

National/International News

Law on Same Sex Couples Prepared

Chicago, IL - Attorneys for Oak Park and the Oak Park Lesbian and Gay Association were cleared November 29th to begin crafting an ordinance that would make the village the first in Illinois to formally recognize same-sex couples as families and to expand the village's employee benefits package to include domestic partnerships.

Authorization for the attorney to begin drafting the landmark ordinance came at a meeting in Village Hall between association officials and Oak Park President Lawrence Christmas. Christmas said he expected a draft of the general domestic partnership ordinance calling for, among other things, the establishment of a registry of same-sex couples in Oak Park to be ready for Village Board debate no later than February. Although several governmental jurisdictions in other parts of the country have adopted such ordinances, the

Oak Park proposal would be unique to Illinois, according to association officers. (*Chicago Tribune*)

Federal Court Puts Cincinnati Anti-Gay Initiative on Hold

Cincinnati, OH - Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund has obtained an order from an Ohio federal court to block an anti-gay amendment to Cincinnati's charter passed by the city's voters on November 2nd. In the absence of his injunction, the charter amendment, which threatened to prevent Cincinnati's city council from prohibiting discrimination against lesbians, gay men and bisexuals and repeal existing laws, would have taken effect December 1st.

Beatrice Dohrn, Lambda's Legal Director, noted, "Just as the DC Circuit found in the Steffan ruling announced today, the court recognized that the prejudice of others against lesbians and gay men may not form the basis of law or policy."

Ruling that the amendment appeared to violate the fundamental constitutional rights of the plaintiffs and could cause them irreparable harm if allowed to take effect, Judge Arthur Spiegel issued the preliminary injunction to block the proposed law until a full trial on its merits. "The court recognized that fundamental civil rights of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals cannot be voted away by popular election," said Patricia M. Logue, managing Attorney of Lambda's Midwest Regional Office. (*Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund*)

Military Recruiters Banned From SUNY


New York, NY - A New York state supreme court judge ruled that SUNY- Buffalo Law School may not permit military recruiters on campus because of the military's policy of discrimination against lesbians and gay men. Allowing the military use of school facilities such as the place-

ment office was held to be in violation of Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 28.1, which prohibits state agencies from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation. The potential impact of the order is enormous, as it applies throughout the SUNY system, which is the second largest public university system in the country.

Evan Wolfson, senior staff attorney at Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, who represented the law student along with Lambda cooperating attorneys Carey Wagner and Timothy Reinig, hailed the decision as "putting teeth in the Governor's order which compels state employees not to discriminate, or permit discrimination, against lesbians and gay men." Wolfson said, "Scores of schools across the country have adopted policies protecting their students and other members of the campus family against sexual orientation discrimination. It's time the military started protecting gay and lesbian service personnel as well."

"Five courts in the past few months have held that military discrimination against gay people is irrational, unconstitutional, and just plain un-American," said Beatrice Dohrn, Lambda's Legal Director. The strong, closely-reasoned decision by Justice Diane Lebedeff rejected the school's claim that it had to admit military recruiters. "The focus must be upon the University's compliance with the Executive Order. The Governor's policy was clear, and it was as head of the executive branch that he addressed the 'complex societal and governmental issues' involved in an anti-discrimination policy," said the court. "Every court to consider the issues has found that law schools have no duty under federal law to cooperate with military recruiters' who discriminate."

The case began in October 1990, when SUNY- Buffalo's Lesbian and Gay Law Student Organization (LGLSO), along with the student chapter of the National Lawyer's Guild (NLG), filed a complaint




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