

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:



When I went to my first PFLAG meeting 12 years ago, I thought I wouldn't live to see the day when LGBT couples could be legally married. On Friday, November 8, I was invited to act as witness to the civil marriage of two long-time PFLAG board members, Stuart Huggins (Vice President) and York Knowlton (Treasurer and Webmaster). It was a deeply moving experience—even the officiator cried. It matters profoundly that the State of California and the federal government recognize and affirm the marriage of this couple and all LGBT couples. That is why I am so happy that Illinois (15th state) and Hawaii (16th state) have legalized marriages between LGBT couples. Yes, there will be court challenges—particularly in Hawaii—but the tide is turning. We have the power to change things.

That is why I ask you to take action in support of ENDA (H.R. 1755) which will prohibit workplace discrimination against employees who are or are perceived to be LGBT. A similar bill has already passed the U.S. Senate, but Speaker of the House John Boehner refuses to bring the bill to the floor for a vote. Call, write, or email your representative urging them to demand that Speaker Boehner bring the bill up for a vote. I hope that the bill will have been passed by the time you read this, but I expect delays. If Congress has refused to act or has adjourned by the time you are reading this contact your representative anyway. We have won marriage equality rights here and in other states by being persistent. Our persistence will win workplace discrimination rights for the LGBT community as well.

Models of Pride: PFLAG Los Angeles joined PFLAG Pasadena to put on the Adult Straight Ally program at Models of Pride on October 19. On a warm autumn day, over 180 parents and adult allies (sponsors of GSAs and other groups for LGBT youth) chose from 26 different workshops in English and Spanish. Topics included civil rights, gender expression/gender identity, religion, making a safe classroom, and panels by transgender youth, and the success stories of LGBT young adults to name only a few.



Coming Soon - A new satellite meeting in Boyle Heights: The PFLAG Los Angeles Board is working with a dynamic group of individuals from Boyle Heights, including Queen Victoria of the Royal Court, to start a Spanish language PFLAG meeting in that community. This joint venture is part of our goal to assist Latino communities in providing support for LGBT youth and their families. An exciting kick-off event is planned for January. Check out our website for the date, time and place.

Nominations are now open for PFLAG Los Angeles Officers and Board: If you know someone (yourself included) with a special talent or just a special love for PFLAG Los Angeles, consider making a nomination. We need all kinds of skills—someone to be a corresponding secretary and someone to organize newcomers services to name a few. Elections will be held at a regularly scheduled meeting in 2014. All members are eligible to vote. Look for the date and slate of officers and board on our website and in our monthly email. - *Mariette*

Our Stories From Liz Siegel Mullen

My name is Liz Siegel Mullen. I am a member of the LGBT community and a very proud member of the board of PFLAG Los Angeles.

I came out to myself as a lesbian at the age of 26 in NYC. (I'm 62 now.) It may seem difficult to imagine not knowing something of such importance to myself until then. I dated boys all through school, and then didn't really acknowledge my attraction to women until one of my friends came out first. It was more important for me to fit in and be accepted.

I want to mention something about that time in the history of gay rights. It was the beginning of a safe period for LGB people in NYC as we had begun walking toward fairness and dignity after the 1969 Stonewall Riots. 1977 was a watershed moment in my mind and was helped by Anita Bryant, a singer and a very conservative religious zealot, who happened to be a spokesperson for Florida Orange Growers. She became an active anti-gay political face, attempting to prevent the very rights we were striving for. Gay and straight supporters united to fight her bigotry by boycotting orange juice. We won by using economic pressure. The 1977 Gay Pride Parade was hugely popular and it was my first.

Another very important event occurred in 1978 when NYC Mayor Ed Koch announced a Mayoral Decree protecting gay NYC employees from being fired for it. I was such an employee. I was financially secure and I had accepting friends, so I was free to explore my authentic self.

