

Youngstown  
Chapter  
Winter  
2013-14

# PFLAG Rag

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



## Membership Report

— Steve Schildcrout, Treasurer

As our 2013-14 membership drive comes to a close, we have 13 renewing memberships plus five new ones. Our members are a generous group, adding \$430 in donations beyond the basic dues. Thanks to all of you who have paid dues and/or donated. I will be sending the list of current members to National PFLAG in mid-December, so there is still time to renew or join if you have not yet done so. You can either (a) mail a check payable to Youngstown PFLAG for \$25 for dues (with an optional additional donation) to Youngstown PFLAG, 2201 Goleta Ave, Youngstown, OH 44504, or (b) you can bring a check or cash to the holiday party on December 10, or (c) take advantage of our new option of using Paypal with your credit or debit card by visiting our Website [www.youngstownpflag.org](http://www.youngstownpflag.org) and clicking on the Donate button.

With the new Paypal option, you can make special donations in memory or in honor of a person or of a special occasion. We will recognize special donations in a future edition of the PFLAG Rag (but the amount will not be mentioned).

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## Faith and Sexuality

—Toni Schildcrout

On November 21, 2013 the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy at Youngstown State University, the YSUnity student campus organization, and the Unitarian Universalist

Congregation hosted the first in a series of presentations on Faith and Sexuality: The Fear of Homosexuals in Faith Communities. Panelists were Dr. Victor Wan-Tatah, Professor in the Department; Rabbi Josh Jacobs-Velde of Ohev Tzedek Temple in Boardman; Dr. Michael Jerryson, Assistant Professor in the Department; Garret White, YSU Campus Ministry. Dustin Hall and Abby Kulisz of YSUnity moderated the discussion focusing on LGBT persons in the faith communities of Christianity (Wan-Tatah and White), Judaism (Jacobs-Velde) and Buddhism (Jerryson).

The focus of discussion addressed the historic views of each religion toward LGBT persons and whether and how they have changed over time.

Dr. Wan-Tatah spoke of the Pope's recent comments and the direction of the U.S. in "appreciation of the other." He understands that Christianity has "not shown a lot of acceptance" over time but hopes for change.

Dr. Jerryson said that Buddhism spoke to behavior vs. identity as it is addressed in a diverse Buddhist belief system that varies throughout the world, be it in China (where the family lineage is most important), Tibet (where heteronormality is the only acceptable behavior), or Thailand (which has limited acceptance of the LGBT community) for example.

Rabbi Jacobs-Velde explained that Orthodox Judaism, which is strongly traditional, still believes in the traditional prohibition of men having sex with men. Although there is not a strong mention regarding lesbian relationships, historically it was prohibited as well. But change

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“mirrors a shift in the larger communities” of the Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist arms of Judaism. He said that the “past has a vote but not a veto” in reflecting the positive values and life affirmation that equal rights brings to relationships. For example, since 1984 the Reform movement follows full inclusion of gays and lesbians. “It has become a non-issue.” The Reform movement has ordained a couple of transgender rabbis, although full transgender inclusion is in the “beginning stages” of understanding.

Mr. White says that his Christian beliefs are rooted in the biblical texts and that there is a “balance between truth and love.” He also agrees that the church has not done well in treating LGBT persons.

We are anticipating the follow-up program that YSUnity is preparing for the spring and thank all concerned for giving the Youngstown community a thoughtful presentation.

## Hallmark's Gaffe



—<http://onenewsnow.com/culture/2013/11/01/gay-activists-seeing-red-over-christmas-ornament#.UnPrPZR0SW0>

A 2013 Christmas ornament just released by Hallmark uses lyrics from the Christmas song “Deck the Halls.” But instead of the holiday sweater-shaped ornament displaying the usual phrase, it says: “Don we now our FUN apparel!” The Associated Press reports that critics are charging the greeting card company with making “an unnecessary political statement.” Hallmark has responded, saying multiple meanings attached to the word “gay” meant the sweater’s lyrics would be “open to misinterpretation.”

Hallmark says no political statement was intended and that despite the criticism, it has no plans to stop selling the ornament. However, the company has stated “in hindsight, we realize we shouldn’t have changed the lyrics on the ornament.”

## Dates to Put on Your Calendar

Dec 10, 6:30 PFLAG meeting, St. John’s Episcopal Church, 323 Wick Ave., lower level  
 Dec. 10, 7-8:30 Annual Holiday Party immediately after the meeting. Please bring a treat or side dish. RSVP Mfelice43058@live.com or 330-782-9554 / 942-1440  
 Jan. 14, 6:30 PFLAG meeting  
 Feb. 11, 6:30 PFLAG meeting  
 Mar. 11, 6:30 PFLAG meeting

## You Tube

*Gen Silent*, the movie about LGBT seniors: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T\\_8QUMW4qaw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_8QUMW4qaw)  
 A Same-sex wedding: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVxi7ilonk8>

## Salvaging the Salvation Army's Image



—Tom Copeland

The Salvation Army has recently been accused of advocating death for gays, but the truth is somewhat more complicated. It is true, for example, that sexual intercourse between members of the same sex is forbidden by the organization. A position paper published by the Salvation Army reads in part as follows:

