

National/International News

Illinois Judge Rules Lesbian Couple Can Adopt

Chicago, IL - In what's believed to be the first ruling of its kind in Illinois, a judge has decided that two Chicago lesbians have a legal right to jointly adopt a young girl. The women have been trying to jointly adopt the 4-year-old girl for more than 1 1/2 years. She was conceived by one of the women through artificial insemination when the couple, after being together more than nine years, decided they wanted a child. Cook County Judge Stephen Yates' ruling, which permits the case to go forward, apparently is the first in the state to recognize an unmarried couple's right to adopt a child together. (*Chicago Tribune*)

Florida Supreme Court Blocks Anti-Gay Ballot Initiative

Tallahassee, FL - In a major civil rights victory for Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Florida Gay and Lesbian Lawyers Association against the national wave of anti-gay initiatives, the Florida Supreme Court blocked an anti-gay and anti-democratic measure from the state's November 1994 ballot. The high court declared that the measure violates Florida law and instructed the Attorney General to not certify the measure. "The Florida Supreme Court's ruling is a critical national precedent. It makes clear that civil rights are not special rights -- and it deals a powerful blow to the national radical right attack on lesbians and gay men and civil rights generally" said Suzanne B. Goldberg, the Lambda staff attorney who argued the case before the high court. "By striking the measure, the Florida Supreme Court has preserved the integrity of the state's political process and made clear that 'stealth measures' which pretend to protect citizens but actually target some for unequal treatment will not be tolerated," she added.

The measure, sponsored by the American Family Political Committee, sought to amend the state's constitution to prohibit legislation protecting certain groups from discrimination; and it threatened to repeal all additional anti-discrimination laws -- including laws against discrimination based on sexual orientation, veteran status, pregnancy and other characteristics. Seven states currently face attempts to place similar anti-gay and anti-democratic initiatives on their ballots. (*Lambda Legal Defense Fund, The Washington Blade*)

Oregon Update

Salem, OR - The anti-gay forces of the Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA) have succeeded in passing anti-gay measures in three more Oregon cities and Marion County, the location of Salem, the state capital.

Unofficial results as of March 31:

Turner	Yes	313 (77%)
	No	85 (23%)
Junction City	Yes	658 (57%)
	No	497 (43%)
Albany	Yes	5357 (59%)
	No	3750 (41%)
Marion County.	Yes	36418 (61%)
	No	22897 (39%)

Marion Co was split nearly even on the infamous Measure 9 in 1992, and is considered by some to be the most nearly representative of potential statewide voting patterns among all the Oregon jurisdictions which have been lost to the OCA "Sons of 9" measures this year. (*American Online*)

Lesbian/Gay Families Under Attack

In Rome, Pope John Paul II blasted the European Parliament for approving a non-binding resolution that gay and lesbian couples be allowed to marry and adopt children. "A relationship between two men and two women cannot make up a real family," said the Pontiff. "You cannot grant such a union the right to adopt children who do not have a family."

In Washington state, an anti-gay ballot initiative targets lesbian and gay parents and their families, prohibiting them from becoming foster parents, adopting children, or gaining custody in a divorce. The initiative states that upon the dissolution of a marriage where one of the parents is gay or lesbian, the other parent will receive custody. Where both parents are gay,

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