

# PFLAG ORLANDO

*Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends.*

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Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends. This is done 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.

**Support meetings** are held on the third Wednesday of the Month at the First United Methodist Church of Downtown Orlando 142 East Jackson Street, Orlando, FL, Wesley Building, Room 205 and start at 7:30pm

**Our next meeting is September 19, 2007.**

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## **Sheehan will have gay challenger by Scott Maxwell**

Seven years ago, Democrat Patty Sheehan rocked the Orlando establishment when she ousted an incumbent and became the city's first openly gay council member.

Most everyone predicted she'd face campaign challenges down the road. And now she has one -- though not what many expected.

Her challenger, you see, is another openly gay Democrat.

[orlandosentinel.com](http://orlandosentinel.com)

## **Presidential Hopefuls Sound Off on Gay Rights**

By Joel Wendland

Democratic candidates have earned high marks for supporting LGBT equality, according to a report released last week by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, examining the positions of all the presidential candidates on LGBT issues.

The report looked at the voting records and campaign statements of both Republican and Democratic candidates on issues such as a transgender inclusive anti-discrimination law, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, lifting the anti-gay military ban, transgender inclusive hate crimes laws, civil unions, domestic partnerships, marriage equality, adoption, and the Federal Marriage Amendment.

The clearest result of the study is that while Democratic candidates have a mixed record on equality for LGBT people, they appear to be open to expanding civil rights for LGBT people.

All of the Democratic candidates scored well across the board in the study, but only Rep. Dennis Kucinich (OH) earned a perfect score for his views on the issues.

The only point where most Democratic candidates parted ways with the civil rights organization was on the question of same-sex marriage.

[politicalaffairs.net](http://politicalaffairs.net)

**Sex matters**

If you don't accept gay people as sexual beings, you don't accept us at all. We deserve better — from our families, our churches and our government.

By LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

JUL. 13, 2007

Last month, I spent a week in Florida for a reunion of my dad's side of my family. With 26 adults and 10 kids all staying in the same big beach house, bedroom space was at a premium, so my parents' generation doled out room assignments.

Two of my cousins were allowed to bring the people they were dating, but my aunt forbid them from sharing a bedroom because they aren't married — despite the fact that they are all over 30 years old. My partner and I were secretly pleased that no one has ever challenged us sharing a room, even at our first family reunion nine years ago. Luckily, my relatives seem to realize that we're as married as we're legally allowed to get, which is basically not at all here in Georgia.

Many gay people, even some with supposedly "accepting" parents, aren't so lucky. Some gay couples are allowed to bring their partners to their parents' homes, but not to spend the night. Or they may spend the night only in separate bedrooms. Or they are given the same room, but one with twin beds.

These personal examples mirror a larger cultural issue. Perhaps it's a sign of progress that in a society in love with buzzwords like "diversity" and "tolerance," it's increasingly unacceptable to simply say that you don't like or approve of gay people.

But too often, even our alleged "allies" seem willing to accept us only by trying to ignore what makes us gay: we actually are romantically and (gasp!) sexually attracted to people of the same sex.

From "Will & Grace" to some church and government policies, gay is okay — as long as we take the sex out.

Atlanta pastor Bradley Schmeling, and all other gay people who feel called to Lutheran ministry, this week fell victim to exactly this sort of willful blindness to the importance of romance and sex to all people, including gay people.

Schmeling is pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Like many Protestant denominations, the ELCA is deeply divided between those who want full acceptance of gay people, and those who believe homosexuality is a sin.

In order to avoid the kind of schism that now threatens to split the gay-supportive Episcopal Church (USA) from the worldwide Anglican Communion, several of these denominations have adopted compromise policies that attempt to "welcome" gay people without really welcoming all of that sinful gay sex.

"The ELCA has acted to welcome gay and lesbian people to participate fully in the life of its congregations and to reject discrimination, assault, and harassment of gay and lesbian persons," the denomination states on its website.

But that invitation to "participate fully in the life of its congregations" doesn't extend to bestowing blessings on gay unions like those routinely given to heterosexual marriages. And it doesn't stop the church from discriminating against pastors who actually want to live full lives, including full romantic lives.

"Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships," states ELCA's Visions & Expectations of Ordained Ministers.

As the ELCA Definitions & Guidelines for Discipline explain, "The biblical understanding which this church affirms is that the normative setting for sexual intercourse is marriage. In keeping with this understanding, chastity before marriage and fidelity within marriage are the norm."

Sound familiar? This creates the same Catch-22 faced by gay youth subjected to ineffective "abstinence until marriage" AIDS education in school: you can't have sex until you're married, and by the way, gay people can't get married, so you can't have sex ever.

And chastity before and fidelity within a committed gay union isn't acceptable. After the ELCA Definitions & Guidelines policy denounces adultery, promiscuity and sexual abuse, it continues: "Practicing homosexual persons are precluded from the ordained ministry of this church."

"Practicing homosexual," of course, means having sex. Leaving aside the deeply offensive lumping together of committed gay relationships and sexual abuse, the ELCA policy fails the test of logic. If it is okay to be gay, why isn't it okay to act on those feelings? If it is okay for church members to be in gay relationships, why not church leaders?

