



# PFLAG - LA

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

P. O. Box 24565 Los Angeles, CA 90024 (888) PFLAG88 <http://www.pflagla.org>

2010 / Newsletter # 258

## OUR MISSION

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) promotes the health and well-being of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered 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. PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

Our meetings are always held on the **3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday** of each month at the Westwood United Methodist Church, 10497 Wilshire Bl., NE corner of Wilshire and Warner. Take the 405 Freeway to the Wilshire Bl. East exit. Continue 1.5 miles. The entry on Warner has an elevator; another entry is through the sanctuary to the corridor, then upstairs to the Fellowship Hall - 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. There is also easy access from the north driveway. Doors open at 7:00 pm; general meeting begins at 7:30 pm.

Our meetings typically include rap groups where individuals can share their concerns, questions, and understanding about the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered person(s) in their families, and invited guest speakers on topics pertinent to our families. There is a short refreshment break between the rap session and the speaker(s).

For **U**pcoming **S**peakers,  
Please **C**heck **O**ur **W**eb site **A**t  
[www.pflagla.org](http://www.pflagla.org) !

New support meeting in  
Silverlake!

Please see page 2 for details.

**We can't make it without your support!**

Please consider making a year-end donation,  
renewing your membership,  
or joining us!

*[Continues on page 7, see DONATE TO PFLAG LOS ANGELES!]*

**HELPLINES, CHAPTERS & CONTACTS 9AM-9PM**  
**1-888-PFLAG88 or 1-888-735-2488 www.pflagla.org**

West LA: 310-454-6681 (Liz)  
 LI ZARM@aol.com

Pasadena: 626-797-1732 (Patti)  
 ploitz@earthlink.net

Santa Clarita: 661-254-2177 (Dave)

San Fernando Valley: 818-788-8678 (Lynette)

South Bay: 310-546-2721 (Dick)

Long Beach Chapter: 562-403-1234

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 818-368-2008  
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Transgender: 818-985-9319 (Chris)

LA Gay & Lesbian Center:  
 323-993-7400  
 www.lagaycenter.org

The TREVOR PROJECT  
 24-hour nationwide suicide prevention line for  
 GLBT and Questioning youth.  
 866-4 U TREVOR / 866-488-7386  
 www.thetrevorproject.org

PFLAG National  
 (202) 467 8180 www.pflag.org

**Hablamos español!**

Leonor 818-956-7533  
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ä Need to get in touch with the editor? Send an email to Chris at [haichi87@sbcglobal.net](mailto:haichi87@sbcglobal.net) ä

**Officers:**

President: Mariette Sawchuk  
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Carol Cox	Steve Krantz
Maurie Davidson	Barry Mason
Ron Elecciri	Sandy Sawchuk
Chris Haiss	Sylvia Weisenberg

Liaison from PFLAG en Espanol: Lenor Holmstrom

**When you don't need  
 PFLAG any more  
 that is when PFLAG  
 needs YOU!**

**Silverlake Meeting!**

When: 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month  
 from 7:30pm to 9pm

Where: Metropolitan Community Church  
 4953 Franklin Ave  
 Los Angeles 90027

Contact: Dawn at  
[silverlake@pflagLA.org](mailto:silverlake@pflagLA.org)

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## PFLAG Los Angeles 2010 Highlights

It's hard to believe that we are entering the final weeks of 2010. As we prepare to celebrate the holidays, I thought it might be fun to look at some of the highlights of the past year.

### Monthly Meetings:

Our monthly meetings continue to be the core of what we do. Always inspiring, there were a number of very special moments this year. In April, Dr. Joseph R. Hawkins, President of the Board of Directors of the One National Gay and Lesbian Archives, shared the history of LGBT life in Los Angeles. Using pictures and documents, he showed the work of pioneers like Harry Hay, founder of the Mattachine Society organized to protect LGBT rights in 1950.

