

Youngstown  
Chapter  
Fall  
2015

# PFLAG Rag



Visit our website at  
[www.youngstownpflag.org](http://www.youngstownpflag.org)

## The Land of the Free

—*Daily Kos*, 6/26/15

Washington DC's Gay Men's Chorus came to the Supreme Court steps to celebrate today's historic decision striking down gay marriage bans across the United States of America.

Appropriately, they sang "The Star-Spangled Banner."



Like the nature of the song—which was inspired not by our American Revolution but by a smaller victory during the War of 1812—this victory and its context can and will take on a much more important symbolic meaning as time moves on.

Today's decision is no different. Today a song, frequently stood through while waiting for hot dogs and beer to arrive at your seats, can bring tears of pride to your eyes. "O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave."

## From Antonin Scalia's Dissenting Opinion

### in the Same-Sex Marriage Case

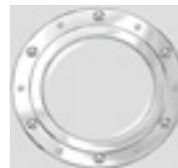
— Zack Ford & Judd Legum, [ThinkProgress.org](http://ThinkProgress.org),  
6/26/15 (Credit: Ap/Dylan Petrohilios)

We just destroyed democracy.

A system of government that makes the People subordinate to a committee of nine unelected lawyers does not deserve to be called a democracy.

## Go Purple

Click the porthole to read the GLAAD's tips for GOING PURPLE on social media for Spirit Day, October 15:



President:  
Marguerite Felice  
Vice-President:  
Shavar Johnson  
Secretary:  
Sandy Driscoll  
Treasurer:  
Steven Schilderout  
Trustee:  
Toni Schilderout  
Newsletter Editor:  
Thomas Copeland

. . . [T]o allow the policy question of same-sex marriage to be considered and resolved by a select, patrician, highly unrepresentative panel of nine is to violate a principle even more fundamental than no taxation without representation: no social transformation without representation.

[The majority] . . . have discovered in the Fourteenth Amendment a "fundamental right" overlooked by every person alive at the time of ratification, and almost everyone else in the time since. They see what lesser legal minds—minds like Thomas Cooley, John Marshall Harlan, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., Learned Hand, Louis Brandeis, William Howard Taft, Benjamin Cardozo, Hugo Black, Felix Frankfurter, Robert Jackson, and Henry Friendly—could not.

But what really astounds is the hubris reflected in today's judicial Putsch. The five Justices who compose today's majority are entirely comfortable concluding that every State violated the Constitution for all of the 135 years between the Fourteenth Amendment's ratification and Massachusetts' permitting of same-sex marriages in 2003.



3  
**Dues Are Due**

—Steven Schildcrout

PFLAG's new fiscal year runs October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016. To join or to renew your membership, take advantage of paying electronically and securely by credit or debit card through PayPal from our Website <http://www.youngstownpflag.org/> Just click the "Donate" button, and proceed. If we don't have your current contact information, please send an email to [youngstownareapflag@gmail.com](mailto:youngstownareapflag@gmail.com) with the information requested below. A similar information form can be downloaded from the Website and attached to your email.

If you prefer to mail us a check, please include also the information requested below.

From your \$25 dues (per household), we send \$15 to National, and our chapter uses the remaining \$10. There is no extra charge to receive our quarterly newsletter by email. Please consider an additional tax deductible donation, which will fund our local programs, awards, brochures, supplies, and meeting expenses. We depend on your continuing support. Thank you!

- New
- Renewal
- Change of contact information. Please fill in form below.
- \$25.00 Household membership for fiscal year 2015-16
- \$5.00 Newsletter postal subscription (if you don't receive it electronically)
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ Additional donation

Total payment \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to Youngstown Area PFLAG.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Add Address\_\_\_\_\_

Email\_\_\_\_\_ Phone\_\_\_\_\_

Mail to

**Youngstown Area PFLAG**  
**2201 Goleta Ave.**  
**Youngstown, OH 44504**

If you have a question about dues or your membership status, please contact us at [youngstownareapflag@gmail.com](mailto:youngstownareapflag@gmail.com).

# What Is PFLAG?

## Our Vision

We, the parents, families and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, celebrate diversity and envision a society that embraces everyone, including those of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Only with respect, dignity and equality for all will we reach our full potential as human beings, individually and collectively. PFLAG welcomes the participation and support of all who share in, and hope to realize this vision.

## Our Mission

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

## Our Strategic Goals

1. Build the capacity of our organization at every level so that we may have all the resources, in the form of information, people and funding, necessary to move forward in our work with the greatest possible effect.
2. Create a world in which our young people may grow up and be educated with freedom from fear of violence, bullying and other forms of discrim-

ination, regardless of their real or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation or that of their families.

3. Make our vision and our message accessible to the broadest range of ethnic and cultural communities, ending the isolation of families with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender family members within those communities.
4. Work toward full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons within their chosen communities of faith.
5. Create a society in which all LGBT persons may openly and safely pursue the career path of their choice, and may be valued and encouraged to grow to their full potential in the workplace.
6. Create a society in which all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons may enjoy, in every aspect of their lives, full civil and legal equality and may participate fully in all the rights, privileges and obligations of full citizenship in this country.

We welcome the participation and support of all who share in our Vision and Mission and who hope to realize our goals.