My next step wasn't easy. I came out to my parents, fairly liberal Jews who did not think they had discriminatory ideas. However, when it came to their daughter, they were shocked, confused and fearful, and made some pretty horrible comments to me. They had no vantage point to understand my difference. I have since realized that LGBT people are really the only minority that doesn't share this status with their own family. My parents have since become loving and active supporters. *Continued inside*



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(1.888.735.2488)
www.pflagLA.org

PFLAG Los Angeles is an all volunteer, non-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization run by parents, family members, LGBT persons and their friends. Each of us came for help, found support, and joined the organization to assist others on their journey to acceptance. Our chapter, together with a group in New York City, founded the national PFLAG organization, which provides assistance to over 350 independent chapters nationwide.

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Legislative Corner

From the editor: I hope you didn't miss the progress that has been made in regard to same-sex marriage. Minnesota, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and now Hawaii have joined the states that no longer ban same-sex couples from getting married. Still, the battle continues until ALL legally married couples are on equal footing. So, even if you are tired of hearing it, voting does matter.

Another major victory! The U.S. Senate passed ENDA, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. It passed with 64 votes, including 10 Republicans and 2 Independents. (ENDA was also introduced in the House, but has not yet been brought up for a vote.) First introduced in the House in 1994 by Congressman Gerry Studds, original cosponsors included 4 Republicans. In 2007, ENDA was introduced by Congressman Barney Frank. That was the first time the bill included sexual orientation AND gender identity. Three Republicans were original cosponsors. Currently, several states offer protection based on sexual orientation and gender identity. ENDA would ensure this type of protection across the entire U.S.

In California, Governor Brown signed the following four bills that were sponsored by Equality California into law. Thank you, California legislators and Governor Brown, for understanding how important these protections are for Californians, including our most vulnerable populations: seniors and students.

AB 1121 (Toni Atkins)
Transgender Name Changes and Birth Certificates

California procedures to change a person's name and/or gender are extremely costly and burdensome. AB 1121 simplifies the process required for name changes and ensures that a transgender person's gender identity is reflected accurately on important identity documents.

AB 663 (Jimmy Gomez)
LGBT Cultural Competency Training for Administrators in Senior Care Facilities

Older LGBT Californians often opt to go back in the closet when they enter senior care facilities for fear of discrimination. AB 663 ensures that administrators of residential care facilities have additional training in cultural competency and sensitivity in aging LGBT issues.

AB 362 (Phil Ting)
LGBT Health Insurance Tax Parity

Although DOMA has been struck down, according to the Franchise Tax Board, the compensation provided to employees by their employers in the 2013 taxable year to make up for unfair federal taxes they had to pay in order to cover a partner or spouse on health insurance is still subject to state income taxes. AB 362 will provide relief from state taxes for employees who receive this compensation from their employer in fiscal year 2013. AB 362 also covers employees with a same-sex registered domestic partner to give these couples up to five years to transition to marriage without incurring this state tax on their employer-provided reimbursements for unfair federal tax payments.

AB 1266 (Tom Ammiano)
School Success and Opportunity Act

Every student - including transgender students - should have a fair chance to fully participate and succeed in school. AB 1266 addresses the exclusion of transgender students from classes and activities, and clarifies existing anti-discrimination law to provide clear protections for transgender students.

(AB 1266 that seeks to reduce discrimination against transgender students is already under major attack by the usual suspects, joining forces under the name "Privacy for all Students" that they created right after Governor Brown signed the bill into law. Read more on page 4 "TransAction".)

Information provided by Equality California www.eqca.org. If you're interested in how your California state representatives voted in 2013, please go to www.eqca.org and type in the search box 2013 Scorecard. The report is available in English and Spanish.

Be Out! Be Healthy!
According to the Transgender Law Center, 1 in 3 LGBT people lack health insurance. Here's good news:

Healthcare coverage is just steps away with Out2Enroll, a collaborative effort from the Sellers Dorsey Foundation, the Center for American Progress, and the Federal Agencies Project to educate LGBT communities about their options under the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. For transgender people this means that insurance companies can no longer deny coverage or charge them more based on their gender identity. Plans will also cover the services transgender people need as long as those services are covered for other people on the plan. Check out your options at out2enroll.org.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK!