Scripture forbids sexual intimacy between members of the same sex. The Salvation Army believes, therefore, that Christians whose sexual orientation is primarily or exclusively

same-sex are called upon to embrace celibacy as a way of life. There is no scriptural support for same-sex unions as equal to, or as an alternative to, heterosexual marriage. < <http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/stances-of-faiths-on-lgbt-issues-salvation-army> >

Moreover, in response to criticisms of this document made by gay pop star Darren Hayes, an Australian Media Relations Director of the Salvation Army named Major Andrew Craibe gave an incautious interview broadcast on the radio program *Salt and Pepper* on Melbourne radio station Joy FM <<http://www.snopes.com/politics/sexuality/salvationarmy.asp#AqicvjHffUGk4DmS.99>>. Craibe offered his own interpretation of the official position. This opinion supports Hayes’s charge, but Snopes.com affirms that it has been misquoted so as to suggest that he recommends the death penalty for gay parents.

To pour oil on the waters, the central office published a response to the brouhaha on their website < <http://www.salvationarmy.usawest.org/usw20/news/44DE5A449860078B88257A3D006FD448>>, including the following statements:

The Salvation Army acknowledges that the response in the interview has led to a serious misunderstanding of our teaching and that clarification should have been given during the interview. The Salvation Army believes in the sanctity of all human life and believes it would be inconsistent with Christian teaching to call for anyone to be put to death. We consider every person to be of infinite value, and each life a gift from God to be cherished, nurtured and preserved.

The Scripture in question, viewed in its broader context, is not referring to physical death, nor is it specifically targeted at homosexual behaviour. The author is arguing that no human being is without sin, all sin leads to spiritual death (separation from God), and all people therefore need a Saviour.

Uh huh.

## Ex-Gay Industry Yet Alive

Wayne Besen of Truth Wins Out writes in *The Advocate*, October 17, 2013, “During the next few years, the LGBT movement is going to be besieged with fighting the **martyr industrial complex**, with claims of bogus attacks on the right wing’s religious freedom. This was driven home in a book the Liberty Institute was giving away [at the 2013 Values Voter Summit], titled *Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America*. Personally, I’m worried about where this toxic rhetoric will ultimately lead. The religious right’s leaders are antagonizing already paranoid people and screaming hysterically that the government, the liberals, and the

Truth Wins Out: “We thank The Salvation Army for acting swiftly and decisively in addressing our concerns about links to ‘ex-gay’ organizations,” said Truth Wins Out Executive Director Wayne Besen. “This is a step in the right direction and congruent with their anti-discrimination campaign. We hope this action leads to further progress in gaining the full confidence and trust of the LGBT community.”

homosexuals are conspiring to get them. It is not unreasonable to think that this constant drumbeat of dread might not take the more unstable elements down a very dark path.

“... LGBT Americans are clearly on the cusp of achieving equality. I would strongly caution, however, against premature celebration. . . .”

Evan Hurst adds in Truth Wins Out’s list-serve, “The Religious Right are already treating themselves as martyrs, simply for having to exist equally in a society with people they don’t like, and they are expanding on this tactic. This is dangerous for LGBT kids who happen to be raised anywhere near people who hold such beliefs, as we know that the greatest cause of depression and suicide in LGBT teens is societal bullying of the sort that tells them that they’re not good enough, that they need to change, that they’re going to hell, or that they’re unworthy of love.

“For those kids, the ‘ex-gay’ industry is anything but dead, and our work must continue.”

# Valley Comes Together Recognize World AIDS Day

—Shavar Johnson

At 5:00 pm on Sunday, December 1, a group of twenty-five gathered at the steps of the Mahoning County Courthouse for a candlelight vigil to recognize World AIDS Day. In the light from burning candles, people stood in silence, listening as Tammy Bellish of Struthers and Iris Almos of Youngstown delivered heartfelt speeches about the stigma associated to HIV. “How are you going to respond to me and others like me?” Bellish asked in her speech. “Stigma breaks hearts. It breaks spirits. It’s important to me that everyone knows who we are, and it doesn’t make us any less of a person,” Almos said.

Among the speakers of Sunday’s candlelight vigil was Councilwoman Janet Tarpley, who presented a Resolution to the Youngstown World AIDS Day committee to recognize World AIDS Day in the City of Youngstown. “On behalf of the city council and administration, we are observing World AIDS Day to promote awareness and education and remember those who have passed,” said Councilwoman Tarpley. After the speeches, Youngstown World AIDS Day committee Co-Chair Anita Davis initiated a roll-call, allowing individuals to come up and state the name of a loved one who passed from the disease. At that moment, several individuals proceeded up the Courthouse steps to pay tribute, driving home the all too sobering reality of HIV.

Yet, in spite of this reality, the Ohio Department of Health has reported high cases of HIV infection in Mahoning County. Rates of infection remain high among African-Americans, Hispanic females, gay Caucasian males, and children (age 13 and under) who were infected prenatally. Anita Davis believes the only way to change this situation is to come together and take action. “Unless we make more noise, it’s going to keep increasing,” Davis stated, adding,

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“In the African-American community, we still have our heads in the sand about this disease.” The Youngstown World AIDS Day committee is a group of individuals from local nonprofit groups who decided to come together to organize the event. After the candlelight vigil, the crowd walked to the B&O Boxcar Lounge for a social to further commemorate the poignant evening. Participants hope that this is the first of many World AIDS Day events to raise awareness of HIV in the Valley.