—See more at: <http://community.pflag.org/page.aspx?pid=237#sthash.WpB2s9T6.dpuf>

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## Join Us

If you are joining as a new member, please send your name, email, postal address, and phone number to [youngstownpflag@aol.com](mailto:youngstownpflag@aol.com). You may submit your dues payment of \$25 per household plus any optional donation using PayPal at our website: <http://www.youngstownpflag.org>.

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## Submissions

*The Youngstown Area PFLAG Rag* needs your input. There are four issues annually, having the following deadlines: March 1, June 1, September 1, December 1. Send submissions (including pictures) to [tcpeland@neo.rr.com](mailto:tcpeland@neo.rr.com) or to

Youngstown Area PFLAG  
313 N. Belle Vista Ave.  
Youngstown, OH 44509



### Disclaimer

The views expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the executive board, editor, or chapter.

Meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month at 6:30 in the Parish House of St. John's Episcopal Church (lower level), 323 Wick Avenue, Youngstown, OH.

## Heads of State

“Pres. Obama includes LGBT rights reference in U.N. General Assembly speech. On September 29th, President Obama’s remarks at the United Nations General Assembly called out countries with discriminatory laws” (PFLAG, *Policy Matters*, 10/2/15).

“On September 21st, Prince William condemns homophobia, a royal first. The remarks were part of his participation in a session on bullying and homophobia in schools. While there are hundreds of charities in which the Royal Family is involved, it is rare that any member embraces LGBTI rights. In fact, 90% of the Commonwealth’s citizens live under anti-LGBTI laws even as the Monarch’s role is as its head. No member of the Royal family has been reported to have spoken in favor of the freedom to marry” (PFLAG, *Policy Matters*, 10/2/15).

“Pope Francis, in the first extensive interview of his six-month-old papacy, said that the Roman Catholic church had grown ‘obsessed’ with preaching about abortion, gay marriage and contraception, and that he has chosen not to speak of those issues despite recriminations from some critics.” But the pope has by no means turned his attention away from fairness and inclusion. In a July speech in Brazil, he said, “No amount of peace-building will be able to last, nor will harmony and happiness be attained in a society that ignores, pushes to the margins or excludes a part of itself” (“Stunner from Pope,” Ian Reifowitz, *Daily Kos*, 9/19/15).

[On 9/14, Yoweri Museveni, president of Uganda,] said his country already bans consensual

5 same-sex sexual relations, [so the proposed “anti-gay” law “is unnecessary”]. Museveni in February 2014 signed the statute under which those convicted of repeated same-sex sexual acts faced life in prison (PFLAG, *Policy Matters*, 9/18/15).

## Pope Visits Kim Davis

Among “several dozen” persons whom the Nunciature chose for the pope to greet as he prepared to depart from Washington, D.C. for New York was Kim Davis, who illegally prevented gay marriages, writes Gabrielle Bluestone, “The Vatican Clarifies,” *gawker.com*, 10/02/15. The Vatican insists that “His meeting with her should not be considered a form of support of her position in all of its particular and complex aspects,” and, writes Bluestone, “Such brief greetings occur on all papal visits and are due to the pope’s characteristic kindness and availability. The only real audience granted by the pope at the Nunciature was with one of his former students and his family.”

*The New York Times* reports that “Francis gave only one ‘real audience’: to someone later identified as one of his former students, Yayo Grassi, a gay man in Washington who says he brought his partner of 19 years to the Vatican’s embassy in Washington for a reunion.” Grassi is a caterer whose acquaintance with Pope Francis began in the ’60s when Grassi was his student in a literature course. The couple received a warm welcome (“Before Pope Francis Met Kim Davis,” Jim Yardley and Laurie Goodstein, 10/2/15).



## Six-Year-Old vs. Bigot

— Walter Einkenkel, *Daily Kos*, 7/1/15

[The day after SCOTUS legalized gay marriage throughout our nation, Zea encountered a protester at] ComFest—a family-friendly music festival in Columbus, Ohio. . . . Zea is a first grader who . . . volunteers every year [at ComFest.. She] was on her way to spend her volunteer tokens on pizza. [Here is a shot of her encounter,]

## Girl Scouts Stand Firm

—Faith Gardner, *Daily Kos*, 6/30/15

Our kids are living in a new world, and it's a beautiful thing.



An unnamed \$100,000 donor sent the Queen Anne offices of the Girl Scouts of Western Washington a note last May asking the chapter to “guarantee that our gift will not be used to support transgender girls. If you can’t, please return the money.”

Council CEO Megan Ferland returned the donation, which would have sent 500 girls to camp and helped the troop meet nearly a quarter of their annual fundraising goal, with a note saying “Girl Scouts is for every girl. And every girl should have the opportunity to be a Girl Scout if she wants to.”

[Thank the Girl Scouts by clicking the porthole.]



## Homeless LGBT Young People

— JamesMichael Nichols, *Huffington Post*,  
*Huffpost Gay Voices*, 09/30/2015

Homelessness is, without a doubt, a major issue for the queer community.

Rates of homelessness among queer youth—those under age 18 in America—are staggering, with 40 percent of homeless youth reportedly identifying as LGBT.

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The Ali Forney Center took out an open letter in *The New York Times* in April 2014 drawing attention to the ways in which the pope and Catholic church have called same-sex attraction “intrinsically disordered,” among other things, and encouraged parents to reject their queer children.

And while the pope certainly made an effort to visit the homeless during his U.S. tour last week, there did not seem to be an intentional effort to address the needs of specifically homeless queer youth.



