whom they wish to marry. As Vice President Dick Cheney said in opposing a federal constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, "Freedom means freedom for everybody."*

GWB: In 1996, Congress approved the Defense of Marriage Act by large bipartisan majorities in both the House and the Senate, and President Clinton signed it into law.

*FACT: That's why the Marriage Protection Amendment is superfluous. Former representative Bob Barr, the author of the Defense of Marriage Act, strongly opposes the amendment as unnecessary and an affront to federalism.*

GWB: This national question requires a national solution.

*FACT: Marriage has never been a "national question." It has always been governed by state law, and should remain so.*

GWB: A constitutional amendment would not take this issue away from the states, as some have argued. It would take the issue away from the courts, and put it directly before the American people.

*FACT: A constitutional amendment would override state decisions, whether they are made by courts, legislatures, or popular referenda, and it would be virtually impossible to reconsider.*

GWB: As this debate goes forward, every American deserves to be treated with tolerance and respect and dignity.

*FACT: No American is treated with respect and dignity by this amendment, which not only demeans gay and lesbian citizens but shows contempt for the ability of the people to rightly decide this issue for themselves through the democratic process.*

GWB: All people deserve to have their voices heard, and a constitutional amendment will ensure that they are heard.

*FACT: A constitutional amendment will silence the voices of millions of Americans today and those of generations to come.*

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➔ The above is an edited version. FMI contact Center for American Progress at media@americanprogress.org