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## The HOPE Act

—email from PFLAG National

On Thursday, November 21, President Obama signed into law The HIV Organ Policy Equity (HOPE) Act, giving HIV positive people the opportunity to receive organs from HIV positive people and lifting the ban on donations of organs from HIV positive people.

[Thank those who represent your interests in Washington:

Sen. Rob Portman  
1240 East 9th Street, Room 3061  
Cleveland, Ohio 44199  
Phone: (216) 522-7095

Sen. Sherrod Brown  
1301 East Ninth Street, Suite 1710  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114  
Phone: (216) 522-7272  
Fax: (216) 522-2239

Rep Tim Ryan  
241 West Federal Street  
Youngstown, Ohio 44503  
Phone: (330) 740-0193  
Fax: (330) 740-0182

Suggested message:] “As your constituent and as a member of PFLAG, I thank you for your YES vote as part of the unanimous bipartisan House and Senate passage of the HOPE Act, which was signed into law on November 21st. I appreciate your giving great hope to HIV-positive organ donors and recipients across the country. This humane and helpful action reflects PFLAG’s values, which are America’s values. Thank you!”

## HIV= \$\$

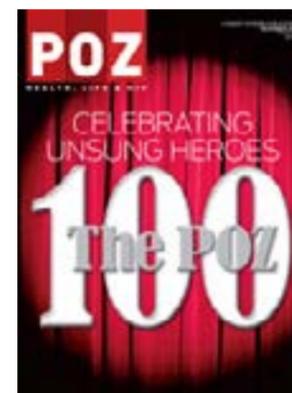
—11/27/13 <<http://www.nationofchange.org/greeks-inject-themselves-hiv-order-claim-benefits-1385482389>>

Greek residents have recently started injecting themselves with HIV so they can claim about \$950 in monthly health benefits. Because of Greece’s deeply troubled economy, health benefits for citizens have significantly declined. The country’s suicide rate has also skyrocketed. “These adverse trends in Greece pose a warning to other countries undergoing significant fiscal austerity, including Spain, Ireland and Italy,” a report noted. Despite severe austerity measures the country’s economy has continued to deteriorate. Greeks have had poorer access to healthcare as hospital budgets have been slashed, which has been the reason for this self-injecting.

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## HIV+ Heroes

POZ Magazine asked individuals and organizations to nominate unsung heroes across the nation who are invested in the fight against HIV. For the first time, all honorees selected as part of the Poz 100 are HIV positive. Read about them in the December issue of *The Poz* or at [http://issuu.com/smartandstrong/docs/poz\\_hiv\\_aids\\_0192/36](http://issuu.com/smartandstrong/docs/poz_hiv_aids_0192/36).



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## Medal of Freedom

from PFLAG’s *Policy Matters*

History is Made: Presidential Medals of Freedom Presented Posthumously to Same-Sex Partners of Sally Ride and Bayard Rustin on Behalf of the Honorees

On Wednesday November 20th, the first American woman in space Sally Ride and civil rights legend Bayard Rustin were posthumously

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awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America’s highest civilian honor. Their partners, Tam O’Shaughnessy and Walter Naegle, respectively, historically became the first people to accept the award on behalf of a deceased same-sex partner. Presented by President Obama 50 years after President John F. Kennedy established the award, you can read about the ceremony and all of this year’s honorees, including President Bill Clinton and Oprah Winfrey, here.

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## Must-See Movie

—bridegroommovie.com.

*Bridegroom* is a documentary directed by Linda Bloodworth-Thomason that tells the emotional journey of Shane and Tom, two young men in a loving and committed relationship—a relationship that was cut tragically short by a misstep off the side of a roof. The story of what happened after this accidental death—of how people without the legal protections of marriage can find themselves completely shut out and ostracized—is poignant and enraging; it opens a window onto the issue of marriage equality as no speech or lecture ever will.



On May 7, 2012, the anniversary of Tom’s death, after a year of documenting his own grief, Shane decided to make a video tribute to his partner entitled *It Could Happen To You*. This film, posted on YouTube, received over 3.4 million views and has been translated into over twenty different languages. The impact of Shane’s YouTube video and the raw nerve it touched, tells us this is an important story that needs to be told.

With the incredible support from influential people like Brad and George Takei and Neil Patrick Harris, *Bridegroom* was successfully funded on July 19, 2012, by over 6,500 people on Kickstarter.com becoming the most funded documentary in the history of crowd funding, and released in the fall of 2013.

## Same-Sex Marriage Progress

—Tom Copeland

PFLAG's *Policy Matters* reports, "Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn on Wednesday, November 20th, signed into law a bill that will legalize same-sex marriage in the state, effective June 1, 2014. . . . Hawaii Gov. Neil Abercrombie signed into law a bill legalizing same-sex marriage in the Aloha State on Nov. 13, with marriages legalized there on Dec. 2, 2013."