## Dad Approves Son's Doll

Curtis M. Wong, *HuffPost Gay Voices*' Senior Editor, writes (8/24/15), “Mikki Willis, who hails from Ojai, California, says he’s been sharing videos of himself with his son, Azai, on social media for the past three years. But the latest clip, in which Azai proudly shows off his new doll, in the visage of Ariel from Disney’s *The Little Mermaid*, that’s receiving national buzz, having been viewed over 11 million times since Willis posted it.

“My job as daddy is to provide a safe playing field for my boys to play whatever game they choose, or better yet, create their own game,” Willis wrote on Facebook. “I trust that by the time they realize the world isn’t as accepting as mommy and daddy they’ll have such a solid foundation that nothing will shake their stance to fully, and unabashedly be themselves.”

Click on the porthole to watch the video.



## Lily Tomlin Is . . . Dumbfounded . . .

— librarisingnsf, *Daily Kos*, 8/21/15

Lily Tomlin . . . will be starring in her first movie as the lead actress in twenty-seven years—*Grandma*. In an interview with *The Wrap* she says that she is “dumbfounded” by “how the gay community has been so successful in progressing.”

The 75-year-old Tomlin plays Ellie, a lesbian poet coping with the recent death of her longtime partner, in *Grandma*, her first leading role in twenty-seven years. *Grandma* opens in theaters Friday.

“It’s been dumbfounding to me how the gay community has been so successful in progressing,” Tomlin answered. “I think it’s a matter of enough kids coming out to their parents and their neighbors and their relatives—and slowly, it burgeoned into a big awareness that my kid is gay, or my grandchild, or the kid around the corner.”



## LGBT-Inclusive Church Vandalized

—Steven Payne, *Daily Kos*, 7/21/15



The Metropolitan Community Church of our Redeemer in Augusta, Georgia, . . . is a Christian Community extending God’s inclusive love by affirming hope, healing, and spiritual growth through worship, discipleship, outreach, and fellowship.

The pastor of the church, Pastor Rick Sosbe, and his now husband, Michael Rhen, were the first gay couple to get their license to marry in Augusta after the Supreme Court handed down their ruling last month. They were married four days later.

This morning, Pastor Sosbe and the entire congregation were treated to an appalling sight. Across the front door of the building vandals had scrawled “burn” and quoted Leviticus 18:22, which says “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.” This was followed by the word “lies.”

Pastor Sosbe’s response was quoted by the *Augusta Chronicle*:

I was angry. I was very sad and I thought, “Just why?” To me, it seems so interesting that they’re saying on there that you’ll burn—in other words saying “You’ll burn in hell,” I’m sure—and quoting scripture. Is that what Christianity—right-wing, fundamentalist Christianity—has come to?

Yes, Pastor Sosbe, I’m afraid this is what right-wing, fundamentalist Christianity has come to. It actually arrived there quite some time ago.

Update: And we have your back

## Senator Sherrod Brown, Our Advocate

—Emails on 7/11 and 7/23/15  
from Senator Brown’s Office

In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court’s June 26 ruling that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marriage, U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) [on 7/11/15] announced a bill to modernize the U.S. tax code.

Marriage equality is now the law of the land across our country and our tax code should reflect that. The Equal Dignity for Married Taxpayers Act, which was cosponsored by the full Democratic caucus, would replace gender-specific references to marriage such as “husband” and “wife” with “married couple” and “spouse.” . . .

To expand federal civil rights laws to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) [On 7/23/15] cosponsored the Equality Act. This legislation would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit discrimination in public accommodations, education, federal financial assistance, employment, housing, credit, and federal jury service.

## U.S. Women's Soccer Star Appears on ESPN

—Jen Hayden, *Daily Kos*, 7/9/15 (e-mail)

Megan Rapinoe, star midfielder for the U.S. Women's Soccer team and longtime LGBT advocate, is making the media rounds after the historic victory in the World Cup final. Today she appeared on ESPN's SportsCenter and when the hosts asked her to write down one word that best describes herself, she had more than a little fun with it:



Hilarious! Thank you, Megan, for bringing home the World Cup trophy and for being such an awesome role model for young men and women everywhere.

## Come Out, Be Erased

—Jen Hayden, "Kentucky High School Excludes Star," *Daily Kos*, 8/12/15

Dalton Maldonado made headlines last year after he decided to come out to his teammates during a basketball tournament. An opposing team had been yelling "faggot" at him and in a moment of anger and frustration, he went in the locker room and confided in his coaches and teammates—yes, he was gay. The team rallied around him and finished the tournament. Maldonado said he was surprised by the extent of their acceptance and support.

Apparently the administrators at his high school weren't so accepting and supportive. Dalton finally got a copy of his high school yearbook and was shocked . . . [to see that it] omitted its starting senior point guard from the senior boys basketball tribute page in the yearbook, a deeply insulting blow to an athlete who has contributed to his school.



People run as Turkish riot police uses rubber bullets and tear gas to a Gay Pride march on June 28, 2015 in the Istiklal avenue in Istanbul (AFP Photo/Ozan Koase)

## It Gets Better: Facebook Post

—Quoted in "Poor Bigots are right," Scott Woledge, *Daily Kos*, 1/1/13

Something incredible happened last night. After a fun night out Ethan and I were in line at the Mikey's Late Night Slice Truck (surprise!) in the Short North. It was really cold so we were holding hands and standing close together laughing and joking about all the fun we'd had. The guy in front of us turns around and tells us to cut our gay shit out. I didn't expect what happened next but almost every single person in that line made it known to him it was not ok for him to speak to us like that. Granted he was caught between two homos so John Warner and I let him know this was our city too and let him have it but the straight people who spoke up were so awesome. The best part though was as he grew more irate and vocal the guys who work the truck told him they would not serve him because he was spewing hate and that he should get out of line. As I walked away with my pizza all I could think about was THAT'S IT! Every person who spoke up to defend us including the pizza guys representing their business was doing their part to make hate a thing of the past. We must never forget to speak up and make our voices heard no matter where we find ourselves. No slut sauce for you mr. homophobe.

attribution: None Specified The author's original post has been shared more than 700 times on Facebook.