Renew your membership, make a special gift, or join us for the first time TODAY.

As an all-volunteer organization, our work is made possible only with the generous contributions of our members and donors. Your contributions support our monthly meetings, website, helplines, Speakers Bureau, and outreach to ethnic and faith communities. PFLAG Los Angeles is a 501(c)3 charitable organization and 100% of your donation supports our programs.

Please Note: When you pay dues to PFLAG Los Angeles, a portion of your dues (\$15) goes to PFLAG National and makes you a member of both PFLAG Los Angeles and PFLAG National. However, if you pay dues or make donations directly to PFLAG National, 100% of your dues/donation stays with PFLAG National making you only a PFLAG National member.

Use the envelope provided or donate on-line at www.pflagLA.org/Join-Donate.

We Need YOUR Stories!

We all have a PFLAG story to share. Some are a testimony of growth and understanding, others are painful and heart-breaking. These stories of real peoples' lives can be major teaching moments to some and life-savers to others.

We encourage you to share YOUR story with us. There will be at least one person out there who will benefit from what you have to share.

The focus should be on your personal story as it relates to the coming-out of an LGBT family member/loved one. Maximum number of characters with spaces is 4,300.

All stories are welcome and submissions are subject to editing. By submitting your story you give PFLAG permission to publish it in our newsletter, on our website or other media to promote PFLAG. If requested, your name will not be published.

Please e-mail your story to NewsletterEditor@pflagLA.org.

Our Stories *Continued from cover*

This brings me to my first exposure to PFLAG which was started in NYC in 1972 by Jeanne Manford, a mom who was not going to let society destroy her gay son, so she did something theretofore unheard of - she marched with him in the Gay Pride Parade. The first time I read a PFLAG sign in my first Gay Pride Parade, I wept as I accepted the message of love from someone else's mom or dad.

Jump ahead to my relocation to Los Angeles in my early 30s and meeting my spouse about 5 years later. She and I had a spiritual holy union in 1990. Throughout my life, I had always had a strong drive to become a mom, so she and I adopted our son 17 years ago. There were pioneering mentors all around us so we did not have to break ground.

The toughest part for me was that my son was presenting androgynously, wearing make-up on a regular basis.

About 14 years later, I crossed paths with PFLAG again, after our son came out. Don't think that a Lesbian mom who had lived for over 30 years in the community would just automatically be 100% accepting of a gay son. The toughest part for me was that he was presenting androgynously, wearing make-up on a regular basis. I sought out PFLAG to gain understanding and acceptance of my son's authentic self, as it is evolving. I learned that as it was easy for me to love and support the kids of the PFLAG parents in the support groups, it wasn't long before it translated to total support for my own son.

I consider myself fortunate to have found the resources to help my family. I then wanted to give back to the larger LA community and joined the Speakers Bureau

about 3 years ago. We primarily talk to High School students whose teachers have asked us to share our stories with them. It is a very non-threatening, personal exchange where we are able to answer questions, and begin the dialogue that helps people gain respect and acceptance for all. I was honored to take on the Speakers Bureau Coordinator position last year.

I don't want to skip over two important milestones for our family. Margie and I were able to legally marry in 2008, and then our California marriage became federally recognized this past June. The hard work and dedication of thousands of LGBT people and allies, including PFLAG, made our hopes and dreams of equal treatment under the law and within society come true. However, we must remember that if we moved to Kentucky, our marriage would not be recognized there.

People who attend PFLAG events become family to each other. The passion we feel for protecting our families spurs us on to advocacy for all of the LGBT community, particularly the most vulnerable of us, the kids who are coming out younger and younger and the trans and gender non-conforming people.

I want to take a moment here to highlight the needs for support for trans and gender non-conforming of all ages. I will admit that, initially, I didn't quite understand how sexual identity related to gender identity, and yet once again, as a member of PFLAG, I have been enlightened.

PFLAG Los Angeles is an all volunteer organization. I am amazed each and every day by the dedication and effort of all of those who participate. I have asked myself what fuels our group and the answer that came to me is no one can get between loving moms and dads and their LGBT children's quest for equal rights and respect. It is like getting between a bear and her cub.