Earlier this year, New Jersey legalized same-sex marriage when Governor Christie withdrew his appeal to the NJ Supreme Court to stay the ruling of a lower court until a suit then pending should have been heard in January. The highest court's initial response to the governor, as reported by Nation of Change, was enough to discourage even the most resolved of appellants:

The State has advanced a number of arguments, but none of them overcome this reality: same-sex couples who cannot marry are not treated equally under the law today. The harm to them is real, not abstract or speculative. [...] The State identified certain abstract harms [ensuing from the passage of this bill]. . . . Weighed against them are immediate and concrete violations of plaintiffs' right to equal protection under the law. Because plaintiffs cannot marry under State law, they and their children are simply not eligible for a host of federal benefits available to same-sex married couples today. [...] The balance of hardships does not support the motion for a stay. <<http://www.nationofchange.org/new-jersey-supreme-court-same-sex-couples-can-begin-marrying-monday-1382192093>>.

Len Deo, spokesman for New Jersey Family First, complains, "It's a sad day for the rule of law in New Jersey. We're no longer ruled by freely elected representatives but by a judicial oligarchy" <<http://www.onenewsnow.com/culture/2013/1>

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0/21/%E2%80%98judicial-oligarchy%E2%80%99-ushers-in-nj-same-sex-%E2%80%98marriages%E2%80%99#.Upy6M2RDvyQ>.

New Mexico has been poised to approve same-sex marriage since October, but nothing has changed. According to *Rolling Stone*, "Same-sex marriage is already legal in New Mexico, depending on where you live—it's the only state in the country that doesn't mention gender in its definition of marriage, meaning that same-sex unions are neither explicitly banned nor allowed. Because of this, county clerks have taken up the issue to decide for themselves, and eight counties currently allow same-sex couples to apply for marriage licenses" <<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-next-five-states-to-legalize-marriage-equality-20131127#ixzz2mL1vPz37>>.

## Houston Mayor Brings Same-Sex Partner Benefits to Legally Married City Employees

—from PFLAG's *Policy Matters*

It will soon not matter to Houston city employees who are legally married to a same-sex partner that their state does not recognize same-sex marriage because third-and-final-term, openly lesbian Mayor Annise Parker announced on Wednesday, November 20, that the city will grant their partners health and life insurance benefits. Her decision follows the U.S. Supreme Court striking down Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) on June 26, which she believes makes a 2001 amendment unconstitutional that bans domestic partner benefits because the amendment specifically grants benefits to legally married employees. Houston will join Texas cities Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, and San Antonio, [which] already offer DP benefits.

## Celebrate the holidays with PFLAG

—Posted 11/27 at <http://pflagvoice.blogspot.com/2013/11/pflagholidays2013.html>

For some people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender holidays mean celebration, joy, family, and togetherness. But for others it can mean a time of stress, difficulty, and even sadness or depression—especially if you feel that you aren't able to come out or are not out to everyone in the family. Sitting through a family meal can be challenging enough, but what happens if you are not yet in a position to be true to your authentic self as you make your way through the meal?

Here are some suggestions—both for people who are LGBT and for allies—for getting through the end-of-year family celebrations unscathed!

If you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender:

Don't assume you know how somebody will react to news of your sexual orientation or gender identity — you may be surprised.

Don't wait for your family's attitude to change to have a special holiday. Recognize that your parents and family may need time to acknowledge and accept that they have an LGBT family member. It took you time to come to terms with who you are; now it is your family's turn.

If you are transgender, be gentle with your family's pronoun "slips." Let them know that you understand how difficult this may be for them.

Before the visit . . .

Make a decision about which family members you intend to be "out" to, and how you will do so.

If you bring your partner home, don't wait until late into the holiday evening to raise the issue of sleeping arrangements. Make plans in advance.

If you do plan to come out to your family

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over the holidays, have support available, including PFLAG publications and the number of a local PFLAG chapter.

During the visit . . .

Reassure family members that you are still the same person they have always known.

Remember to affirm yourself.

Connect with someone else who is LGBT—by phone or in person—who understands what you are going through and will affirm you along the way.

If you are the friend or family member of someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender:

Get support for yourself. Find the phone number of the nearest PFLAG chapter.

Take your time. Acceptance may not come instantly, but be honest about your feelings.

Before the visit . . .

Practice in advance if you are going to be discussing your family member's sexual orientation or gender identity with family and friends. If you are comfortable talking about it, your family and friends will probably be more comfortable too.

If your family member is transgender, practice using the

correct pronouns.

During the visit . . .

Treat an LGBT person just as you would treat anyone else in your family.

Don't ask your LGBT family member to act a certain way. Let them be their natural selves.

If your LGBT family member is bringing a partner, include him or her in your family traditions.

If you are uncertain about how to address an LGBT family member, respectfully ask in private.

Be sure to visit the PFLAG Holiday pages for more resources and helpful tips! If you are a person who is LGBT, visit [www.pflag.org/lgbtholidays](http://www.pflag.org/lgbtholidays). If you are a parent, family member, friend, or ally of a person who is LGBT, visit [www.pflag.org/allyholidays](http://www.pflag.org/allyholidays).



Hey, folks, I've got a confession.

# Methodist Defrocking

—Tom Copeland

PFLAG's *Policy Matters* reports, "PFLAG National leaders of strong and varied faith traditions issued a statement of support for Pennsylvania-based United Methodist pastor Rev. Frank Schaefer. On November 18th, Rev. Schaefer was suspended of his ministerial duties by a 13-member jury of UMC pastors for 30 days for officiating at the 2007 marriage of his openly gay eldest son Tim to his same-sex partner. PFLAG National President Rabbi David M. Horowitz, Board Member Rev. Gilbert H. Caldwell who is a retired ordained UMC minister for 57 years, and Executive Director Jody Huckaby each offered personalized messages of support for Rev. Schaefer and his family."