## Episcopal Church Approves Same-Sex Marriages (with Accommodation)

—Jack Jenkins, “Second Major . . .,”  
*ThinkProgress*, 7/2/15

Less than a week after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage nationwide, the Episcopal Church has voted to fully embrace marriage equality, making it the second major American Christian denomination to do so in 2015.

[At the church’s General Convention on July 1, two resolutions were approved which,] taken together, . . . allow Episcopal priests in the United States the ability to officiate a same-sex weddings with approval, and guarantee that LGBT couples can be married by the church.

[B]ishops and priests who disapprove of same-sex marriage [may] opt-out of performing unions, although they are required to accommodate couples in some way in every diocese.

[Nevertheless, t]he Most Rev. Justin Welby—the Archbishop of Canterbury and the head of the Anglican communion—expressed “deep concern” when the Episcopal bishops offered initial approval of the two overtures, saying in a statement that the vote could “cause distress for some and have ramifications for the Anglican Communion as a whole, as well as for its ecumenical and interfaith relationships.”

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## Presidential Accommodation?

When JFK was running for the presidency, there was considerable fear lest a Catholic president let his obedience to the pope trump the responsibilities of his office. Today, Marco Rubio, Mike Huckabee, Rand Paul, Ted Cruz, and Bobby Jindal express eagerness to find a way to reconcile personal conscience with public duty. This is a conundrum as old as Antigone, and it is probably a good thing for this new generation to wrestle with it.

## Gay Men Who Married Women (A Failed Accommodation)

How many can you identify (and their wives)? Answers are on the next page.



1



2



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4



5



6



7



8



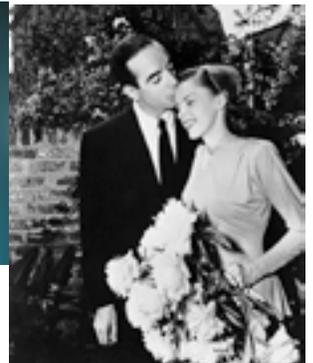
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16

# Answers to Quiz

1. Elton John and Renate Blauel, a German recording engineer
2. Cole Porter and Linda Lee Thomas
3. Richard Cromwell and Angela Lansbury
4. Tony Richardson and Vanessa Redgrave
5. Little Richard and Ernestine Campbell
6. Oscar Wilde and Constance Lloyd
7. Dwight Eubanks (star of *Real Housewives of Atlanta*) and She Who Will Not Be Named
8. Alan Cumming and Hilary Lyon

9. Anthony Perkins and Berry Berenson
10. Jonathan Plummer and Terry McMillan
11. Peter Marc Jacobson (creator of *The Nanny*) and Fran Drescher
12. James McGreevey (former Governor of NJ) and Kari Schutz and Dina Matos
13. Eugin Charles Williams and Jackie Harry
14. Vincente Minelli and Judy Garland
15. Peter Allen and Liza Minelli
16. Jack Wrangler and Margaret Whiting (vocal star of the '40s)

Main Sources  
<http://www.timebreak.com/229611/famous-gay-men-who-married-women>  
<http://www.lifedaily.com/19/famous-gay-men-who-married-women/>



Humans of New York

"I'm homosexual and I'm afraid about what my future will be and that people won't like me."

July 3



**Hillary Clinton** Prediction from a grown-up: Your future is going to be amazing. You will surprise yourself with what you're capable of and the incredible things you go on to do. Find the people who love and believe in you - there will be lots of them. -H

Unlike · Reply · 73,306 · July 3 at 3:02pm

# Kim Davis's Cafeteria Government

—Jeffrey Toobin *New Yorker*, 9/15/15

Kim Davis, America's most famous county clerk, returned to work in Kentucky Monday morning, and she announced—well, it wasn't entirely clear what she was saying. Earlier this month, a federal judge had jailed her for contempt of court because she refused to provide marriage licenses for same-sex couples, who had the right to wed thanks to the Supreme Court's Obergefell decision, in June. The judge released her after four days, on the understanding that she would no longer prevent certification of these marriages. On Monday, Davis said that she wouldn't stop her deputies from granting licenses, but she also suggested that marriages certified by mere deputies might not be legally valid. As she said, "Effective immediately, and until an accommodation is provided by those with the authority to provide it, any marriage license issued by my office will not be issued or authorized by me."

Davis used the word "accommodation" several times in her statement, and for good reason. It's the most important concept in the expanding clash between assertions of religious belief and civic obligation. Religious people (almost all with conservative political beliefs) have been seeking exemptions from a wide variety of societal laws and customs. Pharmacists don't want to sell birth control; photographers don't want to shoot same-sex weddings; now at least one government official doesn't want to do the paperwork to ratify those unions.