These kinds of compromise policies end up satisfying neither side. Those who believe homosexuality is a sin end up forced to feign acceptance for people they really don't accept in any meaningful way.

Meanwhile, gay pastors are forced into a situation similar to another failed compromise, the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Here again, the "self-understanding" of being gay doesn't preclude someone from service, as long as they keep that understanding to themselves.

Like gay soldiers, gay pastors are expected to not act on their sexual orientation, and not tell anyone if they do.

The reward for those who would prefer to live honestly — like Rev. Schmeling and the almost 12,000 people discharged from the military under DADT — is unemployment.

I'm not arguing, like some of our opponents, that being gay is "just about sex." If that were the case, most of us wouldn't qualify to be called gay nearly as often as we'd like.

But completely divorcing gay identity or gay rights from gay sex ignores a key aspect — the key aspect — of what makes us gay.

It allows us to do things like agree to compromise policies that actually seek to erase our right to lead full and open lives, or to comply in the oppression of other sexual minorities.

This article first appeared in Southern Voice, Atlanta's LGBT newspaper [www.sovo.com](http://www.sovo.com) and was reprinted with permission.

### Mayor can cross toilet paper off shopping list

Gay activists are outraged over Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jim Naugle's comments about gay sex in public restrooms. Naugle told the Miami Herald that a new \$250,000 self-cleaning robotic toilet for the beach could cut down on sex in bathrooms because it would be single-occupancy. Now the gay rights group Equality Florida is encouraging people to mail toilet paper to the mayor. Group spokesman Brian Windfield told the Herald it would help the mayor "wipe his dirty mind clean." One nifty feature is an optional timer that opens the stall door after a set period.

[sptimes.com](http://sptimes.com)

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### Gay Allies Form Group In Florida Marriage Battle by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

Posted: July 11, 2007 - 3:30 pm ET

(Tallahassee, Florida) A new organization made up mainly of people who are not gay has amassed more than \$1 million to battle a proposed amendment to the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage.

Florida Red & Blue boasts both Democrats and Republicans among its members. The organization says that the proposed amendment could be devastating not only for gay and lesbian couples but also for unmarried opposite-sex couples who live together.

The group says it needs 18,000 more signatures by February to get the amendment on next year's ballot.

[365gay.com](http://365gay.com)

### Equality Florida: LGBT community outraged by Daytona murder

Represents the Latest Victim of Brutal Anti-LGBT Hate Crimes in Florida

DAYTONA -- Equality Florida today expressed deep sorrow and outrage at the Sunday morning murder apparently motivated by anti-gay and anti-transgender bigotry.

Troubling also are early reports that the accused killer is using the "homo-panic" defense, claiming an unwanted sexual advance led to the shooting.

According to police reports, Oscar Mosqueda, 34, was shot in the head around 2:20 a.m. following an argument with Cesar Israel Villazano, 18, of DeLand, the police report stated. Mosqueda was transported to Halifax Medical Center, and died about noon Sunday, police said.

miamiherald.typepad.com

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### Anti-Gay Lawmaker Tries to Buy Oral Sex From Man From Staff & Wire Services

Posted Aug. 10, 2007 - A Florida Republican, known for his staunch anti-gay positions, got busted recently for allegedly trying to buy some oral sex for 20 bucks in a park washroom from an undercover cop.

So why did he Bob Allen do it?

He says because he was afraid of the numerous Black men at the park. "I certainly wasn't there to have sex with anybody and certainly wasn't there to exchange money for it," the 48-year-old Allen told officers.

bet.com

### Should state ban same-sex marriage?

Some people say yes, others say a constitutional ban will affect heterosexuals, too.

By J. Taylor Rushing, Capital Bureau Chief

TALLAHASSEE - From where John Stemberger sits, the prospects for putting a same-sex marriage ban in the Florida constitution are very bright.

Stemberger is an Orlando attorney leading Florida4Marriage.org, the group working to send voters a proposed constitutional amendment on the subject on the November 2008 ballot.

"There are boxes and boxes of petitions piled as high as the ceiling in the hallway outside my office," said Stemberger, also head of the Orlando-based Florida Family Policy Council Inc. "We're definitely going to have way more than we need."

Sometime in the coming weeks, Stemberger said his group intends to submit the petitions - a total of 611,009 signatures are required, but Stemberger estimates he has 750,000. The Florida Supreme Court has already approved the amendment's language.

jacksonville.com

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### Try a Tryst -- martini, that is -

Southern Nights on Bumby Avenue in Orlando shut down last week, due to supposed unpaid tax issues. The popular gay/bi/lesbian bar had been a staple for many years and not only catered to its target audience well, but also made everyone who entered feel comfortable and have a great time. It will be missed.

orlandosentinel.com

**Former 'ex-gay' leaders change their tune**

ELIZABETH PERRY

Three former "ex-gay" leaders were scheduled to make public apologies Wednesday in Los Angeles for the harm their ministries caused gays and lesbians, and will call for those still involved in ex-gay therapy to acknowledge their part.

