

ed nondiscrimination policy approach used by every Fortune 500 company that has incorporated sexual orientation into their policies."

The number of shareholders opposing discrimination nearly doubled from last year, when HRC co-filed the shareholder resolution, which garnered 13 percent of the vote, representing a value of \$25.8 billion worth of stock. The effort was spearheaded by the New York City Employees Retirement System.

Earlier, the resolution received a major boost when Institutional Shareholder Services recommended that people vote in favor of it. "ISS says most of ExxonMobil's competitors ban discrimination based on sexual orientation in their equal employment policies, and ExxonMobil's failing to do so puts the company at a disadvantage and invites possible litigation," according to a May 29 news report in the *Wall Street Journal*.

In late March, the Securities and Exchange Commission denied the company's request to delete the question from the ballot. In December 1999, when Exxon merged with Mobil, it became the first U.S. employer ever to rescind a nondiscrimination policy covering sexual orientation. At the same time, executives closed Mobil's domestic partner benefits program to any additional employees.

OHIO

The Ohio Supreme Court ruled May 15 that the state's soliciting law, which criminalizes expressions of sexual interest between people of the same sex, is unconstitutional. In a unanimous decision, it ruled that the statute violates the equal protection clauses of the U.S. and Ohio constitutions.

Under the law, it was a first-degree misdemeanor for someone to make a sexual advance toward a person of the same sex, should that advance be found offensive. The penalty could include up to six months in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000. The law covered advances that involve nothing more than words, but only if the words are directed at somebody of the same sex.

"This is a stark rejection of anti-gay discrimination in criminal laws," attorney Heather C. Sawyer said. "We don't throw men in jail for making passes at women, and there can be no double standard for gay people doing the same thing."

The case stems from the conviction of a man who made passes at a male jogger. When the jogger asked to be left alone, the man complied, but the jogger then complained to the police.

The man was charged and convicted of violating the soliciting law and sentenced to six months in jail; he appealed. The state's 11th District Court of Appeals found that the law violates equal protection rights, but it upheld the law and the man's conviction based on a prior ruling from the Ohio Supreme Court.

PENNSYLVANIA

A "morally bankrupt" report issued May 10 advises University of Pittsburgh not to begin providing health benefits to same-sex partners of lesbian and gay employees, the American Civil Liberties Union said.



Mark Nordenberg

A special committee was appointed by university president Mark Nordenberg in May 2001, five years into an ongoing lawsuit by lesbian and gay employees seeking equal benefits. Both the university and the ACLU agreed to suspend all litigation so the committee could weigh whether or how to provide equal benefits.

"The question here has always been whether gay employees should be compensated the same as straight employees," said Witold Walczak, ACLU of Pennsylvania Greater Pittsburgh Chapter executive director. "Instead of answering that question, the committee looked around to see which way the wind is blowing.... It reported on what it thinks others believe is right and wrong and decided it's too risky to provide equal benefits now."

In a two-page memorandum issued with the report, Nordenberg thanked the committee for its work but did not indicate whether he accepts its recommendation. "We call on President Nordenberg to assume leadership where this committee failed...and change this policy," Walczak said.

The Philadelphia City Council voted 15-2 on May 16 to add gender identity to a city ordinance prohibiting discrimination in housing, public accommodations and employment.

"Statewide protections do not exist," said Stacey Sobel, Center for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights executive director. "Therefore, it is incumbent upon local jurisdictions to do the right thing by protecting all of its most vulnerable inhabitants and visitors."

Mayor John F. Street has pledged to sign the updated ordinance into law. Two other major U.S. cities—Dallas and New York City—recently voted to include trans-specific language in anti-discrimination ordinances.



John F. Street

CALIFORNIA

An award-winning high school teacher, harassed and denied a promotion for being a lesbian, has settled her discrimination case against a Southern California school district, Lambda Legal said May 23.

The lengthy and expensive battle emphasizes the consequences for school districts that fail to take sexual orientation harassment seriously. The settlement requires the Oceanside Unified School District in San Diego County to pay Dawn Murray more than \$140,000 and to provide annual sensitivity training to its employees on issues of sexual orientation discrimination.

A biology teacher hired in 1983, she suffered severe harassment that began when co-workers learned she is gay. Although she had won state and national awards, she was denied a promotion.

Murray became the target of vicious anti-gay remarks, false rumors and obscene graffiti that was painted repeatedly outside her classroom. Officials at Oceanside ignored the abuse and threatened disciplinary action against her when she complained.

"This lawsuit shows other school districts that if they respond to harassment in an inappropriate way, we will stand up, the laws will protect us, and they will be made to stop," Murray said. "Young people learn from adult behavior, and it was important to wage this fight to show students all people have to be treated fairly."

Continued on Page 23



Will You Be Shut Out When Your Partner Needs You?

Richard B. Schneider

ATTORNEY AT LAW

is well versed in the special estate planning needs of the GLBT community and can help you with care and professionalism.

FREE REPORT!

"Gay & Lesbian Couples Face Special Challenges In Estate Planning."

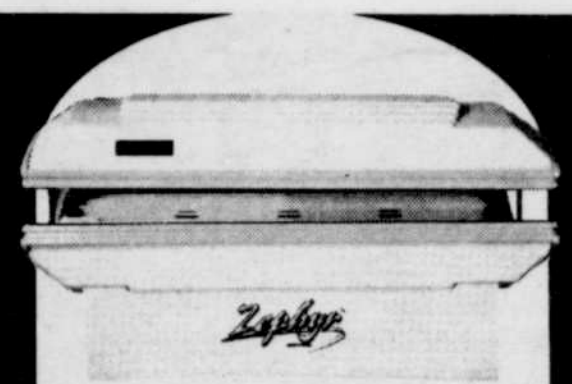
What Every Gay And Lesbian Couple Should Know About Estate Planning.

Call today for your free copy.

503.241.1215

www.rbsllc.com

Law Offices of Richard B. Schneider, LLC
2455 NW Marshall St., Suite 11 • Portland, OR 97210



Zephyr 16
Tanning Bed

THE POWER THE TANNING

- 16 amps
- Single phase, 110 volt, 20 amp
- Structural and electrical warranties
- 110v surge protector
- Special built-in safety timer
- Canopy and lounge formed to provide maximum tanning area
- Top quality, durable acrylics
- FDA compliant 20 minute tanning
- Multiple cooling fans for a comfortable experience

Home & Castle

POOLS • SPAS • PATIO • STOVES

Tigard 11960 SW Pacific Hwy
99 W at Greenburg Rd (503) 620-4534

"You are the best doctor for your own teeth."

I will share with you holistic dental methods.



Dr. Amy

B.Sc., D.M.D., F.I.C.C.M.O., P.C.

Holistic dentistry without mercury, of course!

503-289-1215 • 700 N. Hayden Island Dr., Ste. 330

Our office is a discrimination-free zone. All minorities welcome.