



Wishing you a healthy & happy 2012!



The Voice of PFLAG Hartford

Caring

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IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

THANK-YOU To our November meeting speaker, Jim Zegras. Jim is now an out and proud gay man, but it was not always so. Jim shared, with a great deal of humor, some of the struggles of growing up knowing he was different, and his journey to eventually coming out to his family. Jim is a science teacher at an alternative high school in Cheshire. He is also a social worker, with an MSW, specializing in youth and young adults issues. Jim, thanks for sharing your difficult journey and your happy ending.

PFLAG is a welcoming place for parents and friends of lesbians & gays, but we are much more than that. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are also encouraged to attend our meetings. GLBTI people come with or without their family members, and parents and friends come with or without their GLBTI loved ones. PFLAG is for YOU!

PFLAG HARTFORD MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP MEETS: Third Wednesday of each month, 7:30 p.m., Immanuel Congregational Church House, 10 Woodland Street (Just North of Farmington Ave.), Hartford. For more information, please call Marie & Bob at (860) 633-7184 or Becky & John at (860) 633-5111.

REFRESHMENT REMINDER:

- January 18 - Eric & Jason**
- February 15 - Alexis & Mitch**
- March 21 - Connie & Mike**
- April 18 - Tom & Marybeth**

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

- Student/Limited Income: \$10
- Household Membership: \$40
- Individual Membership: \$25

(Paid membership includes a one-year subscription to Caring and the National PFLAG newsletter.)

Please make your check payable to **PFLAG Hartford** and Send it to Joan Jansen, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415



Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and their families and friends through:

SUPPORT: To cope with an adverse society

EDUCATION: To enlighten an ill-informed public

ADVOCACY: To end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

UPCOMING /ONGOING EVENTS

- **RAINBOWROOM:** (a program of the **Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective**) -- A welcoming place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning "LGBTQ" teens (13-21 years old). RainbowRoom meets every Sunday from 3-6 p.m., 1841 Broad Street (Health Collective building), Hartford. For more information please visit our website at <http://www.hglhc.org/> or contact lizy@hglhc.org or call 860/278-4163.
- **STONEWALL SPEAKERS** is an all volunteer speakers' bureau composed of LGBT people and allies dedicated to reducing violence and bias while promoting equality for all. We speak to thousands of Connecticut students and adults annually. Listeners will meet LGBT people and their allies in person; hear candid accounts of their lives; and receive honest, informed answers to any questions they have. Let your high school, college, business, religious group or community group know we are available. For more information please contact coordinator@stonewallspeakers.org.
- **XX CLUB "Twenty Club"** – The Transsexual Support Group of New England meets the 2nd & 4th Saturday of every month from 2-5 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT www.twentyclub.net
- **LIVING SOULFULLY** (Men Loving Men In Community) meets the 4th Wednesday of every month, 7:30-9:30 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT. 860/278-4163.
- **Mpower CT** – Social gathering for gay and bisexual men ages 18-35 meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month from 7-9 p.m. at The Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective, 1841 Broad Street, Hartford, CT. 860/278-4163.
- **TRUE COLORS YOUTH CONFERENCE XIX**, "Celebrating Our Allies," Friday, March 16 & Saturday March 17, University of Connecticut, Storrs. Details coming in March/April *Caring*.

DO I NEED TO BE FIXED? I DON'T THINK SO.

I find it hard to believe anyone believes this in 2011. Yet there are those groups who, despite mountains of research to the contrary, believe that LGBT people can and should be fixed.

Yes, you know the ones: Focus on the Family and zealots like Ann Coulter, to name a few, just won't give up the notion that "reparative therapy" can "fix" homosexuality.

Well I can easily make a list of things that need to be fixed. And I'm certainly not on it. These groups need to hear the truth - LGBT people don't need to be fixed. What does? Let's see ... Maybe Congress? Wall Street? The economy?

