

NATIONAL news

The Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth will commemorate its 10-year anniversary with a Gay-Straight Youth Pride Celebration on May 18 in Boston.

"No other event of this kind exists anywhere in the world," coordinator Mark Taggart said. "It's a jam-packed weekend of entertainment, education and celebration."

Among the guest speakers will be U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass.; Anthony Rapp, star of the musical *Rent* and the film *A Beautiful Mind*; author Christopher Rice; and former televangelist Tammy Faye Bakker. Other scheduled events include a discussion of queer youth issues conducted by a panel of gay cast members from MTV's *The Real World*, the first-ever gay and lesbian college fair with more than 44 schools represented, a film festival, a rally and a march.

The commission's mandate is to make schools safe and to eliminate harassment, violence and suicide. According to chairman Vincent McCarthy, no other state comes close to matching the services provided for queer youth.

"There are more than 300 high schools in the state of Massachusetts, and 181 of them now have gay-straight student alliances," he said. "If you think about how much has changed in just a decade, you realize that this is an extraordinary accomplishment."

FLORIDA

A lawsuit challenging a petition submitted by Take Back Miami-Dade will proceed in the wake of a decision May 2 in Florida's 11th Judicial Circuit Court. The Sept. 10 referendum would overturn a human rights ordinance prohibiting discrimination against gay men and lesbians.

Judge Norman S. Gerstein denied a motion to dismiss the suit, which charges that Take Back did not comply with requirements of Florida law and that the petition was certified improperly by the Miami-Dade County elections supervisor. In particular, attorneys assert the documents are riddled with irregularities and evidence of fraud.

Save Dade has asked the court either to reject the petition in its entirety or to require a signature-by-signature review of only those pages that are in compliance with state and county law. Gerstein gave Take Back 10 days to answer the complaint.

The ordinance was amended in 1998 to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, financing and public accommodations. The action came two decades after Anita Bryant led a successful effort to repeal the county's first gay rights law.

TEXAS

The Dallas City Council passed an ordinance May 8 prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing and public accommodations.

The strong backing of Mayor Laura Miller, who pledged her support during her campaign, helped in the 13-2 vote. The ordinance exempts employers with fewer than 15 workers, and fines of up to \$500 will be given to violators.

"We are elated with this vote that ensures basic civil rights for people in Dallas," said Steve Atkinson, who has worked with the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance, Human Rights Campaign and Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas to pass the ordinance. "It is long overdue in Dallas and important for cities around the country to have these type of protections."

Donald J. Carty, an American Airlines execu-

tive, spoke in favor of the ordinance, saying that contrary to what opponents claimed, this ordinance would benefit businesses. According to HRC WorkNet, 2,142 employers have nondiscrimination policies that include sexual orientation, including 294 Fortune 500 companies.

NATIONAL

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays announced May 8 the selection of David Tseng, former White House senior policy adviser and staff director for the National Economic Council, as the organization's new chief executive.



David Tseng

He succeeds Kirsten Kingdon, who retired May 15. During her four-year tenure, PFLAG grew from 416 to 486 affiliates nationwide.

"Our advocacy for GLBT equality grows out of our strong family values," Kingdon said. "David's commitment to these values coupled with his experience in politics and government will serve PFLAG well in our goal of changing hearts, minds and policies."

Tseng begins June 1. "I am honored and thrilled to have been chosen by PFLAG and hope to continue the historic, trailblazing civil rights leadership that PFLAG families and Kirsten Kingdon have provided," he said.

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The legacy of Anita Bryant (right, eating humble pie in 1977) continues to vex Miami-Dade County

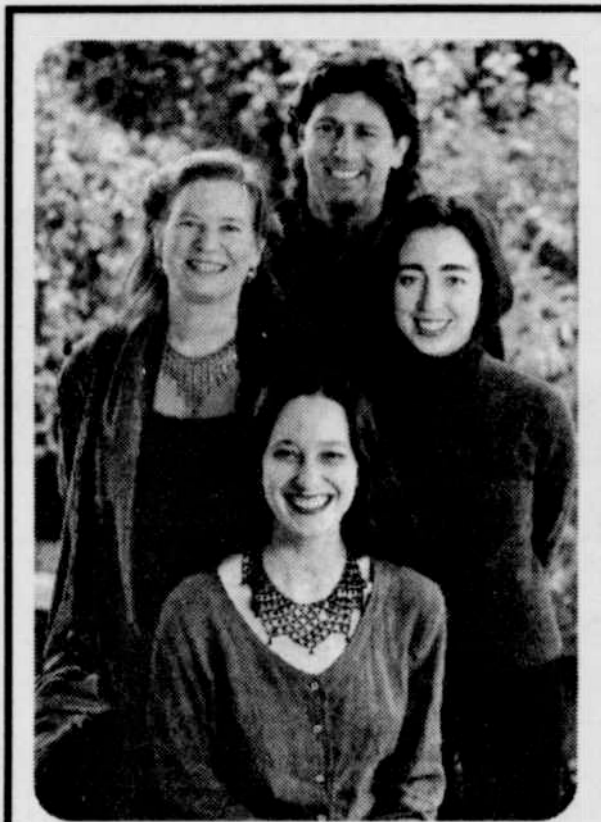
care expert, Tseng also served as chief assistant treasurer for the city and county of San Francisco, a benefits policy adviser for the U.S. Labor Department and a private practice attorney in Los Angeles. He is the first gay man and first person of color to serve as PFLAG executive director.

Tseng, 43, earned his undergraduate degree in English literature from Columbia University and received his juris doctor degree from University of California at Los Angeles School of Law. He and his partner of seven years, John Burnim, make their home in Washington, D.C.

CONNECTICUT

The Connecticut Legislature passed a bill May 7 extending a variety of legal options to same-sex couples. A compromise from earlier civil union and same-sex marriage measures, it was approved in both House and Senate chambers with bipartisan support.

Although the bill does not specifically mention same-sex couples, it allows a person to name another person to make medical decisions and choices on life termination, such as organ



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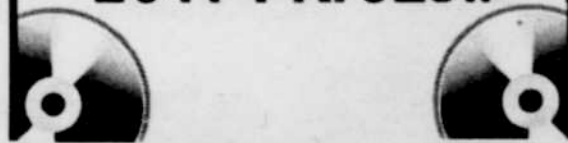
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