According to the Associated Press, 11/20/13, "Schaefer had previously testified that he performed his son's wedding out of love, not a desire to flout church teaching on homosexuality. But Tuesday's testimony made clear he has had a change of heart. 'I have to minister to those who hurt, and that's what I'm doing,' Schaefer said.

"The prosecutor, the Rev. Christopher Fisher, invited Schaefer to 'repent of your actions' and pledge never again to perform a homosexual union.

"'I cannot,' Schaefer replied."

*Time Magazine* adds that Schaefer took issue with the Methodist *Book of Discipline*, which states,

The United Methodist Church does not

condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.

Schaefer told his judges, "To homosexual believers, this feels as though their acts of love are regarded as sinful. Since 'practice' is not defined by the church, we must assume that it includes sexual, romantic, and ceremonial aspects of a homosexual relationship. If what you understand to be an act of love is declared a sin by the Church, what does that do to your soul, your understanding of morality and salvation? It's a terrible message that puts our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters in inner conflict and turmoil.

"*Wikipedia* defines hate speech as 'speech perceived to disparage a person or group of people based on their social or ethnic group.' It may not be intentional, but calling homosexual practice 'incompatible with Christian teachings' is a form of hate speech. What's really incompatible with Christian teachings is discrimination and hate speech, and I will continue to speak out about it despite the disciplinary actions that have been taken against me" (*Time Magazine*, <http://ideas.time.com/2013/11/22/discrimination-and-hate-speech-in-the-united-methodist-church/>).

## The Wretched Refuse of Your Teeming Shore

—<http://www.nationofchange.org/lgbt-immigrants-face-rampant-assault-us-jails-1385655586>

Gay and transsexual immigrants who enter the U.S. detention system face high levels of sexual abuse, new research warns, at times leading them to decide to return to their home countries [where their situation might be still worse than that which they face behind bars here,] rather than stay to fight a legal battle.

According to a new report, released this week by the Centre for American Progress (CAP), a progressive think tank here, as many as 34,000 immigrants are detained each day by U.S.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in over 250 detention facilities across the country.

According to the study, which is based on evidence gathered through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, detained LGBT immigrants are far more vulnerable to abuse than other immigrants.

"What we tried to do with this report is to paint a clearer picture of what is going on inside these



detention centers," Sharita Gruberg, a policy analyst at CAP and the author of the report, told IPS. "And what we've found is that, in some centers, guards were still using homophobic language against LGBT detainees."

But LGBT detainees say they face far worse problems than abusive language, reporting instead physical and sexual abuse by both fellow detainees and guards.

Because of internal regulations, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) does not keep data on sexual orientation or gender identity of detainees. But the information obtained through the FOIA request suggests that LGBT detainees are "15 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than the general population."

ICE, the agency in charge of immigration detention facilities across the United States, has also been at the center of an investigation by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), an official watchdog, into the agency's sexual abuse allegations.

According to a GAO report released Nov. 20, nearly 40 percent of total allegations were never acted upon "because ICE field office officials did not report them to . . . headquarters."

"ICE takes the health, safety, and welfare of those in our care very seriously," an ICE official, who commented on the condition of anonymity, told IPS by e-mail. "The agency is continually working to ensure these reforms are consistently implemented at all facilities that house ICE

detainees."

. . . [Nevertheless,] Harper Jean Tobin, the director of policy at the National Center for Transgender Equality, an advocacy group here, told IPS [of] the congressionally mandated requirement that ICE detain 34,000 immigrants at all times, also known as the "bed mandate." According to the NIJC, this mandate "prevents ICE officers from exercising discretion and expanding more efficient alternatives to detention . . . that would allow individuals who pose no risk to public safety to be released back to their families."

In the past, U.S. legislators have touched upon the issues surrounding mistreatment of detainees in immigration facilities. In 2003, Congress passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), which sought to protect individuals against sexual abuse in confinement settings, including . . . immigrant detention centers.

But according to the new Centre for American Progress findings, PREA may have only partially addressed the issue of sexual abuse in detention facilities. It points out that ICE created its own standards on sexual assault in detention facilities, which are less comprehensive than those mandated by the Department of Justice in 2012.

Last June, Rep. Trey Gowdy of South Carolina, the chair of the House Immigration Subcommittee, introduced the Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement Act (SAFE), which was later approved by the Judiciary Committee. Yet critics note that, if approved, this bill not only would do "nothing to resolve the legal status of 11 million undocumented

immigrants" but would also "create an environment of rampant racial profiling and unconstitutional detentions."

Washington, D.C., has become the gayest place in America. Some 10 percent of people in the nation's capital identify as gay, according to Gallup. That's double the percentage in Hawaii, the country's gayest state, and almost triple the national average of 3.5 percent.

Source: *The New York Times*

## Paradise Tarnished

—Southern Poverty Law Center, 07/26/2013  
<http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/news/splc-report-us-groups-working-to-keep-criminal-statutes-barring-lgbt>

As LGBT people continue making strides toward equality in the United States, hard-line U.S. religious-right groups that have spent decades demonizing them are focusing their attention—and propaganda—on a legal battle over the criminalization of LGBT sex in Belize.

The outcome of the fierce battle will likely affect criminal statutes in as many as a dozen other Caribbean countries.