These groups think LGBT people can "pray away the gay." They ignore the research that shows that their fix-it approach isn't just ineffective, but can be truly harmful. And they're even setting their sights on recruiting kids, claiming they can help, as the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality puts it, "those who struggle with unwanted homosexuality." This sends a harmful and dangerous message that LGBT people need treatment — that we can, and should, be fixed.

Years ago, the Task Force worked successfully to convince the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from its list of conditions that need treatment. Yet proponents of "reparative therapy" refuse to accept the mounting research that rejects their claims. We must send them a message, loud and clear: We don't need to be fixed. In so-called "reparative therapy," we're forced to be something we're not and it's time for it to stop.

Rea Carey, Executive Director, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

STEPHEN HILL, GAY SOLDIER BOOED AT GOP DEBATE, SHARES REACTION SAN FRANCISCO

Huffington Post
November 16, 2011

-- Army Capt. Stephen Hill says he wasn't trying to score political points when he asked the Republican presidential candidates if they would reinstate the ban on gays serving openly in the U.S. military.

He wasn't worried that his debate question, posed via a YouTube video recorded in Iraq, would generate boos or reveal his sexual orientation to millions of people, including his superiors and fellow troops. All Hill was thinking about in September was his husband of four-and-a-half months, Joshua Snyder, in Columbus, Ohio.

Now that "don't ask, don't tell" has been lifted, he needed to know if the military would take the next step and recognize his marriage, or if a new president would try to force soldiers like him back into the closet. "I was

looking forward to the future and hoping everybody would realize we are soldiers first, always," said Hill, 41, an Army reservist who returned last week from his yearlong deployment. "I was hoping 'don't ask, don't tell' would be a distant memory for everybody."

In an interview with The Associated Press, Hill reflected publicly for the first time on his reasons for submitting the pre-recorded question for the Sept. 22 debate, as well as his reaction to the heckles heard around the world; the answer that former Sen. Rick Santorum gave to thunderous applause; and the outrage expressed on his behalf by, among others, his commander in chief.

With Snyder on the telephone, Hill watched the debate live from Iraq at 4 a.m. And this is what he asked: "In 2010, when I was deployed to Iraq, I had to lie about who I was because I'm a gay soldier and I didn't want to lose my job. My question is, under one of your presidencies, do you intend to circumvent the progress that's been made for gay and lesbian soldiers in the military?"

Santorum replied that he would reinstitute the ban on open service by gay troops because "any type of sexual activity has absolutely no place in the military." "What we are doing is playing social experimentation with our military right now. That's tragic," he continued. "Leave it alone. Keep it to yourself whether you are heterosexual or homosexual."

"When the actual booing occurred, my gut dropped out, because my first inclination was, did I just do something wrong?" he said. "The answer, obviously, wasn't very supportive of gay people, and there was a lot of fear of how the Army would take the question." He did not have to wait long to find out. At breakfast later that morning, the segment was playing on the chow hall television. Hill immediately tracked down his commander, who told him she had no problem with what he'd done but that she would need to run it up the chain of command. She later relayed the response. "She said, 'What the military's most concerned with is that you are OK, because it's a lot of pressure on you and we want to make sure if there is anything we can do to help,'" he recalled. President Barack Obama, about a week later, chided the Republican contenders for staying silent when several people booed an American soldier. Santorum said he had not heard the booing but condemned the audience members who did it.

What Hill remembers most was that a presidential candidate defined his marriage and military service in terms of sex. He holds that up against the times he hid Snyder's photograph because Army buddies were coming over to play video games, introduced his husband as his roommate or brother, and the legal vows they exchanged at the grave of Air Force Sgt. Leonard Matlovich, who was discharged in 1975 after becoming the first gay service member to challenge the U.S. military's ban on gay troops.

Snyder and Hill last month joined other same-sex military couples in suing the government for the same benefits as straight military couples, which the Pentagon denies them on grounds that federal law defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

"This is not about sex," Hill said. "A special privilege is not hiding pictures in my house or God forbid, taking mortar fire again and not knowing if Josh will be recognized. I'm fighting every day to protect everyone's rights as human beings, and it seems counterintuitive for me to be fighting for those rights and not have them."