In August, PFLAG Los Angeles Chapter members Aye Robin and Charisse Delk gave us an eye-opening tour of the gender landscape beyond the male/female binary. Student activists in their high schools, and now in college, they have formed a new non-profit, Break the Binary, to continue their mission of support and education for transgender, gender queer, and intersex youth.

L.A. City Councilman Bill Rosendahl generously and candidly shared his life story with us at the October meeting, describing the pain and joy of his three major coming out experiences: to family, at work, and in politics. His tireless work for the LGBT community and for his constituency in District 11 inspired all of us.

### The Pride Events:

PFLAG Los Angeles members were out and proud at the annual Christopher Street West Pride Parade, distributing new postcards that describe our work and highlight the new PFLAG Los Angeles meeting in Silverlake.

At Models of Pride in October, PFLAG Los Angeles, API PFLAG, and PFLAG Pasadena cooperated to design and present the Parents Program, the first ever formal sessions for parents of LGBT youth at this popular event. More than 25 people attended these sessions, which covered topics such as parenting, safe schools, religion, and advocacy.

### PFLAG Los Angeles at Silverlake:

PFLAG Los Angeles has a new satellite meeting, which began in January of this year. Run by three dedicated facilitators, Stephen Jimenez, Dawn Berg, and Virsil Mitchell, the meeting has grown from six to 16 attendees, with many first-time parents coming for support. Join them on the 2nd Thursday of every month from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Los Feliz Metropolitan Community Church.

### PFLAG Los Angeles on radio:

Thanks to Sylvia Weisenberg, one of the longest running programs on LGBT issues, KPFC's IMRU hosted Karen Mason, talking about PFLAG's mission of support, education, and advocacy. Later, Speakers Bureau organizers Andy and Ron shared the microphone to talk about gay marriage.

It's been a great year, and we're looking forward to making next year even better with your help. Join us at a meeting, renew your membership or make a contribution, sign up to have a Speakers Bureau panel at your school or workplace. Keep up with the latest PFLAG Los Angeles news and events at our website: [www.pflagla.org](http://www.pflagla.org).

Mariette Sawchuk  
[msawchuk-pflag@earthlink.net](mailto:msawchuk-pflag@earthlink.net)

## LEGISLATIVE CORNER

### Signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger:

#### **SB 543 -- Mental Health Services for At-Risk Youth (Mark Leno):**

This is a historic bill that allows youth 12 to 17 years old to receive mental health care without requiring their parents' consent. LGBT youth across California who are fearful that their families could become abusive or kick them out if they come out -- or refuse to consent to their obtaining mental health services -- will now be able get the help they need, before it's too late.

"I am pleased the governor signed this important legislation, which ensures all youth have better access to critical mental health services," said Senator Leno. "Recently, four young people in our nation, including one in California, have taken their lives due to bullying because they were either perceived to be or identified as gay. We simply must do more to support and protect our young people in order to prevent tragedies like these from happening in the future, and SB 543 is a step in that direction."

#### **AB 2199 -- Repeal of Discriminatory Code (Bonnie Lowenthal):**

AB2199 repeals the offensive section of the California Welfare and Institutions code, which instructs the State Department of Mental Health to conduct research into the "causes and cures of homosexuality." Lowenthal pointed out that the code, which implies that being LGBT is harmful and should be "cured" -- contradicts substantial research that says otherwise. "It's discriminatory, it's insulting and it has to go," Lowenthal said.

#### **AB 2700 -- Separation Equity Act (Fiona Ma):**

AB 2700 amends the state's family code, allowing for couples who first registered as domestic partners and who legally married thereafter to dissolve both contracts through a single, uniform procedure. The current system forces couples to go through a separate process for each, which can take an extra one to two years for each case to be resolved and unnecessarily burdens the judicial system. The bill also clarifies that same-sex couples who married outside of California and who have all the rights and responsibilities of, may dissolve those out of state marriages in California.

"AB 2700 brings us a step closer towards marriage equality by recognizing that ALL marriages are treated alike, even when it comes to dissolving marriages," said Assemblymember Fiona Ma.

