

mitted because the other student liked to listen to the British rock band Queen, a band Rogers termed a "gay band."

All three are students at Northfield Mount Hermon School, a coeducational school with approximately 1,100 students located in Gill, a small western Massachusetts town.

According to Gill Police Chief David Hastings, the wounds were deep enough to draw blood. "When I saw them they were three days old and they were still very visible," he says. "The letters were four to five inches high and ran all the way across his back."

Shapiro and Rogers have both pleaded innocent to charges of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, assault with intent to maim and assault with intent to intimidate resulting in bodily harm.

The third charge makes the incident a hate crime. If convicted, the suspects would be required to undergo counseling and diversity training.

Both Shapiro and Rogers have been released on bail. Each faces a maximum sentence of 25 years in prison if convicted.

NATIONAL

By a 2-1 vote, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled the Americans with Disabilities Act does not apply to the content of insurance policies, even if the policies are discriminatory.

The majority ruled that, while the ADA prohibits businesses from excluding people with disabilities altogether, it does not prohibit businesses from offering the disabled inferior services, according to a June 3 press release from the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and the AIDS Legal Council of Chicago.



The ruling involves insurance policies issued by Mutual of Omaha to two men with HIV. Although the insurance giant insures other serious illnesses for up to \$1 million, in these cases it put a lifetime ceiling for HIV-related coverage at \$100,000 for one man and \$25,000 for the second man.

This ruling overturns a lower-court ruling that prohibited the restrictions placed on the two men's coverage.

Commenting on the ruling, Heather C. Sawyer, a Lambda staff attorney, said: "Insurance policies place all sorts of across-the-board limitations on coverage to reduce costs. However, singling out a disability and refusing to cover expenses from it is unprecedented. Discrimination is the only possible explanation for such cruel limits."

AIDS Legal Council of Chicago Executive Director Ann Fisher added: "This tortured interpretation of the ADA will affect all policy holders. The ruling gives the entire insurance industry broad license to institute coverage caps on any health problem it chooses, regardless of the real costs of care. For people with AIDS, it legalizes irrational discrimination by health insurers."

Because of the coverage restrictions the two men face, they must consider the possibility of foregoing state-of-the-art therapies that could prolong their lives.

NEVADA

With a stroke of the pen, Gov. Kenny Guinn signed into law a bill prohibiting job discrimination based on sexual orientation, reports a May 29 Associated Press story.



"Signing this bill was a matter of fairness and doing what's right for the people of Nevada. Discrimination based on race, gender, religion or sexual orientation is wrong and I hope this law sends that message loud and clear," said Guinn, Nevada's first Republican governor in 16 years.

Assemblyman David Parks, D-Las Vegas, the only openly gay member of the Legislature, sponsored the bill, which becomes effective Oct. 1.

Nevada is the 11th state to enact an employment nondiscrimination law.

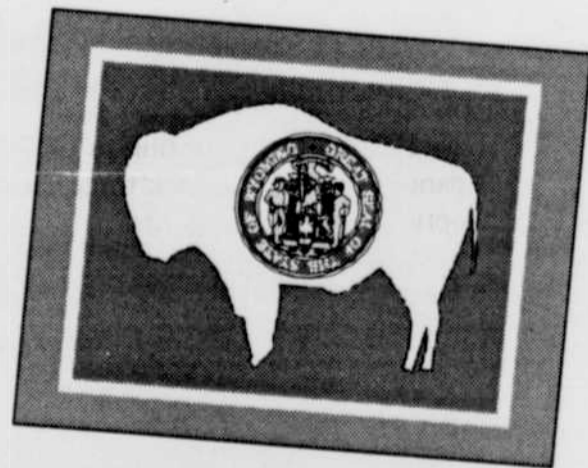
Tax-exempt organizations, like the Boy Scouts, are exempt from the law.

WYOMING

When Aaron McKinney stands trial in Laramie for the October murder of gay University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard, it is possible he will plead not guilty by reason of insanity, according to recent media reports.

McKinney is one of two men charged in Shepard's murder. Russell Henderson pleaded guilty in April to felony murder and was given two life sentences. McKinney, who faces the death penalty if convicted, is scheduled to go on trial Oct. 11.

Prosecutor Cal Rerucha's motion to seal all the files in the case was granted by Judge Barton Voigt. The motion was granted because of recent news stories concerning McKinney's criminal history, allegations that he threatened a judge and an attorney, and that he offered to have a woman's former husband killed.



Voigt also ordered attorneys involved in the case to stop talking to the media.

Both men's girlfriends were present at the alleged murder. Last month Henderson's girlfriend, Chastity Vera Pasley, 20, was sentenced to up to two years in prison for helping conceal evidence. Pasley was charged with being an accessory after the fact to first-degree murder.

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