HILLARY CLINTON DELIVERS HISTORIC LGBT SPEECH IN GENEVA

December 7, 2011

The following are excerpts from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's Human Rights Day speech, delivered today in Geneva.

Text posted with permission from the White House Office of Communications:

...This weekend, we will celebrate Human Rights Day, the anniversary of one of the great accomplishments of the last century.

Beginning in 1947, delegates from six continents devoted themselves to drafting a declaration that would enshrine the fundamental rights and freedoms of people everywhere. ... At three o'clock in the morning on December 10th, 1948... the president of the UN General Assembly called for a vote on the final text. Forty-eight nations voted in favor; eight abstained; none dissented. And the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted. It proclaims a simple, powerful idea: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. And with the declaration, it was made clear that rights are not conferred by government; they are the birthright of all people. It does not matter what country we live in, who our leaders are, or even who we are. Because we are human, we therefore have rights. And because we have rights, governments are bound to protect them.

In the 63 years since the declaration was adopted, many nations have made great progress in making human rights a human reality. Step by step, barriers that once prevented people from enjoying the full measure of liberty, the full experience of dignity, and the full benefits of humanity have fallen away. In many places, racist laws have

been repealed, legal and social practices that relegated women to second-class status have been abolished, the ability of religious minorities to practice their faith freely has been secured.

In most cases, this progress was not easily won. People fought and organized and campaigned in public squares and private spaces to change not only laws, but hearts and minds. And thanks to that work of generations, for millions of individuals whose lives were once narrowed by injustice, they are now able to live more freely and to participate more fully in the political, economic, and social lives of their communities.

Now, there is still, as you all know, much more to be done to secure that commitment, that reality, and progress for all people. Today, I want to talk about the work we have left to do to protect one group of people whose human rights are still denied in too many parts of the world today. In many ways, they are an invisible minority. They are arrested, beaten, terrorized, even executed. Many are treated with contempt and violence by their fellow citizens while authorities empowered to protect them look the other way or, too often, even join in the abuse. They are denied opportunities to work and learn, driven from their homes and countries, and forced to suppress or deny who they are to protect themselves from harm.

I am talking about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people, human beings born free and given bestowed equality and dignity, who have a right to claim that, which is now one of the remaining human rights challenges of our time. I speak about this subject knowing that my own country's record on human rights for gay people is far from perfect. Until 2003, it was still a crime in parts of our country. Many LGBT Americans have endured violence and harassment in their own lives, and for some, including many young people, bullying and exclusion are daily experiences. So we, like all nations, have more work to do to protect human rights at home.

Now, raising this issue, I know, is sensitive for many people and that the obstacles standing in the way of protecting the human rights of LGBT people rest on deeply held personal, political, cultural, and religious beliefs. So I come here before you with respect, understanding, and humility. Even though progress on this front is not easy, we cannot delay acting. So in that spirit, I want to talk about the difficult and important issues we must address together to reach a global consensus that recognizes the human rights of LGBT citizens everywhere.

The first issue goes to the heart of the matter. Some have suggested that gay rights and human rights are separate and distinct; but, in fact, they are one and the same. Now, of course, 60 years ago, the governments that drafted and passed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were not thinking about how it applied to the LGBT community. They also weren't thinking about how it applied to indigenous people or children or people with disabilities or other marginalized groups. Yet in the past 60 years, we have come to recognize that members of these groups are entitled to the full measure of dignity and rights, because, like all people, they share a common humanity.

This recognition did not occur all at once. It evolved over time. And as it did, we understood that we were honoring rights that people always had, rather than creating new or special rights for them. Like being a woman, like being a racial, religious, tribal, or ethnic minority, being LGBT does not make you less human. And that is why gay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay rights.