#### **AB 2055 -- Unemployment Benefits Equality (Hector De La Torre):**

Currently, couples who are engaged to be married are eligible for unemployment benefits if one of the partners must leave his or her job in order to move closer to his or her future spouse. This bill would extend the same rights to couples who plan on entering into a domestic partnership. The bill is especially beneficial for same-sex couples because they are prohibited from legally marrying and therefore unable to receive these benefits.

"AB 2055 will bring equity to imminent domestic partners and help keep families and couples together," said Assemblymember De La Torre. "By guaranteeing this right to imminent domestic partners fairness under the law will be enforced, family unity will be preserved, and all committed relationships will be given equal opportunity to unemployment benefits."

### Vetoed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger:

#### **AB 633 -- LGBT Prisoner Safety Bill (Tom Ammiano):**

Would have stopped corrective institutions from continuing their outrageous policy of placing LGBT prisoners in solitary confinement as a first step in supposedly protecting them from rape and other violence.

#### **AB 1680 -- Hate Crimes Protection Act (Lori Saldaña):**

This bill would have prohibited contracts from requiring a person to waive their legal rights and procedures under the Ralph Civil Rights Act, which provides protections from hate related crimes.

#### **SB 906 -- Civil Marriage Religious Freedom Act (Mark Leno):**

This bill would have reaffirmed the freedom of clergy to make faith-based decisions regarding which marriages they solemnize. Additionally, this bill would have clarified that religious institutions would not lose their tax exempt status in California if they refuse to solemnize a marriage that is contrary to their religious faith.

## SPREADING THE WORD IN THE COMMUNITY

through speaking engagements/education, activism & advocacy:

- Bill Fields, Lisa Kimsey, Steve Krantz, and Sylvia Weisenberg spoke at Dr. Stacey Lee Longmore's marriage and family class at California State University, Northridge.
- Joseph Harounian, Marla Weiss, and Steve Krantz spoke to students at Beverly Hills High School.
- Bill Fields, Mitch Grobeson, and Mel Schwartz talked to students at the "Child in a Diverse Society Class" at Pierce College.
- Andy Birnbaum, Ron Elecciri and Sylvia Weisenberg provided a full-day training session in San Diego for members of the local PFLAG speakers bureau.
- Carol Cox, Maurie Davidson, and Stuart Huggins talked to a class in the Master of Social Work program at USC.
- Stephen Allman, Lisa Kimsey, Steve Krantz, and Sylvia Weisenberg presented to employees of the consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton.

## A Shout Out to the Speakers Bureau

The members of PFLAG Los Angeles' Speakers Bureau work hard to realize our mission of education. Over thirty times a year, they are out in the community telling their stories and spreading understanding, tolerance, and reliable information in many different kinds of venues.

Run by Andy Birnbaum and Ron Elecciri, the Speakers Bureau sends panels of LGBT individuals, parents, and straight allies, into middle schools, high schools, college campuses, community groups, and businesses. The response from their audiences is enthusiastic and warm.

A recent engagement at a peer mentoring class at LACES (Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies) got the following evaluations. When asked whether they had learned anything new about LGBT people all 20 students said "yes." Student comments were universally positive, with statements such as these:

*"It [was] really helpful and teaches you not to be judgmental and to accept people as they are."*

*"I'll check out the website and learn more about gay people. Thank you for coming to my class. I feel this will help me with my peers and peer helping. I feel passionate for gay rights now. Thank you."*

*"It was educational and actually helped me think positively about GLBTs. PFLAG is a program that can help GLBT families cope when others have negatives views. It makes you better."*

**Training for new speakers is taking place on November 20** to be led by Andy and Ron, and Sylvia Weisenberg, a Speakers Bureau volunteer and Board Member. If you are interested in attending, please email Andy and Ron at [andyron@gmail.com](mailto:andyron@gmail.com) for specific information. In particular, the bureau needs straight parents who can speak during the daytime. If you are reading this after the training date has passed, straight parents willing to speak should still contact Andy and Ron. Your voice will make a difference for LGBT people.