A new SPLC report, *Dangerous Liaisons: The American Religious Right & the Criminalization of Homosexuality in Belize*, examines how the U.S. groups are working in countries such as Belize where anti-gay attitudes are strong and violence against the LGBT community is common.

Several prominent groups have descended on the tiny Central American country to prevent Section 53, a statute criminalizing gay sex, from being struck down in court. Their efforts already have intensified anti-LGBT attitudes in the country, where the plaintiff in the case has been threatened and physically assaulted.

“Many of these American religious-right groups know they have lost the battle against LGBT rights in the United States, and they’re now aiding and abetting anti-LGBT forces in countries where anti-gay violence is prevalent,” said Heidi Beirich, report author and director of the SPLC’s Intelligence Project. “These groups are pouring fuel on an exceedingly volatile fire.”

Groups such as the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) often refuse to publicly acknowledge their efforts in these countries. The ADF, a prominent Christian legal group formerly known as the Alliance Defense Fund, joined the legal battle in Belize by providing advice to defenders of Section 53, which prescribes a ten-year sentence for “carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any person or animal.”

Other religious-right groups working abroad include the American Center for Law and Justice, the Catholic Family & Human Rights Institute, Family Watch International, United Families International, and the World Congress of Families.

The legal contest in Belize is only the latest in a

wider struggle that is simultaneously being waged in Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere. Overturning Section 53 in Belize could lead to the demise of similar statutes in a dozen other countries that are part of a single legal system culminating in the Caribbean Court of Justice.

Since the arrival of the groups in Belize, LGBT activists have reported an increase in anti-gay propaganda imported from the United States—such as the bogus claim that gay men are more likely to be pedophiles.

Caleb Orozco, the plaintiff in the Section 53 case, said he has seen a change after the ADF’s arrival.

“I didn’t feel as insecure [before],” he said. “The majority of people had a live-and-let-live attitude toward gays, which is ‘Do your thing, just don’t bring it to my house.’ But the controversy really gave people permission to express their hate in a way they didn’t see they had permission to before.”

Orozco has been physically assaulted in the streets and threatened with death. His lawyers worry that he could be assassinated, an event that would end the lawsuit, since he is the only plaintiff.

A report released this March by the Chicago-based Heartland Alliance, a human rights group, found that the LGBT community in Belize is routinely subjected to violence, even from law enforcement officials. The report cited, among other violent crimes, the bludgeoning death of an openly gay doctor and the murder of a politician’s gay brother in his own home. It also noted that border officials have regularly detained and harassed visitors they suspect of being gay.

### Similar battles elsewhere

Uganda, where a similar battle over the criminalization of gay sex has been raging for years, has seen violence as well. In 2010, a newspaper there published front-page photos and the home addresses of gay men under the words “Hang Them.” Twenty-three days later, an LGBT activist on the list was murdered in his home.

“These American groups are clearly fanning the flames of anti-gay hatred,” Beirich said. “They need to explain how their stated goals of protecting religious liberty and marriage means bringing the full weight of the criminal law down on LGBT people.”

## Ukraine Trembles on the Edge

—Tom Copeland



Gay Pride in Russia

In a copyrighted article for Truthout <<http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/18744-ukraines-gay-community-fears-russias-pull>>, Josephine Simmons describes the plight of the LGBT community of Ukraine, where although homosexuality has been legalized, attitudes toward gays approach those of Russia. That means these days that violence is held back with difficulty.

Ukraine aspires to inclusion in the European Union, but Russia is putting economic pressure on it to join its “customs union” along with other former Soviet states. The country is poised to swing in either direction. Parliament has passed a law resembling Russia’s ban against “homosexual propaganda,” but President Viktor Yanukovich has not yet signed it, waiting, no doubt, to see the success of the country’s application for membership in the EU.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Leonid Kozhara has announced plans for a law forbidding discrimination against LGBT citizens. Being admitted to the EU would provide enough economic advantages that Russia’s refusal to import Ukrainian chocolate would become a negligible annoyance, but being refused EU membership would most likely mean that Ukraine would fall further under the influence of Russia—and Russia’s draconian suppression of homosexuality.



## Taxonomic Angst

—Tom Copeland, source: One News Now, 11/15/13:  
 <<http://ww2.onenewsnow.com/culture/2013/11/15/about-that-pedophile-sexual-orientation-description-whoops-just-a-typo#.UpJxV2RoTt4>>

The American Psychiatric Association has corrected a reference to pedophilia as a “sexual orientation” in its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, explaining, according to *The Washington Times*, that pedophilia is rather an abnormal sexual attraction (a “paraphilia”). Similarly the term “orientation” was mistakenly applied to sadism and masochism, which, the APA insists, are properly called “interests.” The stir has arisen because the APA desires to be “values-neutral,” and in the case of homosexuality its efforts have been so successful that the term “orientation” has become overwhelmingly accepted as immune to condemnation. Therefore the American Family Association’s apoplectic outrage at the recent application of “orientation” to these other psychological conditions obliged the APA to seek out other neutral terms to distance possibly condemnable sexual desires from homosexuality.

The AFA admits, however, that “The APA also said in the same statement that the organization ‘stands firm behind’ criminal prosecution for sexually abusing and exploiting children and adolescents. ‘We also support continued efforts to develop treatments for those with pedophilic disorder with the goal of preventing future acts of abuse,’ the organization also said.”