Michael Bussee, one of the founders of the ex-gay movement; Darlene Bogle, former director of Paraclete, a California-based ex-gay ministry; and Jeremy Marks, a former president of Exodus International Europe, will issue the apology to coincide with Exodus International's annual Freedom Conference going on this week at Concordia Lutheran University in Irvine, Calif.

washblade.com

**AMA Mends Trans Stance / Queerty**

Trans rights got a dose of good - and largely unnoticed - medicine from the American Medical Association earlier this month when the healers amended their non-discrimination policy to include transgender folk.

The report, released after the docs' House of Delegates meeting in Chicago, admitted the allegedly helpful profession's short comings:

Transgender individuals face complex medical, psychological, and social issues. Within the health care system issues of discrimination and unique access barriers to important medical and social support services can occur. queerty.com

**In The Life** is a national television series in a newsmagazine format that reports on LGBT issues and culture. <http://www.inthelifetv.org/>

WMFE Channel 24 Orlando

"Looking Back, Moving Forward"

Wednesday, September 5, 11:00 PM

**Methodist Court To Consider Case Of Transgender Pastor**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) -- The highest court for the United Methodist Church is taking up the case of a minister who changed gender from female to male.

The Reverend Ann Gordon had spent five years as minister at St. John's United Methodist Church in Baltimore before undergoing surgery and hormone therapy to become the Reverend Drew Phoenix.

todaysthv.com

**State victories hearten rights leaders**

The U.S. same-sex marriage debate has created an oddly divided America, with only the country's Northeast corner and Pacific Coast recognizing same-sex unions. But gay rights leaders are encouraged by progress on other parts of their agenda across the American heartland.

Three states -- Oregon, Iowa and Colorado -- have enacted laws this year outlawing discrimination against gays, raising the total to 20 states that account for more than half the U.S. population. Twelve of those states extend those protections to transgender people. planetout.com

**Church cancels memorial for gay Navy vet**

By ANGELA K. BROWN Associated Press Writer  
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ARLINGTON, Texas — A megachurch canceled a memorial service for a Navy veteran 24 hours before it was to start because the deceased was gay.

Officials at the nondenominational High Point Church knew that Cecil Howard Sinclair was gay when they offered to host his service, said his sister, Kathleen Wright. But after his obituary listed his life partner as one of his survivors, she said, it was called off.

"It's a slap in the face. It's like, 'Oh, we're sorry he died, but he's gay so we can't help you,'" she said Friday.

chron.com

### Wash. gay couples line up for new rights

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Dozens of gay and lesbian couples lined up to register as domestic partners Monday as a new Washington state law went into effect.

The secretary of state's office registered the first couple shortly after opening its doors at 8 a.m.

A crowd of about 100 gathered outside the building counting down the minutes, then sent up a cheer as the doors were opened.

Couples that register as domestic partners get enhanced rights including hospital visitation, the ability to authorize autopsies and organ donations, and the ability to inherit in the absence of a will. They won't get all the rights that traditionally married couples have, though, and the state's registry is not the same as civil unions offered to gay couples in other states.

In order to register, couples must share a home, not be married or in a domestic relationship with someone else, and be at least 18.

usatoday.com

### N.M. Gays Can Marry in Massachusetts

By JAY LINDSAY | Associated Press Writer

BOSTON - Gay couples from New Mexico can marry in Massachusetts because their home state has not explicitly banned same-sex marriage, Massachusetts officials say.

New Mexico joins Rhode Island as the only states whose gay residents are allowed to marry in Massachusetts, the only state that has legalized same-sex marriage. But neither Rhode Island nor New Mexico has said it would recognize the marriages after its residents return home.

orlandosentinel.com

### Wal-Mart ends support for LGBT groups

Gay & Lesbian Leadership SmartBrief

Retail giant Wal-Mart, facing the threat of a conservative boycott and opposition from some employees, is no longer supporting LGBT groups. Advocate.com (06/25)

smartbrief.com

### Plugged In: Protecting transgender workers from bias - Jul. 24, 2007

A 2007 "State of the Workplace" report just published by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) says that 125 of the Fortune 500 companies now specifically prohibit job discrimination against transgender employees. Five years ago, only 15 of the Fortune 500 promised to protect transgender people from on-the-job bias.

money.cnn.com

### UPS IN N.J. OFFERS GAY PARTNER BENEFITS

After persuasion from New Jersey's governor and attorney general, UPS Inc. said yesterday that it would extend health insurance benefits to the civil union partners of gay employees in New Jersey who are covered by a union contract. The policy change has to do with New Jersey's civil unions law, which took effect in February, and seeks to give gay couples the same rights in the state as married couples. Gov. Jon S. Corzine sent Atlanta-based UPS a letter on July 20 asking the shipping company to change its stance. UPS spokesman Norman Black said the company is reviewing its policies in Connecticut and Vermont, which also offer civil unions. Management and administrative staff in the company nationwide already receive domestic partnership benefits.

kentucky.com

Several news sites move articles behind firewall creating broken links. Please go to their site and use the search boxes to find more on articles found here.