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national news

Suspicion of HIV is grounds for arrest in North Dakota

Lawmakers in North Dakota have approved a law giving judges the power to detain a person without a hearing and force him or her to have a blood test for HIV, according to an American Civil Liberties Union press release. Gov. Edward Schafer signed the measure on April 10.

The law, which takes effect on July 1, stipulates that a person who believes another individual has significantly exposed him or her to blood may obtain a state court order confining that individual for up to five days—whether or not



criminal charges have been filed—and request that a judge order an HIV test. The law defines "person" as a police officer, firefighter, emergency medical technician, health care worker or a patient. The ACLU is considering a challenge to the measure.

"This law is way over the top," said Keith Elston, executive director of the ACLU of the Dakotas, in the press release. "It completely violates people's most basic rights, while addressing none of the health concerns raised."

If the ACLU decides to challenge, the press statement says, it will argue that the measure violates rules of due process and the Fourth Amendment guarantee against unreasonable search and seizure. The statement further says the bill's lack of guidance to courts on how the results of the forced HIV test will be kept confidential raises important questions about individual privacy.

The legislation stems from an incident in Minot, N.D., in which a police officer was exposed to blood during an emergency call and later requested an HIV test when he realized he also had a scratch on his arm. The subject tested positive, but the officer has not.

Matt Coles, director of the ACLU's National AIDS Project said, "The only way that officers and others can know if they haven't been infected is to get tested themselves. While it may satisfy our curiosity to know the other person's HIV status, those results don't tell us anything about our own health."

Children of lesbian parents well-adjusted, studies find

Children born to artificially inseminated lesbian couples are just as emotionally healthy and well-adjusted as those raised by heterosexual parents, according to three studies released April 2 at a national meeting of the Society for Research on Child Development. The studies, conducted in the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands, found no discernible difference in the emotional development—as measured by standard psychological assessments—of children raised in lesbian or mixed-gender households, according to an Associated Press report.

Most of the children in the lesbian families had been conceived at fertility clinics, as were some of the heterosexuals' children, but the studies also compared these groups with children conceived conventionally and once again found "no significant differences" in adjustment or behavior.

"The children of insemination are developing normally whether in lesbian or heterosexual families..." said Raymond W. Chan of the University of Virginia.

Fiona Tasker of Birkbeck College in the Netherlands said her study revealed that nonbiological lesbian parents generally were more active participants in child rearing than fathers in heterosexual couples. Ninety percent of the lesbian co-parents assisted with everyday child-raising tasks and 60 percent were involved in disciplining the kids, compared with 37 percent and 20 percent, respectively, for fathers.

Another University of Virginia scientist, Charlotte J. Patterson, noted that "the existing body of research [on lesbian parenting] is relatively sparse and open to criticism." She said the samples used were small and many of the lesbian couples had volunteered for the research, which could have influenced the results. She added that because the children in the studies were age 9 and younger, it is too soon to determine if having homosexual parents will affect their sexual orientation.

Gay Buddhists ask Dalai Lama to clarify his views on same-sex love

Many gay men and lesbians who turned to Buddhism thinking it an open, nonjudgmental religion have been stung by passages in the Dalai Lama's book *Beyond Dogma*, published last year, that call oral and anal sex "improper" and off limits for both men and women. According to a story in the *San Francisco Examiner*, the passages in question refer to Buddhist teachings that are thousands of years old and restrict intercourse in other ways, such as prohibiting sex near temples or during daylight hours. Interestingly, having

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