Not too long ago, it was all but unquestioned that, in cases like these, civic obligation trumped religious expression. With a few well-established exceptions, like conscientious-objector status and the option of swearing or affirming oaths, religious people followed the same rules as everyone else. As Justice Antonin Scalia wrote in *Employment Division v. Smith*, a 1990 case rejecting a church's attempt to use peyote in a

sacrament:

The rule respondents favor would open the prospect of constitutionally required religious exemptions from civic obligations of almost every conceivable kind—ranging from compulsory military service, to the payment of taxes, to health and safety regulation such as manslaughter and child neglect laws, compulsory vaccination laws, drug laws, and traffic laws; to social welfare legislation such as minimum wage laws, child labor laws, animal cruelty laws, environmental protection laws, and laws providing for equality of opportunity for the races.

Scalia meant his list as a parade of horrors; no country, he suggested, could allow religious exemptions from so many obligations. And Scalia personally said that he would show the courage of his convictions. A devout Catholic as well as a conservative, Scalia said in a subsequent article that he would feel compelled to resign rather than issue a ruling that was in accord with precedent but in conflict with his conscience.

But the broader conservative movement had other ideas. Congress responded to the Smith case by passing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which enshrined the accommodation principle into federal law. Embraced by conservatives, the law has now been extended to include the religious convictions of large corporations, as reflected in the Supreme Court's Hobby Lobby case of 2014.

In that case, a family-owned corporation was excused from providing insurance for certain forms of birth control because their use conflicted with the religious convictions of the family. (The word "accommodation" or its cognates appear dozens of times in the various opinions of the Justices in the Hobby Lobby case.)

Now Davis is seeking to extend the concept of accommodation even more—to government officials, like her, who want to pick and choose which legal obligations to honor. It's one thing to allow cafeteria citizenship; Davis wants cafeteria government. The problem, as Scalia recognized more than two decades ago, is that there is no logical stopping point for the accommodation principle. People have sincere religious beliefs that obligate them to engage in, or refrain from, all kinds of behaviors that the law allows (like same-sex marriage) or requires (like paying taxes). Especially in conservative regions of the country,

like Kentucky, accommodation of religious belief is very popular—more popular, by and large, than government mandates. As the Hobby Lobby case illustrates, the courts, too, have embraced an expansive notion of the accommodation of religious belief.

The controversy in Davis’s county may now end without another confrontation (or incarceration). If the marriages are valid with her deputies’ signature, then that will probably defuse the situation. But the principle is still a troubling one—that religious belief carries with it a shopping-cart approach to citizenship. You can choose some obligations but not others, while the legislators and judges figure out which ones are really mandatory. It’s a recipe for further division in an already polarized society—and the prospects, in Kentucky and elsewhere, are for more conflict, not less.

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## Davis’s Future?

— Associated Press in Frankfort, Kentucky, 8/28/15

Davis cannot be fired because she is an elected official. The legislature could impeach her, but that is unlikely given that many state lawmakers share her beliefs. The Republican president of the state senate spoke at a rally last week in support of Davis.

The gay couples that sued her could ask US district judge David Bunning to hold Davis in contempt. That would trigger another court hearing and would likely include testimony from Davis herself. The judge could then order hefty fines or even put her in jail until she complies with the order.

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## Another Accommodation

— Jessica Glenza, *The Guardian*, 9/12/15

In Alabama, 10 of the state’s 67 counties stopped issuing marriage licenses entirely, according to LGBT rights advocates Human Rights Campaign [sic]. . . . [Similarly,] in North Carolina, 32 of the state’s 672 magistrates have

excused themselves from marrying couples altogether, once a duty of the office, to avoid marrying same-sex couples. . . .

In at least one [NC] county, rural McDowell in the western part of the state, all four county magistrates have opted out of marriage, requiring a magistrate to travel from a nearby county to perform marriages 10 hours per week.

But some legal experts believe government officials can’t stop all marriage to avoid wedding same-sex couples without running afoul of the constitution. . . .

“It gives a special privilege to those that hold certain religious beliefs which crosses the line into making someone’s personal religious belief part of the state’s public policy,” said Columbia Law School law professor Katherine Franke about such religious objection laws. . . .

[This particular accommodation has been ruled unconstitutional by the Board of Professional Conduct of the Ohio Supreme Court (not the same as a binding ruling of the Ohio Supreme Court)]: “A judge may not decline to perform all marriages in order to avoid marrying same-sex couples based on his or her personal, moral, or religious beliefs” (jurist.org, “Ohio Board: State Judges Can’t Say”).

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## Rejecting Accommodation

Refusing to accept accommodations is a quick and easy way to lose credibility and sympathy, as is demonstrated by how Fox News has distanced itself from the cause of Kim Davis. Shepard Smith, Fox News anchorman, laments, “We thought what this woman wanted was an accommodation, which they’ve now granted her, something that worked for everybody. . . . But it’s not what [she and her attorney] want,” and he goes on to imply that their motive is to remain in the news, according to Terrance Heath (“Why Kim Davis Isn’t . . . the Martyr . . .” *Nation of Change*, 9/14/15). Heath adds that a “recent Rasmussen Reports poll shows that just 26% of Americans think an elected official like Davis should be able to ignore a federal court ruling she disagrees with for religious reasons.”

## Mormon Accommodation

“The accommodation principle” has been embraced by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [LDS], which, on July 26, “. . . decided to stay with Boy Scouts after getting assurances they can appoint troop leaders according to their own religious and moral values,” reports TimesFreePress.com. This compromise does not indicate any change in Mormons’ opposition to same-sex marriage or lessening of their condemnation of homosexual behavior as a sin.