It is a violation of human rights when people are beaten or killed because of their sexual orientation, or because they do not conform to cultural norms about how men and women should look or behave. It is a violation of human rights when governments declare it illegal to be gay, or allow those who harm gay people to go unpunished. It is a violation of human rights when lesbian or transgendered women are subjected to so-called corrective rape, or forcibly subjected to hormone treatments, or when people are murdered after public calls for violence toward gays, or when they are forced to flee their nations and seek asylum in other lands to save their lives. And it is a violation of human rights when life-saving care is withheld from people because they are gay, or equal access to justice is denied to people because they are gay, or public spaces are out of bounds to people because they are gay. No matter what we look like, where we come from, or who we are, we are all equally entitled to our human rights and dignity.

The second issue is a question of whether homosexuality arises from a particular part of the world. Some seem to believe it is a Western phenomenon, and therefore people outside the West have grounds to reject it. Well, in reality, gay people are born into and belong to every society in the world. They are all ages, all races, all faiths; they are doctors and teachers, farmers and bankers, soldiers and athletes; and whether we know it, or whether we acknowledge it, they are our family, our friends, and our neighbors.

Being gay is not a Western invention; it is a human reality. And protecting the human rights of all people, gay or straight, is not something that only Western governments do. South Africa's constitution, written in the aftermath of Apartheid, protects the equality of all citizens, including gay people. In Colombia and Argentina, the rights of gays are also legally protected. In Nepal, the supreme court has ruled that equal rights apply to LGBT citizens. The Government of Mongolia has committed to pursue new legislation that will tackle anti-gay discrimination.

Now, some worry that protecting the human rights of the LGBT community is a luxury that only wealthy nations can afford. But in fact, in all countries, there are costs to not protecting these rights, in both gay and straight lives lost to disease and violence, and the silencing of voices and views that would strengthen communities, in ideas never pursued by entrepreneurs who happen to be gay. Costs are incurred whenever any group is treated as lesser or the other, whether they are women, racial, or religious minorities, or the LGBT. Former President Mogae of Botswana pointed out recently that for as long as LGBT people are kept in the shadows, there cannot be an effective public health program to tackle HIV and AIDS. Well, that holds true for other challenges as well.

The third, and perhaps most challenging, issue arises when people cite religious or cultural values as a reason to violate or not to protect the human rights of LGBT citizens. This is not unlike the justification offered for violent practices towards women like honor killings, widow burning, or female genital mutilation. Some people still defend those practices as part of a cultural tradition. ... we came to learn that no practice or tradition trumps the human rights that belong to all of us. And this holds true for inflicting violence on LGBT people, criminalizing their status or behavior, expelling them from their families and communities, or tacitly or explicitly accepting their killing.

Of course, it bears noting that rarely are cultural and religious traditions and teachings actually in conflict with the protection of human rights. Indeed, our religion and our culture are sources of compassion and inspiration toward our fellow human beings. It was not only those who've justified slavery who leaned on religion, it was also those who sought to abolish it.

The fourth issue is what history teaches us about how we make progress towards rights for all. Progress starts with honest discussion. Now, there are some who say and believe that all gay people are pedophiles, that homosexuality is a disease that can be caught or cured, or that gays recruit others to become gay. Well, these notions are simply not true. They are also unlikely to disappear if those who promote or accept them are dismissed out of hand rather than invited to share their fears and concerns. No one has ever abandoned a belief because he was forced to do so.

...Reaching understanding of these issues takes more than speech. It does take a conversation. In fact, it takes a constellation of conversations in places big and small. And it takes a willingness to see stark differences in belief as a reason to begin the conversation, not to avoid it.

But progress comes from changes in laws. ...Laws have a teaching effect. Laws that discriminate validate other kinds of discrimination. Laws that require equal protections reinforce the moral imperative of equality. And practically speaking, it is often the case that laws must change before fears about change dissipate. ... some worried in my country that the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" would have a negative effect on our armed forces. Now, the Marine Corps Commandant, who was one of the strongest voices against the repeal, says that his concerns were unfounded and that the Marines have embraced the change.

