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NATIONAL news

NATIONAL

Rolling Stone did a pretty dumbass thing in its current issue.

The magazine printed an article in which President Clinton refers to the gays in the military policy as "dumbass." It later attributed the vulgarity to a transcription error.

"The words 'don't ask' were printed as 'dumbass' in our interview," managing editor Robert Love said in a statement. Regardless, Clinton was strongly critical of the policy.

"We couldn't agree more," said C. Dixon Osburn, co-executive director of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, a nonprofit group founded shortly after implementation of the policy in 1993. "President Clinton clearly sees what so many other leaders and, more importantly, American citizens, already know: 'Don't ask, don't tell' simply does not work."

In the interview by *Rolling Stone* editor Jann S. Wenner, Clinton admits the policy resulted in "several years of problems where it was not implemented in any way consistent with the speech I gave" announcing its adoption. He goes on to say "don't ask, don't tell" was "a brilliant political move" by Republicans who "didn't want me to have a honeymoon" during the early days of his administration. He notes that Gen. Colin Powell agreed with his original remarks on how the policy would work but makes clear in the interview that those intentions were not carried out.

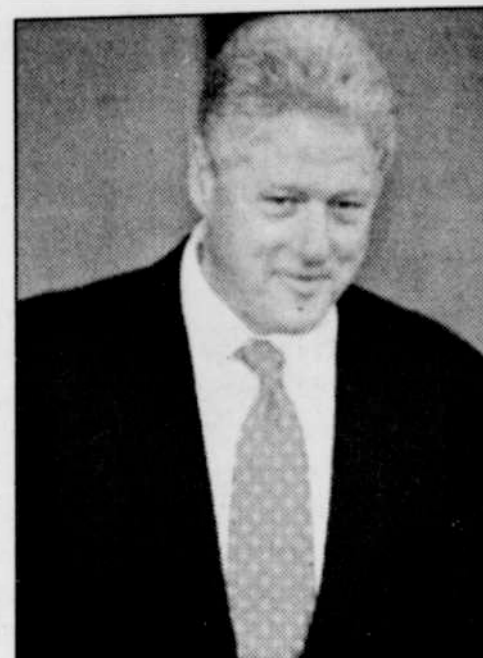
"The president is correct that the policy has not been and currently is not being properly implemented," Osburn said. "Commanders continue to ask, pursue and harass."

The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network announced Dec. 4 the opening of its Office for Public Policy in Washington, D.C. The office will identify federal, state and local public policy strategies and expand the organization's work with the Education Department and mainstream education organizations.

"Over the past few years educational policy leaders and elected officials have begun to wake up to the reality that LGBT students and staff exist and need support," said public policy director Mary Kate (MK) Cullen, who joined GLSEN's staff last March. "In opening an office in the nation's capital, we're better positioned than ever to build coalitions, influence the federal government and stakeholder organizations and articulate a clear strategy for national change."

The office will provide leadership in mapping out the states and communities in which GLSEN will leverage resources to pass safe schools legislation, expand nondiscrimination policies or fight anti-gay initiatives. It also will bring together academics and activists to identify research gap areas and strategies to fill them.

"As GLSEN's reputation within educational communities has grown, so has the need for... a strong and steady presence in Washington," executive director Kevin Jennings said. Cullen's "grassroots experience and commitment to progressive social justice organizing will help to bring about a safer school day for LGBT youth around the country."



President Clinton

GEORGIA

Atanta has become the first city in Georgia to enact a comprehensive nondiscrimination law that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.

City Councilor Cathy Woolard authored the bill and spearheaded its passage Dec. 4 by an overwhelming vote of 14 to 1. Mayor Bill Campbell signed the measure Dec. 12.

Woolard became Georgia's first openly gay or lesbian elected official in 1997 and is the only openly gay or lesbian member of the council. She is also a leading candidate for president of the City Council in 2001.

"All of Atlanta's citizens deserve equal protection from unfair discrimination in all of its forms, and that is what this inclusive law is about," Woolard said. "Those who supported this common-sense measure can be proud of this triumph for all of Atlanta. This legislation, which brings our nondiscrimination ordinances in line with other major cities across the country, is a tribute to our city's core values of fairness and equality."

Prior to the new law's enactment, citizens were covered by a patchwork of protections that had large gaps, especially in the areas of sexual orientation and gender identity—and no one had the right to pursue legal action against perpetrators of discrimination. The legislation, which covers private employment, housing and public accommodations, expressly includes a private right of action.

"The enactment of this new nondiscrimination law is a victory for all of Atlanta's families and a testament to the progress we can

make for equal rights when gay and straight public servants work openly and honestly together," said Brian K. Bond, Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund executive director. "Also, the inclusiveness of the legislation advances the growing public understanding that faith and fairness go together—that religious liberty



Cathy Woolard

and freedom from all forms of discrimination are complimentary values."

The American Dental Association and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission are among the organizations challenging the firing of a hygienist with HIV. They argue an Atlanta-area office had no valid medical or legal reason to terminate Spencer Waddell, whose skills, training and use of standard precautions ensure the safety of his clinical practice.

"What happened to Spencer Waddell was based on fear, not facts, about HIV and AIDS," said Ruth E. Harlow, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund legal director. "The experts speaking out for Spencer have an important education message for the court and the public that people with HIV can and do safely work in health care. Hysteria and ignorance should not take away a qualified professional's job."

Waddell, 37, was fired in 1997 after his HIV status was revealed to his employer. Lambda sued Valley Forge Dental Associates for violat-