Yet Brian Fischer of OneNewsNow (“Boy Scouts sign their own death warrant,” 7/31/15) warns that the LDS will in fact permit gay men to lead boys in the Boy Scout troops under their control and then wake in horror to the calamitous error of this policy:

The LDS church, which sponsors more Boy Scout troops than any other organization in the country, has over the years found itself in court repeatedly fending off charges that scout leaders took sexual advantage of the vulnerable young males in their care. I predict the LDS church will bolt the Boy Scouts out of a desire to protect the young boys in Mormon families and to keep themselves from being bankrupted. If the LDS church allows homosexual scoutmasters, they will be in court until the end of time.

## Ellen Tells Teens What They Need to Hear

— librarisingnsf, *Daily Kos* 8/17/15

Last night, Ellen won the Choice Comedian Award at the Teen Choice Awards. As usual, she added a bit of humor into her acceptance speech, but then she got a bit serious with her younger audience.



I wanna say also it feels good to be chosen, but there was a time in my life that I was not chosen. I was the opposite of chosen because I was different, and I think I wanna make sure that everyone knows that what makes you different right now, makes you stand out later in life. So you should be proud of being different, proud of who you are.

We couldn’t agree more! It also turns out that yesterday was Ellen’s 7-year wedding anniversary with Portia, who was there to support her on that special, surfboard-y night. Thank you for the beautiful words, Ellen! The teens definitely got it right this time.

## Religious Freedom

—jodylanec, *Daily Kos*, 3/26/14

Representatives of a well known faith-based charitable organization were refused a New Jersey bank’s notarization service by an atheist employee. After inquiring about the nature of the non-profit organization and the documents requiring notarization, one of the bank’s assistant managers claimed she couldn’t witness the signatures or attach the State’s official notary seal to the documents because of “personal reasons.”

The Christians later related the story in a Facebook post saying, “Even though we had a valid, legal document and valid, legal identification—she was legally able to refuse me service.”

Wait...what? No. It didn’t happen that way at all. American Atheists, Inc. President Dave Silverman and Managing Director Amanda Knief were refused service yesterday by an assistant manager at TD Bank in Cranford, New Jersey.

In a statement released on the American Atheists Facebook page, Knief said, “I was just refused service—because I am an atheist. It was embarrassing, humiliating, and pissed me off.”

According to Knief,

A notary at a local bank, where I have gone more than a dozen times to have work documents signed, asked me to explain what we were having notarized. The documents were charitable organizations registrations for American Atheists in several states. So I told her what AA is about.

After learning the nature of the organization and the documents requiring notarization the bank manager refused to witness the signatures on the documents. She interrupted another employee’s lunch to come do the authentications.

How long before a Pentecostal refuses to provide a service for a Catholic? And the Catholics won’t do business with Methodists? Where does it stop?

# Sam Brownback (R-KS) Signs Sweeping Anti- LGBT Executive Order

—Chris Reeves, *Daily Kos*, 7/7/17

[Executive Order 15-05 exempts religious organizations from any obligation to provide services that conflict with their religious beliefs, in particular their belief that marriage can exist only between persons of opposite gender. This is superfluous insofar as it applies to performing weddings, since religious organizations currently are not legally obliged to perform any weddings at all.]

It is in section [2] (B) however, that the Governor goes a step further:

[2 (b) The State Government shall not take any discriminatory action against a religious organization, including those providing social services, wholly or partially on the basis that such] organization declines or will decline to solemnize any marriage or to provide services, accommodations, facilities, goods, or privileges for a purpose related to the solemnization, formation, celebration, or recognition of any marriage

Because the government equates providing services with “accommodations, facilities, goods, or privileges” we get into a VERY tricky area. Many hospitals and emergency trauma centers throughout the state exist as religiously held entities. The nearest hospital to me, in Overland Park, as an example is Seventh Day Adventist. Nearby, a Catholic Hospital also exists—both intake emergency (911) care.

Under the standard practiced by Kansas, the marital vows of an LGBT couple could be renounced in the confines of that hospital, leaving married partners unable to speak to the life care decisions of a sick or ill partner.

In an effort to stir up hysteria over continued claims of groups forcing churches to recognize gay couples despite their beliefs, Governor Brownback conflates the public sphere—which

has long acknowledged remarriage of Catholic spouses without the church required annulment—with the private religious sphere.

In their haste to continue the fear and uncertainty about gay marriage in Kansas, the Governor’s quick drafting work creates a situation in which one of the key benefits of marriage—the ability to speak for a partner’s life choices when ill—may stand at risk.

Update: I’ve spoken to Thomas Witt, Executive Director of Equality Kansas, who pointed out that Gov. Brownback’s Executive Order cannot override statute, and that federal acceptance of funds for hospitals would make them [=their acceptance of federal funds would make hospitals] unlikely to take the risk. Still, what the executive order does do is signal continued opposition to change on the issue, and helps create marketplace confusion. More importantly, it continues to hype the fear of a non-issues and conspiracies in order to stoke the fire of those who want to propose conspiracy theories over the issue: “It’s a tantrum.”

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## Marriage in Puerto Rico

The rain relieving the long drought that had oppressed Puerto Rico became symbolic “on Sunday, August 16, when over 60 same-sex couples formalized their commitment to each other in a mass wedding in Old San Juan under the more-than-welcome rain,” according to *Global Voices*, 8/19/15. This long-awaited event came in compliance with “the US Supreme Court’s June 26 ruling that declared marriage equality constitutional in all of the United States and its territories.