## International Trans Day

—Astraea, Lesbian Foundation for Justice < <http://www.astraeafoundation.org/news/264/60/Transgender-Day-of-Remembrance>>

Each year on November 20, we come together with our communities in the U.S. and around the globe for Transgender Day of Remembrance to remember those who have been lost to the violence of transphobia and hatred, and to celebrate their courage and resilience.

Transgender Day of Remembrance has its roots in memorializing Rita Hester, a trans woman of color who was killed in 1998 in Massachusetts. Across the U.S. and internationally, communities gather on November 20th for candlelight vigils, reading the names of those lost to transphobia and hatred in the prior year, and to hold events to raise awareness and bring attention to ongoing violence against transgender people and communities. The Transgender Day of Remembrance allows us all an opportunity to honor those lost, and to show love and respect for our sisters and brothers.

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## The Third Gender

—<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2013/11/germany-adopts-third-gender-law-2013111141748757336.html>

Germany has become Europe's first country to introduce a third gender by allowing babies born with characteristics of both sexes to be registered as neither male nor female. The new law gives parents an option of leaving gender section blank on birth certificate, creating a category in public register for indeterminate sex.

The move is aimed at preventing parents from making a hasty decision about controversial sex assignment surgeries for newborns, but critics say the law does not go far enough. Lucie Veith, an intersex person from Hamburg, told AFP news agency that the cosmetic genital surgeries for newborns must be forbidden altogether. . . .

Operations on intersex babies and infants

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take place in many European countries without informed consent by the patients, according to a 2012 European Commission report on the topic.

The Council of Europe addressed the issue for the first time last month in a Parliamentary Assembly resolution, calling on member states to study the prevalence of “non-medically justified operations” that may harm children and take steps to “ensure that no-one is subjected to unnecessary medical or surgical treatment that is cosmetic rather than vital for health during infancy or childhood.” The report also found that many adults born intersex are angry these surgeries were performed without their consent. Experts estimate one in 1,500 to 2,000 births result in a baby of indeterminate gender or both male and female gender features.

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## Breaking New Ground for Trans Children

—Saturday, 09 November 2013 15:13 By Ines Benitez, Inter Press Service | Report, <<http://truth-out.org/news/item/19934-breaking-new-ground-for-trans-children>>

While non-heterosexual orientation is punishable by death in some parts of the world, in others the right to choose one's gender identity has begun to be respected from early childhood, giving rise to a new field of challenges.

Gabi was born six years ago biologically male, but dressed up as a princess and wore necklaces and long hair so that everyone saw a little girl instead.

. . . The brand-new green skirt of the girl's uniform from the school Gabi attends with her two brothers, ages eight and 13, has hung in a closet unused since September. The school won't let her dress as a girl, in infringement of regulations set by the government of the region of Andalusia.

Gabi's mother and the families of two other transsexual children, ages eight and nine, who also attend Málaga schools, asked the Andalusia government to ensure that their children are called on in class by the names they go by, which reflect their chosen gender identity; that they are allowed

to use uniforms and other clothing that reflects their gender identity; and that they can use the bathroom they feel comfortable using.

[Although the government ruled in the families' favor, only Gabi's school, run by Catholics(!), accepted the ruling, and even there the families of other children have protested the ruling.]

The principle of equality and non-discrimination on gender grounds is enshrined in article 14 of the Spanish constitution. . . . [However,] schools in Spain have no protocol for how to deal with transsexual children.

“These are kids who have nightmares, who have a hard time concentrating, who don't want to go to school,” says Cambrollé. “Treating them in accordance with the gender they identify with restores their happiness.”

[Groping its way toward fairness, Spain has so far issued three identity cards to transsexual children listing their chosen sexual identity. The future is murky, since sexual reassignment surgery is illegal in Spain until after the onset of puberty, when legal adulthood has been attained.]

Argentina has gone even further. Six-year-old Luana, who was born biologically male like her fraternal twin brother, now has an identity card where she figures as a girl, and a birth certificate that has been modified to show the gender with which she identifies. . . . Luana's case was the first time that a state has intervened to recognise the transsexual identity of a child at such a young age and without requiring a court decision, according to the Argentine Homosexual Community.

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## A “Purse,” Did You Say?

—Jen Hayden Follow < <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2013/11/08/1254056/-13-year-old-boy-suspended-for-wearing-purse?detail=email> >

Skylar Davis loves his brightly colored crossbody bag from Vera Bradley. The eighth-grader had been wearing it to Anderson County Senior-Junior School every day since August. Everything changed this week when Assistant

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Principal Don Hillard abruptly called him into his office and gave him a choice to take off the bag or face suspension. Feeling . . . he was being discriminated against, Skylar refused to take off the bag:

“I don't think everyone should be treated differently,” Skylar Davis said. “Everyone should have the same privileges.”

Fortunately for Skylar, his family is 100% backing his right to wear the bag:

School personnel then called his mother, Leslie Willis, to come get her son.

“I was a little furious, and I called the school [and spoke to Hillard] to reverify the story, and yeah, he refused to take off his Vera Bradley bag, nothing more to do it,” Willis said.

She said she reviewed the student handbook but did not see a mention to bags or purses. She questions the suspension and the timing.