**Special thanks go to all the speakers, who give so generously of their time to fight prejudice, bullying and discrimination.**

# T r a n s A c t i o n

## New Policy on Gender Change in Passports

The U.S. Department of State announced this summer its new policy guidelines regarding gender change in passports and Consular Reports of Birth Abroad. Under the new policy, when a passport applicant presents a certification from an attending medical physician that the applicant has undergone appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition, the passport will reflect the new gender.

The guidelines include detailed information about what information the certification must include. It is also possible to obtain a limited-validity passport if the physician's statement shows the applicant is in the process of gender transition. No additional medical records are required. **Sexual reassignment surgery is no longer a prerequisite for passport issuance.** A Consular Report of Birth Abroad can also be amended with the new gender.

The new policy and procedures are based on standards and recommendations of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), recognized by the American Medical Association as the authority in this field.

## Transgender Law Center Investigating Offensive Letter from DMV Employee

The Transgender Law Center is outraged that a California Department of Motor Vehicles employee sent a letter to the home of a transgender woman calling her "an abomination" and telling her that she is going to hell.

After Amber Yust, a transgender woman living in San Francisco, went to the San Francisco Department of Motor Vehicles to change her name on her driver's license, she received a letter from the person who had processed her name change at the DMV. In the letter, which had been mailed to her home, the DMV employee quoted from the Bible and stated that Amber had made a "very evil decision." The strongly-worded letter told Amber that she was "an abomination" and said that homosexuals should be put to death.

The Transgender Law Center is investigating the incident.

Hear the report from ABC News at <http://transgenderlawcenter.org/cms/blogs/1-2>

<http://transgenderlawcenter.org>

## Brutal Assault of Transgender Woman

November 1, 2010

Los Angeles – The Los Angeles Police Department is searching for a suspect who brutally assaulted a transgender woman, in what could be a hate-based crime. A transgender woman was brutally kicked in the face and struck in the head with a bottle near the corner of La Brea Avenue and Sunset Boulevard. She was left with a broken jaw. Police are still investigating the incident, which occurred earlier in the month, but are now seeking information from the public.

“This vicious crime is a sad reminder of the violence transgender individuals face far too often,” said Geoff Kors, Equality California Executive Director. “No one should ever fear for his or her safety because of one’s gender identity. As Equality California continues to fight for full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Californians, among our top priorities will be to help prevent anti-LGBT bias-crimes and continuing to advocate for strong rights and protections for transgender community members.”

[www.eqca.org](http://www.eqca.org)

## Transgender Day of Remembrance

The violence against transgendered men and women has not yet stopped and many have lost their lives due to hate and a misunderstanding of what it means to be transgender/transsexual. This hate and misunderstanding is fueled by mostly right-wing conservative organizations and self-proclaimed experts, many of them pro-life unless it is about a gay/lesbian/trans life.

Please show your support and participate in one of this year's Transgender Day of Remembrance events honoring transgender victims of violence.

### November 19, 2010:

- Bixby Park, 130 Cherry Ave, Long Beach, 6:00 pm (candlelight vigil)
- Jewish Transgender Day of Remembrance dinner at Beth Chayim Chadashim (for details see [http://www.bcc-la.org/content/?page\\_id=39](http://www.bcc-la.org/content/?page_id=39))

### November 20, 2010:

City of West Hollywood  
8300 Santa Monica Blvd, West Hollywood, CA  
323-848-6496

**Also check your local calendars of events!**

*[continued from front page]*

## PLEASE DONATE TO PFLAG LOS ANGELES!

We can't make it without your support!

Please consider a year-end donation to support our much needed work.  
(Donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law.)

If you're already a PFLAG member, please renew your membership for 2011.

If you're not a member yet, please join PFLAG Los Angeles now.

We are an all-volunteer organization, receiving no money from PFLAG National. Our work is possible only through your help. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. We are all in this struggle together, and every little bit you give goes a long way.

New or renewal memberships, donations, and memorial contributions can all be made online at [www.pflagla.org](http://www.pflagla.org).

Click on the JOIN/DONATE tab at the top of the page and follow the simple steps.