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“For many, it was the first time they could express their feelings about each other so openly . . . a deeply emotional [experience]. Some couples had lived together for many years already and a few had even raised children together, an impressive accomplishment, considering how socially conservative Puerto Rico can be.”

## Transgender White House Staff Member

— Chad Groening, OneNewsNow.com, 8/19/15



## Transparent Awards

— Jennifer Swann, “Transparent Creator. . .”  
*Nation of Change*, 9/21/15

[Jill Soloway received an award at the Emmys for best directing of a comedy series: the Amazon series *Transparent*. In accepting the award, she] referenced her own transgender parent, whom she lovingly called her “moppa,” a gender-neutral term that combines momma and poppa, to point out that a majority of states still lack civil rights protections for transgender Americans: “She could tomorrow try to go find an apartment, and in 32 states it would be legal for the landlord to say, ‘We don’t rent to trans people.’”



In addition, Jeffrey Tambor, who plays Maura [on *Transparent*], made history as the first actor—regardless of gender—to win an Emmy for portraying a transgender character. It’s a landmark title he also earned when he won the award for best actor in a TV series at the Golden Globes earlier this year.



“When you act, you have to act as if your life depends on it,” Tambor said during his acceptance speech on Sunday night. “And now I have been given the opportunity to act because people’s lives depend on it.”

He dedicated his award to the transgender community, which faces disproportionately high rates of discrimination, harassment, unemployment, and homelessness.

On Tuesday the White House announced it has hired its first openly transgendered staff member. Raffi Freedman-Gurspan, a former policy adviser at the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), will serve as an outreach and recruitment director for presidential personnel in the Office of Personnel. White House senior adviser Valerie Jarrett says Freedman-Gurspan’s commitment to improving the lives of transgender Americans “reflects the values of this administration.”



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Rafael was adopted from Honduras when he was nine months old. His mother, a now-retired social worker, wrote that he began identifying as “gay” from the age of 12—and when she “sent a son abroad for his junior year of college . . . by the time [I] visited Norway in May, [I] was visiting a daughter.”

## Catholic Godparents: No Transgenders Need Apply

— Taylor Wofford, “Transgender Catholics Can’t Be Godparents, Vatican Says,” *Newsweek*, 9/2/15

The Vatican said it is “impossible to allow” a transgender person to become a godparent, according to the CNA [Catholic News Agency]. Transgender status “reveals in a public way an attitude opposite to the moral imperative of solving the problem of sexual identity according to the truth of one’s own sexuality,” the Vatican said. “Therefore it is evident that this person does not possess the requirement of leading a life according to the faith and in the position of godfather and is therefore unable to be admitted to the position of godfather or godmother.”



## Respect for Transgender People's Gender Identities in ICE Custody Is Not Enough

—Chase Strangio, *Truthout*, 7/16/15

This article may not be reprinted without permission, so this is a summary of it.

Strangio claims that a memorandum recommending forms in the treatment of transgender detainees, published in June by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), will probably do little practical good. Worse, even if the document could achieve its ends, detention itself does so much harm that such improvements have negligible value.

All the 18-page memorandum does is let transgender persons to be placed according to their gender identity rather than their physical sex. Strangio does not discuss the document's detailed procedure for determining gender identity; he merely points out that the document does not require compliance; it has no teeth. Moreover, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) already provides for individualized placement, and it has been largely unsuccessful, not only because it provides for harmful "remedies" like isolation, but because it is generally disregarded. "In flawed and violent systems, discretionary decisions around placement usually result in the maintenance of the status quo."

Detention itself is a form of violent abuse, and it exposes vulnerable persons, such as the transgender, especially those with physical ailments, to further abuse by fellow inmates, even those with whom the individuals identify, and by prison employees. The article cites one documented case of death resulting from the prison administration's refusal to respond to an inmate's plea for help.

Strangio concludes with grudging gratitude for a step in the right direction and a hope that highlighting the plight of trans women housed with men may reduce the vastly disproportionate percentage of rape accounted for by this tiny fraction of the total number of detainees.

## Caitlyn Jenner Accepts Award for Courage: A Response

—Leslie Salzillo, *Daily Kos*, 7/15/15

Olympic decathlon winner, Caitlyn Jenner, (formerly Bruce Jenner) was presented with the Arthur Ashe Courage Award at the Espy Awards ceremony. . . . She stole the show.

[Click the porthole and watch the video.



She describes] the realities of being a transgendered person in America. "They're getting bullied, they're getting beaten up, they're getting murdered, and they're committing suicide." And she asks all of us to join her in making this an issue for us all. "It starts with education."

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In ending her speech, the award recipient expresses her honor to have the word "courage" associated with her life, and admits growing up as a winning athlete she wasn't bullied much. She believes she can "take" being made fun of/ mocked. But kids out there trying to become who they are—"they shouldn't have to take it."

"It's about what happens from here. It's not just about one person. It's about thousands of people. It's not just about me, it's about all of us accepting one another," Jenner said. "We're all different. That's not a bad thing. That's a good thing. And while it may not be easy to get past the things you always don't understand. I want to prove that it's absolutely possible if we only do it together."

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Admittedly, I was in tears by the end of her speech. And I'm not sure she could have said it any better. I even forgave her telling Diane Sawyer (and the world) she was she was a Republican. . . .

