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NATIONAL news

NATIONAL

Anthony D. Romero, a Ford Foundation executive and public interest attorney, will become the first Latino and openly gay man to head the American Civil Liberties Union.

"I hope to begin my tenure as the leader of this vitally important organization by sparking a new dialogue about the bedrock values of American democracy," the 35-year-old said. "My overarching goal is to promote a new generation of committed civil libertarians and civil rights activists. Even though we have come so far, our nation faces serious and continuing civil liberties challenges: widespread racial profiling, threats to reproductive freedom, hostility to immigrants, a burgeoning prison population and, most importantly, a generation of young people who do not fully embrace or appreciate the need for constant vigilance and defense of our constitutional freedoms."

Born in the Bronx of immigrant Puerto Rican parents, Romero is fluent in Spanish. He graduated from Stanford Law School and Princeton University.

As to issues, Romero said, "First and most importantly, the ACLU's commitment to free speech must be undiminished." But he added that other core concerns—including religious liberty, reproductive freedom and women's rights, racial justice, immigrants' rights and lesbian and gay equality—also will require increased attention and resources.

Romero said his commitment to civil rights, civil liberties and social justice comes from his life experience. "My memories of discrimination, homophobia and poverty stand in sharp contrast to the dignity and love I got from my family."

Romero will start work at the ACLU's national headquarters in lower Manhattan in September. A native New Yorker, he lives in Manhattan with his partner.

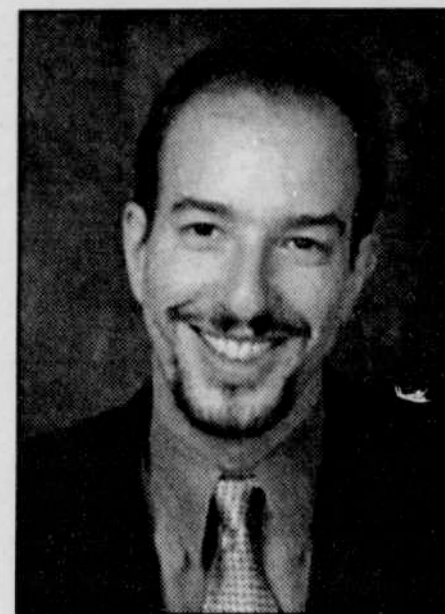
Home Depot, the world's largest home improvement retailer, caved in after an outcry from customers and shareholders and agreed May 11 to add sexual orientation to its nondiscrimination policy rather than face a divisive shareholder resolution.

"Home Depot made a good business decision by deciding to add the words 'sexual orientation' to its nondiscrimination policy," said Kim I. Mills, Human Rights Campaign education director. "The company responded quickly and favorably to its customers and shareholders and now joins 86 percent of the Fortune 50 in prohibiting this type of discrimination."

The Unitarian Universalist Association successfully had sponsored a proposal, which would have come to a vote during a meeting May 30 in Atlanta, asking Home Depot to amend its nondiscrimination policy. The company publicly opposed such a change in its proxy statement, which was sent to shareholders three weeks ago.

The far-right nonprofit Concerned Women for America has taken a giant stride toward becoming one of the nation's leading groups focused on sully society's image of sexual minorities and undermining their efforts to achieve equal rights protections, according to the pro-gay People for the American Way.

The CWA, which was founded by Beverly LaHaye in 1979 to counter "feminists' anti-God,



Anthony D. Romero

anti-family rhetoric," announced April 24 its hiring of *Lambda Report* publisher Peter LaBarbera, who has spent the past decade "opposing the 'homosexual activist movement,'" according to *The Advocate*. He has drawn attention for his public frequenting of sex clubs and S/M bars in Washington, D.C., to gather material.

LaBarbera also has taken to the airwaves and the Internet to describe homosexuality as a sickness that can be cured by strict adherence to the Scriptures. Last April, he accused gay

lobbying groups of promoting "dangerous sexual practices and radical gender identities such as 'transgenderism'" and showing "utter contempt for those who defend a traditional sexual ethic."

LaBarbera's hiring comes less than a month after CWA launched its Cultural and Family Institute headed by Robert H. Knight. LaHaye described him as a "renowned expert and media favorite on family and social issues" who will focus the new arm of the lobbying group on confronting "homosexual activism and other forces that threaten to undermine marriage, family and religious freedom."

TENNESSEE

Legal experts said May 2 that the Tennessee Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in favor of a lesbian mother increases protections for gay parents who live with their partners and have full or partial custody of their children. Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the case, explaining that all available evidence proves a parent's sexual orientation is irrelevant to children's well-being and that children do not need to be shielded from their parents' committed relationships.

In one of the few cases it ever has considered involving lesbian or gay parents, Tennessee's highest court overturned an appeals court decision that barred a lesbian mother from having her partner in their home when her two daughters would visit. The appeals court ordered the restriction following arguments from the former husband, who said he wants his children to live by the biblical mandate that unmarried adults should not live together.

Ruling 5-0, the Tennessee Supreme Court found no reason why Julia Eldridge should be required to have her partner, Lisa Franklin, leave their home during visits with her daughters, noting that the women's living together caused no harm to the children. "The record does not show that [the child in the dispute] is in moral crisis because of

Ms. Franklin's presence during overnight visitation," the decision said.

NEW YORK

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation blasted the *New York Post* for printing the May 8 article "Mother's Day Banned." Andrea Peyser reported on Rodeph Shalom Day School's decision to stop celebrating the holiday in an effort to recognize the increasing diversity of families.

"The *Post* shirked its journalistic responsibility, placing an unsubstantiated opinion column on its front page under the rubric of hard news," said Joan M. Garry, GLAAD executive director. The newspaper "irresponsibly chose to exploit an unsubstantiated claim that the policy was enacted because of complaints from gay parents."

The article quoted several anonymous parents who objected to the school's decision. Peyser