Every penny of your membership or gift will go directly to our all-volunteer work on behalf of LGBT persons and their families.

**THANK YOU SO MUCH!**

### "QUOTE - UNQUOTE"

"When I take office, I pledge to continue being a champion for LGBT Californians, and I look forward to working with Equality California to fight discrimination, and to ensure that LGBT Californians are treated with fairness, dignity and equality under the law."

*CA Governor-elect Jerry Brown  
after the 2010 general election*

We'd like to ask for your

**email address**

to ensure that if we ever have an event on  
short notice

YOU WILL hear about it.

Please email your email address to  
[info@pflagla.org](mailto:info@pflagla.org) or to [karenhmason@yahoo.com](mailto:karenhmason@yahoo.com)

## Have you ever thought of joining our Speakers Bureau?

**If yes, mark your calendar! Training for new speakers is taking place on November 20!**

If you are interested in attending, please email Andy and Ron at [andynron@gmail.com](mailto:andynron@gmail.com) for specific information. In particular, the bureau needs straight parents who can speak during the daytime.

If you are reading this after the training date has passed, straight parents willing to speak should still contact Andy and Ron. Your voice will make a difference for LGBT people!

**Ireland I**

Ireland has become the latest country to allow all its LGBT citizens to sponsor their partners for immigration.

Yes, IRELAND - a country that is over 90% Catholic and where the Catholic Church runs all of the schools.

What makes this sensational? The fact that a country like the U.S. to this day, does not allow its gay/lesbian citizens to sponsor their foreign partner for residency, in spite of the Constitution's guarantee of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

This means that gay/lesbian U.S. citizens in this situation are sooner or later forced to choose between country and partner.

Never would we ask this of any other group of citizens.

Equal under the law? Definitely not, since straight couples can get married in Las Vegas (have you ever seen one of the drive-through chapels?) and immediately thereafter apply for a green card based on that marriage.

**Ireland II**

Appeal against transgender ruling withdrawn  
[From: <http://www.irishtimes.com>]

The Government has withdrawn its appeal against a landmark ruling by the High Court that Irish law on transgender rights is in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The decision also paves the way for the Government to propose new legislation giving transsexuals the right to obtain birth certificates showing their acquired sex and the entitlement to marry in that gender.

Under current law a transgendered person cannot have a birth certificate issued with his or her new gender, and does not have the right to marry in that identity.

What makes this sensational? The fact that Ireland has bypassed states like Ohio and Texas.

If you are interested in legal issues as they pertain to LGBT people, you might want to consider this special event hosted by The Williams Institute – UCLA School of Law (<http://www.law.ucla.edu/WilliamsInstitute/home.html>)

**From DISGUST to HUMANITY: Sexual Orientation & Constitutional Law**

A Book Event featuring Martha C. Nussbaum  
Tuesday, November 23, 2010  
UCLA School of Law, Room 1347  
6:00 - 8:00 pm

For more information or to RSVP call (310) 267-4382.

"A prolific writer and award-winning thinker, Martha Nussbaum stands as one of our foremost authorities on law, justice, freedom, morality, and emotion. In *From Disgust to Humanity*, Nussbaum aims her considerable intellectual firepower at the bulwark of opposition to gay equality: the politics of disgust."

**The PFLAG/L.A. Event**

The first PFLAG LA Event (October 1), on the rooftop of the London West Hollywood Hotel, was simply glorious. It was created and chaired by Prayers for Bobby producers Daniel Sladek, David Permut and Chris Taaffe. The hosts were Modern Family's Jesse Ferguson and Eric Stonestreet. Over 500 people wined, dined and cheered.

We gave PFLAG's outstanding television award to Brian Murphy for *Glee* and PFLAG's outstanding film award to director Lisa Cholodenko for *The Kids Are All Right*.

PFLAGers from all over Southern California were there to celebrate along with our National President John Cepek and Executive Director Jody Huckaby.

*Steve Krantz,*  
PFLAG Director, Southern Pacific Region, and National Board Member