Finally, progress comes from being willing to walk a mile in someone else's shoes. We need to ask ourselves, "How would it feel if it were a crime to love the person I love? How would it feel to be discriminated against for something about myself that I cannot change?" This challenge applies to all of us as we reflect upon deeply held beliefs, as we work to embrace tolerance and respect for the dignity of all persons, and as we engage humbly with those with whom we disagree in the hope of creating greater understanding.

A fifth and final question is how we do our part to bring the world to embrace human rights for all people including LGBT people. Yes, LGBT people must help lead this effort...But often those who are denied rights are least empowered to bring about the changes they seek. Acting alone, minorities can never achieve the majorities necessary for political change.

So when any part of humanity is sidelined, the rest of us cannot sit on the sidelines. Every time a barrier to progress has fallen, it has taken a cooperative effort from those on both sides of the barrier. In the fight for women's rights, the support of men remains crucial. The fight for racial equality has relied on contributions from people of all races. Combating Islamophobia or anti-Semitism is a task for people of all faiths. And the same is true with this struggle for equality.

Conversely, when we see denials and abuses of human rights and fail to act, that sends the message to those deniers and abusers that they won't suffer any consequences for their actions, and so they carry on. But when we do act, we send a powerful moral message. Right here in Geneva, the international community acted this year to strengthen a global consensus around the human rights of LGBT people. At the Human Rights Council in March, 85 countries from all regions supported a statement calling for an end to criminalization and violence against people because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

At the following session of the Council in June, South Africa took the lead on a resolution about violence against LGBT people. The delegation from South Africa spoke eloquently about their own experience and struggle for

human equality and its indivisibility. When the measure passed, it became the first-ever UN resolution recognizing the human rights of gay people worldwide. In the Organization of American States this year, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights created a unit on the rights of LGBT people, a step toward what we hope will be the creation of a special rapporteur.

Now, we must go further... To the leaders of those countries where people are jailed, beaten, or executed for being gay, I ask you to consider this: Leadership, by definition, means being out in front of your people when it is called for. It means standing up for the dignity of all your citizens and persuading your people to do the same. It also means ensuring that all citizens are treated as equals under your laws... it should never be a crime to be gay.

And to people of all nations, I say supporting human rights is your responsibility too. The lives of gay people are shaped not only by laws, but by the treatment they receive every day from their families, from their neighbors. Eleanor Roosevelt, who did so much to advance human rights worldwide, said that these rights begin in the small places close to home – the streets where people live, the schools they attend, the factories, farms, and offices where they work. These places are your domain. The actions you take, the ideals that you advocate, can determine whether human rights flourish where you are.

And finally, to LGBT men and women worldwide, let me say this: Wherever you live and whatever the circumstances of your life, whether you are connected to a network of support or feel isolated and vulnerable, please know that you are not alone. People around the globe are working hard to support you and to bring an end to the injustices and dangers you face. That is certainly true for my country. And you have an ally in the United States of America and you have millions of friends among the American people. ...

This morning, ...President Obama put into place the first U.S. Government strategy dedicated to combating human rights abuses against LGBT persons abroad. Building on efforts already underway at the State Department and across the government, the President has directed all U.S. Government agencies engaged overseas to combat the criminalization of LGBT status and conduct, to enhance efforts to protect vulnerable LGBT refugees and asylum seekers, to ensure that our foreign assistance promotes the protection of LGBT rights, to enlist international organizations in the fight against discrimination, and to respond swiftly to abuses against LGBT persons.

I am also pleased to announce that we are launching a new Global Equality Fund that will support the work of civil society organizations working on these issues around the world. This fund will help them record facts so they can target their advocacy, learn how to use the law as a tool, manage their budgets, train their staffs, and forge partnerships with women's organizations and other human rights groups. We have committed more than \$3 million to start this fund, and we have hope that others will join us in supporting it.