“Skylar has been going to school since August with that same Vera Bradley bag on, hasn't taken it off. What is the problem?” she asked.

She said she supports her son and his choices. She said if he wants to carry a Vera Bradley purse or any other type of bag that he should be able to do so without being punished.



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## Judge Changes Party

—Steveningen of The Daily Kos, 10/21/11 < <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2013/10/21/1249456/-Republican-Texas-Judge-has-had-enough-of-Republican-homophobia-switches-parties#>>

Criminal Court Judge Carlo Key, in Bexar, TX, [tells] why he has decided he will run for re-election as a Democrat:

I can no longer be a member of the Republican Party. For too long, the Republican Party has been at war with itself. Rational Republican beliefs have given way to ideological character assassinations. Pragmatism and principal [sic] have been overtaken by

pettiness and bigotry. Make no mistake: I have not left the Republican Party. It left me. I cannot tolerate a political party that demeans Texans based on their sexual orientation, the color of their skin or their economic status. I will not be a member of a Party in which hate speech elevates candidates for higher office rather than disqualifying them. I cannot place my name on the ballot for a political party that is proud to destroy the lives of hundreds of thousands of federal workers over the vain attempt to repeal a law that would provide health care to millions of people throughout our country.

## Fragments of Reportage about ENDA

Donna Cassata of The Associated Press, writing before the Senate passed ENDA, made several upbeat observations:

“A Pew Research survey in June found that more Americans said homosexuality should be accepted rather than discouraged by society by a margin of 60% to 31%. Opinions were more evenly divided ten years ago.

...

“Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, a co-sponsor of the measure [said,] ‘People intuitively think that it is unfair to discriminate against someone based on their sexual orientation. . . just as it would be unfair to refuse to hire or fire them based on religion or race or gender. In fact, when I talk to constituents, they’re surprised that it’s still legal under federal law.’

...

“The evolution and changing views on gay rights are evident in the senators now expressing support. In September 1996, the Senate narrowly rejected a similar measure on a 50-49 vote. That bill did not include protections for transgender people. Voting against it were Hatch and then-Alaska Sen. Frank Murkowski, father of Lisa Murkowski. Subsequent efforts over the next 17 years to secure Senate passage of the bill faltered.

“This past July, Hatch, Kirk, and Lisa Murkowski backed the bill when the Senate

Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, led by Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, endorsed the measure 15-7.”

The following dramatic description of the actual passage of the bill comes from a most unlikely source, One News Now, a highly conservative news agency < <http://onenewsnow.com/ap/politics/seven-republicans-join-democrats-to-pass-senate-enda-bill#.UnlUFJR0SW0>>:

“Two backers of the measure — Sens. Claire McCaskill of Missouri and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska — were on planes back to Washington. That left sponsors stuck at 58 of the necessary 60 votes, forcing Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Merkley to lobby fiercely, sometimes at the door of the Republican cloakroom off the Senate floor.

“Minutes into the vote, Sen. Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire emerged to vote yes. Then the outcome rested with Sens. Rob Portman of Ohio, who announced earlier this year that his son was gay and he supported same-sex marriage, and Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania.

After extended discussions, Portman and Toomey emerged to vote yes.

“I have long believed that more legal protections are appropriate to prevent employment discrimination based on sexual orientation,’ Toomey said in a statement after the vote, in which he promised to offer an amendment to protect religious freedom.

“The other Republicans who voted yes were Sens. Orrin Hatch of Utah, who had opposed the discrimination measure in 1996, Dean Heller of Nevada, and Mark Kirk of Illinois.

“Kirk delivered his first speech on the Senate floor since suffering a stroke in January 2012. Seated at a desk, Kirk said it was especially important for an Illinois Republican to speak out for the legislation in the tradition of Everett Dirksen and Abraham Lincoln, two leaders on civil rights.

“Attitudes are changing very rapidly on gay rights issues and we’re seeing that with each passing day. More and more people have embraced equality,’ Collins said.”

## 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

One. 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.

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

Three. 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.

Four. Work toward full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons within their chosen communities of faith.

Five. 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.

Six. 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>



## Dues Are Due

PFLAG National's fiscal year begins October 1, 2013. In order for us to submit your dues on time to National, please promptly return the dues form with your check if you have not already paid. From your \$25 dues, we pay \$15 to National, and our chapter uses the remaining \$10. There is no extra charge to receive our quarterly newsletter by email. Your additional tax deductible donation helps our chapter provide funds for our programs, brochures, supplies, meeting expenses, and dues to Help Hotline. Please print this form and mail it with your check to the address below. We depend on your continuing support. Thank you!

**Note:** You can renew, join, or donate through our new website, [www.youngstownpflag.org](http://www.youngstownpflag.org) by clicking the Donate button. Also see Treasurer's report on page 1.

- (     ) New  
 (     ) Renewal  
 (     ) Change of contact information. Please fill in form below.  
 (     ) \$25.00 Household membership for fiscal year 2013-14  
 (     ) \$5.00 Newsletter postal subscription (if you don't receive it electronically)  
 (     ) \$\_\_\_\_\_ Additional donation

Check enclosed for \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to Youngstown Area PFLAG.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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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 Steve at [smschildcrout@ysu.edu](mailto:smschildcrout@ysu.edu)

## 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 [tcopeland@neo.rr.com](mailto:tcopeland@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.