Quote - Unquote

*"To me, the most important thing is to let them know that you love them. These kids need that kind of support, they don't want to be ostracized especially at home with their own families... So it was important for us to make sure that he knew... that we loved him and we supported him 100 percent."
-Cookie Johnson, wife of Magic Johnson, regarding their gay son E.J.*

SUPPORT

MEETINGS CONTACTS ORGANIZATIONS

PFLAG LOS ANGELES MEETINGS

WESTWOOD*

Westwood United Methodist Church
10497 Wilshire Bl. LA 90024

3rd Wednesday of each month
7:30 - 10:00 pm / Free Parking

*Visit our website for upcoming speakers
www.pflagLA.org

SILVER LAKE

Metropolitan Community Church
4607 Prospect Avenue, LA 90027

2nd Thursday of each month
7:30 - 9:00 pm / Street Parking

COMING IN 2014

Our New PFLAG So Cal Español Website and Support Meetings in Boyle Heights
www.SoCalEspañol.org

CONTACTS

PFLAG Los Angeles Speakers Bureau
Contact Liz Mullen at
SpeakersBureau@pflagla.org

HELPLINES

PFLAG Los Angeles & Pasadena
1.888.PFLAG 88 (1.888.735.2488)
English and Spanish

Transgender Support
818.985.9319 (Chris)

The TREVOR PROJECT
24-hour suicide prevention line
866.488.7386
www.thetrevorproject.org

ORGANIZATIONS

PFLAG National
202.467.8180
www.pflag.org

REMEMBER

When you no longer need PFLAG that's when PFLAG NEEDS YOU!

www.pflagLA.org



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

FALL 2013

TransAction

AB 1266 - School Success and Opportunity Act

They're going at it again. The typical suspects. They don't seem to understand what transgender means. Because they are calling for support in their crusade to "Keep Boys Out of Girls' Showers" and "Keep Girls out of Boys' Showers". They claim that boys will falsely state that they're transgender to force their way into girls' showers to see them nude. (Are they referring to their own sons who might do such a thing?) Now, would such behavior be appropriate usage of showers and restrooms or inappropriate usage? Because that's what their concern comes down to: the inappropriate use of facilities which ALWAYS should be unacceptable, no matter who is using a facility in an inappropriate way. This should apply to non-transgender kids as well as to transgender kids who are too often under attack BECAUSE they use or are forced to use a facility according to their birth gender.

The newly founded group "Privacy for all Students" is once more preying on an ill-informed public (the blind leading the blind, so to speak) to raise money and fear on the backs of transgender kids. They are well organized and it looks like they have collected enough signatures to put AB 1266 up for a vote next year in an effort to repeal the law. They are the same folks who failed in their attempt to ban same-sex marriage in our state. Let's not allow them to sell out transgender students who, too, deserve a fair chance when it comes to education in our public school system.

Speaker John A. Pérez Strongly Supports AB 1266:

John A. Pérez, Speaker of the California State Assembly, released the following statement on November 11 in support of AB 1266: "This law is about making sure there is a safe place for transgender students to fully participate in their schools. For too long, transgender members of our society have suffered through the indignity of exclusion, and this bill rights those wrongs by

giving protections that would keep transgender students safe and give them recognition for who they truly are. I will continue my work in protecting the rights of all Californians – gay, lesbian, straight or transgender – to ensure that no one is left without a voice."

Separate Pageants For Transgender Women?

Here is the response from newly crowned Miss Universe Gabriela Isler to the question whether transgender people should be able to compete in international pageants, as posed by HuffPost Live host Ahmed Shihab-Eldin: "They should have their own pageant, I think, and maybe they can realize in this pageant, Miss Universe, or the other pageants [were] made for women," she said. "They are... they have the opportunity, but I think that they have to compete with the same... the same team. Right?" *From: The Huffington Post*

[Note from the editor: It is not clear to me what Ms. Isler means by "compete with the same." After all, there are transwomen where even gynecologists can't tell the difference between them and biological women.]