The women and men who advocate for human rights for the LGBT community in hostile places, ...are brave and dedicated, and deserve all the help we can give them. We know the road ahead will not be easy. ...But many of us have seen firsthand how quickly change can come. In our lifetimes, attitudes toward gay people in many places have been transformed. Many people, including myself, have experienced a deepening of our own convictions on this topic over the years, as we have devoted more thought to it, engaged in dialogues and debates, and established personal and professional relationships with people who are gay.

This evolution is evident in many places. To highlight one example, the Delhi High Court decriminalized homosexuality in India two years ago, writing, and I quote, "If there is one tenet that can be said to be an underlying theme of the Indian constitution, it is inclusiveness." There is little doubt in my mind that support for LGBT human rights will continue to climb. Because for many young people, this is simple: All people deserve to be treated with dignity and have their human rights respected, no matter who they are or whom they love.

There is a phrase that people in the United States invoke when urging others to support human rights: "Be on the right side of history." The story of the United States is the story of a nation that has repeatedly grappled with intolerance and inequality. We fought a brutal civil war over slavery. People from coast to coast joined in campaigns to recognize the rights of women, indigenous peoples, racial minorities, children, people with disabilities, immigrants, workers, and on and on. And the march toward equality and justice has continued. Those who advocate for expanding the circle of human rights were and are on the right side of history, and history honors them. Those who tried to constrict human rights were wrong, and history reflects that as well.

I know that the thoughts I've shared today involve questions on which opinions are still evolving. ... opinion will converge once again with the truth, the immutable truth, that all persons are created free and equal in dignity and rights. ... Let us be on the right side of history, for our people, our nations, and future generations, whose lives will be shaped by the work we do today. I come before you with great hope and confidence that no matter how long the road ahead, we will travel it successfully together. Thank you very much.

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Phone: (860) 633-5111

Transgender Issues: (860) 231-8582

PFLAG SOUTHWESTERN CT

When: 7:30 pm, 1st Wednesday (bi-monthly)
Jan./Mar./May/July/Sept./Nov.

Where: Triangle Community Center
16 River Street (lower level) Norwalk

Help Line: (203) 226-0257 - Westport

(203) 322-5380 - Stamford

(203) 925-0445- Shelton

(203) 847-9183 - Norwalk

Email: PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com

PFLAG SECT (SOUTHEASTERN CT)

When: Second Monday of every month,
Potluck at 6:00 pm; Meeting at 7:00 pm

Where: Noank Baptist Church,
18 Cathedral Heights, Noank (Groton)

Helpline: (860) 447-0884

Email: bjalthen@sbcglobal.net

Web site: www.pflagsect.org

PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN

166 Lovers Lane, Guilford, CT 06437

Meeting: 3rd Tuesday of the Month, 7:30 pm
Church of the Redeemer

185 Cold Spring Street, New Haven
(Corner of Whitney Avenue)

Phone/Help Line (203) 458-0493

Email: greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com

Central and Western Massachusetts

PFLAG FRANKLIN-HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER Northampton

When: Second Tuesday of every month

Where: Highland Valley Elder Services,
Cutlery Building, 320 Riverside Drive

Helpline: 413/625-6636

Email: jcmalinski48@gmail.com

Williamstown Area:

When: Second Sunday of every month, 2 pm

Where: First Congregational Church, Williamstown

Contact: (413) 243-2382

Springfield Area:

Where: Agawam

Contact: (413) 732-3240 or (413) 783-7709

Greenfield, MA

Help Line: 413/625-6636

E-Mail: PFLAGPV@valinet.com

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2011/2012

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**In Connecticut and Western Massachusetts
Monthly Support Group, Third Sunday,
West Hartford, CT.**

Contact Jane Harris at (413) 625-6636 or
jcmalinski48@gmail.com

or at www.straightspouse.org

FOR OTHER PFLAG LOCATIONS

Contact a Hartford Chapter Board Member or call the National PFLAG office at (202)638-4200. You may also sign onto PFLAG's Home Page at www.pflag.org.