Thank you, Caitlyn Jenner. Something beautiful just happened—and it's because of you.

# First Openly Gay Secretary of the Army

PFLAG's Policy Matters reports:

"President Obama has nominated openly gay defense official Eric Fanning for the position of Army secretary, the White House announced on Friday September 18th. If confirmed by the Senate, Fanning would become the first-ever openly gay person to serve in a Senate-confirmed role as head of the civilian side of a military service."



*Daily Kos's* rvande88 explains that this position is intended for a civilian to occupy, and prior service in the armed services is not a prerequisite. Like Fanning, the previous four men who have held the office, two appointed by Obama and two by Bush, had no service record.

Furthermore, rvande88 defends Fanning's fitness for the appointment: "Eric Fanning is highly qualified for this position. He served as Deputy Under Secretary for the Department of the Navy, Chief of Staff for the Department of Defense, Under Secretary of the Air Force, and Acting Secretary of the Air Force" (9/20/15).

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## Chaplains Valued for Their Service as Moral Compass

— Retired Army Lt. Gen. Jim Pillsbury, *Army News*, 8/12/15, as excerpted and summarized by Mikey Weinstein, *Daily Kos*, 8/13/15

While most chaplains have a positive impact on Soldiers, Pillsbury said that, as a whole, the Army's chaplain corps has not been a leader of change. In the 1950s, when the Army began integrating segregated Black soldiers into its units, and throughout the '60s and '70s as integration was fully realized, chaplains did not take lead in making that happen, he said. In the 1970s and '80s, as the Army integrated women into its

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ranks, chaplains were again not at the forefront of change. And, now, as the Army works to include gays and other gender differences, the chaplain corps has been silent, he said.

"Two things you have to wrestle with, and that is your Army oath and your strong beliefs," Pillsbury said.

The retired three-star general went on to describe the sanctuary at his church where his pastor has two chairs and one table near the pulpit. The two chairs represent opposites—black and white, Republican and Democrat, boy and girl, peacemaker and warrior, straight and gay—and the table represents inclusiveness.

"Do you have room in your heart for those who are different from what your beliefs are? I firmly believe the intention of our Lord is for us to read the Bible and interpret the Bible based on our relationship with the Lord. The word is not black and white. That is why Jesus told parables," Pillsbury said.

"You can make room at the table or you can get out. I know all of you have wrestled with that." With a strong faith in the Lord and a strong faith in the nation, Pillsbury said the U.S. was built on controversy, inclusion, and the principles of acceptance.

"Jesus was one for inclusion. I hate to see our nation split, and if our military splits, our nation splits because our military is the rock for our ethics," he said.

"I believe God made everybody for a reason, and there are two things we should do: Love the Lord and love our neighbors."



Click the image to order a T-shirt.

## Sex (Mis)Education

— Sarah Jones in *Wall of Separation, Americans United*, 8/11/15

John Oliver is a comedian; his HBO show, *Last Week Tonight*, is satirical. But this week's episode highlighted a real problem: Flawed sex education in public schools.

"There is no required standard for sex ed in this country," Oliver pointed out. "In fact, only 22 states mandate that kids receive it, and only 13 require that the information presented be medically accurate."

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As Oliver demonstrated on his show, states and school districts often demand that the curriculum be taught from a pseudo-scientific, and sectarian, perspective.

In Mississippi, sex ed teachers are forbidden to show students how to use condoms; it's also one of eight states that significantly restricts what teachers are allowed to say about homosexuality. MSNBC reported last year that the state's teachers are required to tell students that the state legally defines "unnatural intercourse" as "the detestable and abominable crime against nature committed with mankind or with a beast."

If that sounds unconstitutional, that's because it is. Sodomy bans were based purely on religious doctrine, which is why the U.S. Supreme Court nullified them in 2003. Mississippi can't actually enforce its statute, and yet its teachers are forced to pretend otherwise.

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And abstinence-only sex ed isn't going away, even though it clearly doesn't work. Under pressure from congressional conservatives, the Obama administration in 2012 approved \$5 million for use by abstinence-only groups, and there remains no federal requirement that public schools teach accurate sex ed if they're going to teach it at all.

"Human sexuality, unlike calculus, is something you actually need to know about for the rest of your life," Oliver concluded. And he's right. It's a complicated subject, but an important one.

Students deserve access to real information that isn't tainted by reactionary, dogmatic and inaccurate claims.

## Purpose of Marriage

Catholic League president Bill Donohue:

"This idea of two men getting married is the most bizarre idea in human history," Donohue told host John Fugelsang, adding that the purpose of marriage is a "duty" to procreate.

"The whole purpose of marriage is to have a family," he said. "It's not about making people happy. It's not about love."

(Source: Hunter, *Daily Kos*, 4/18/15)




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## Love Drowns Out Hate

—Onomastic, *Daily Kos*, 9/18/15

Our young people stood up this Tuesday in Virginia for love instead of hate. When an anti-gay, self-described, "Preacher" showed up at James Madison University to tell gay students they were going to hell, students responded to his hate with love.

...[T]he James Madison University students gathered around the preacher, singing a song of love and tolerance. With one guy on guitar, the group begins to sing 'How He Loves', a Christian song by John Mark McMillon. And with it, you can't hear the preacher at all.

[Click the image to watch YouTube video.]



Click the Scottish lion to see another hater drowned out by a wee laddie wi a bagpipe.