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**NATIONAL news  
BRIEFS**

**ALASKA**

Calling the measure a threat to public health, Democratic Gov. Tony Knowles vetoed a bill June 19 that would have criminalized the transmission of HIV.

According to the *Anchorage Daily News*, the proposed offense, a felony, would have applied to HIV-positive people who voluntarily engaged in intimate contact with another person, even if the virus was not transmitted. HIV-positive people who donated blood or tissue also would have been charged.



"This bill is a threat to public health, is unnecessary and is simply an attack on those Alaskans who need treatment, compassion and confidence in our public health system—not prosecution," Knowles said.

**CALIFORNIA**

On June 11, a Stanislaus County court nullified the arrest of a man who solicited sex from an undercover police decoy during a sting operation in a Modesto park.

According to the *Modesto Bee*, Superior Court Judge Al Girolami's ruling cited a 1996 California Supreme Court decision that, in essence, found such sting operations to be discriminatory if they singled out gay people.

Bruce W. Nickerson, the attorney who won the 1996 decision as well as this recent decision, argued police rarely use decoys to ferret out heterosexuals who may be engaging in lewd acts in public places. He said that after reviewing three years of Modesto court records, he was unable to find a single arrest in which police used decoys to arrest heterosexuals for solicitation without money being involved.

**NEW YORK**

Under legislation approved June 19, doctors throughout the state must report the names of people living with HIV and AIDS and notify their sexual partners.

According to The Associated Press, the state Assembly passed the sweeping notification measure 112-34 after two hours of heated debate that pitted civil liberties concerns against public health needs.

Under the legislation, health care workers must try to get HIV-positive patients to identify any former sexual partners who may be at risk and then notify them. Currently, doctors have the option of telling partners about the virus in some cases, but health workers say they fear lawsuits if they do so.

Critics say requiring such reporting will deter some people from seeking testing and treatment.

Public health officials argue the notification program could help stem the spread of HIV.



Mayor Rudolph Giuliani credited gay men and lesbians June 22 with playing an important role in New York City's turnaround, saying the Big Apple had grown stronger by embracing diversity.

"Our society has to be better off as we go through sometimes the pain of opening society up, so that everyone gets a chance to make their maximum contribution," the mayor said during a ceremony recognizing gay men and lesbians working in city government.

"When you think back to 100 years ago, when lots of people were excluded from government, some based on race, some based on gender, some based on sexual orientation, we were working with half or less than half of the potential talent that was available," Giuliani said.

"Maybe that's one of the reasons why the city does so much better now than it did 20 and 30 and 40 years ago," the mayor added.

In a proclamation, the Republican mayor declared June 22 "Out in Government Day," part of the commemoration of queer pride month.

**NORTH CAROLINA**

Asheville was a busy town in June, holding a pride march early in the month, followed by the Families United for Biblical Values Weekend just a few days later.

According to the *Hendersonville Times-News*, about 3,000 people attended the latter event.

Among those in attendance was Robert Knight of the Washington, D.C.-based Family Research Council.

"In this corner...is the gay rights movement," he said. "They have a single-minded passion for changing this country. In the other corner we have the family values fighter.... There are a lot of people out there in America who are desperate for somebody to stand up and say 'no' to homosexual activities and 'yes' to family values."

**PENNSYLVANIA**

A June 11 *Philadelphia Daily News* report says the WashWest Neighbors Association succeeded in thwarting the opening of a gay show bar in a central city neighborhood.

In denying a liquor license for the site, Philadelphia Common Pleas Judge Stephen E. Levin Jr. claimed Vincent Massarelli, the club owner, was "not a reputable individual" and had lied on his liquor license application.

Association president Ruthanne Madway responded positively to the decision: "We've stopped something that was very negative and, hopefully, set the stage for something positive at this site."

The location, reportedly popular with prostitutes and drug addicts, is just a few blocks away from the Avenue of the Arts, a \$330 million redevelopment project, and is close to several other queer bars.

**WISCONSIN**

While the sexual minority communities recognized June as a month to express pride, Wisconsin Christians United used the time to try to "reverse the tide of evil that's infiltrated our country," says the organization's director, Ralph Ovadal.

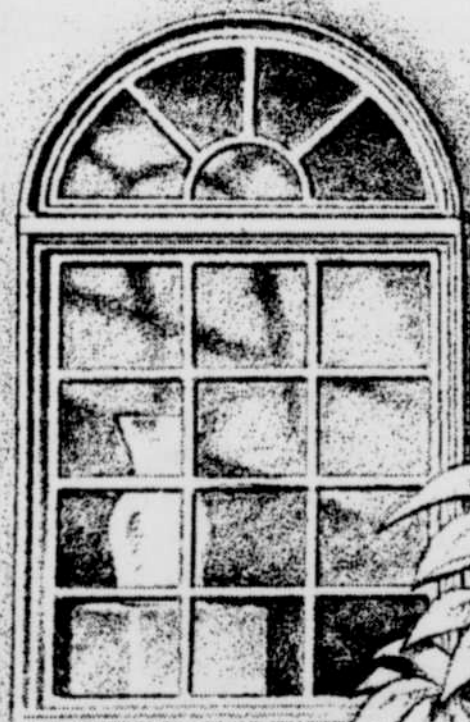
The group attacked the perceived evil by posting the message "Homosexuality is not a family value. Homosexuality is a sin!" on five billboards around the state, reports the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*.

One of the group's aims is to recriminalize homosexual sex in Wisconsin, according to Ovadal.

"Christians need to battle against evil so that we can live in a world that's not taken over by these sexual perverts," he laments.

■ Compiled by WILL O'BRYAN and INGA SORENSON

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