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WORLD news

CANADA

Police raided a gay bathhouse Dec. 12 in Calgary, Alberta. Two employees of Goliath's Sauna and Texas Lounge were charged with keeping a common bawdy house, and 13 patrons were charged with being found without lawful excuse in a common bawdy house.

The police department alleged that customers paid to rent a room and were given a towel and a condom. Activists were scratching their heads because that is what happens in a gay bathhouse and is more or less how Goliath's has operated for 35 years.

"The bawdy house charges are ludicrous," Stephen Lock, co-founder of the gay/police liaison committee, told the *Calgary Herald*. "It's not illegal to have gay sex in Canada."

Goliath's spokesman Keith Purdy said: "The gay community is outraged to no end. I've never seen the gay community like this before. People are furious. The whole community is in shock. It was totally unexpected and totally uncalled for."

like a big event to come out," Brison told the *Halifax Daily News*. "It's the first time I ever spoke to media about it, but it certainly wasn't a secret. I didn't want there to be any misperception out there that I had any fear of dealing with this issue openly and honestly. [This] does eliminate the ability for anybody to participate in whisper campaigns."

Brison said he won't be changing his politics. "I'm a conservative, entrepreneur, investment-banking politician from rural Nova Scotia who drives a Volvo station wagon and has two Nova Scotia duck-tolling retrievers; it's pretty hard to peg me as a radical," he said.



Scott Brison

Canada has three other openly gay federal MPs, Svend Robinson and Libby Davies, who represent Vancouver-area ridings, and Réal Ménard,

who represents a Montreal riding.

SOUTH KOREA

Famous singer/model/actress Harisu was given permission by an Incheon district court Dec. 13 to change her name and gender in the government's family register. The 27-year-old will alter her legal name from the masculine Lee Kyong-yop to the feminine Lee Kyong-eun.

The court declared, "Considering that Ha has been socially recognized as female after her transgender operation, it is appropriate that we regard Ha physically as a woman." The court noted that the Korean Constitution guarantees individual pursuit of happiness and dignity, the *Korea Times* reported.

ARGENTINA

The Buenos Aires City Council passed a civil unions law Dec. 13 by a vote of 29-10. Registered opposite- and same-sex couples will be treated like spouses "in the exercise of rights, obligations and benefits that emanate from the city," including pensions, insurance, loans, sick and bereavement leave, visitation rights and relocation expenses.

"Buenos Aires has become the first city in Latin America to pass such a law, and we hope it is only a first step," City Councilor Roque Belloso said. To register, a couple must be in a "stable, public relationship of affectivity" for at least two years (unless they have children together) and must live in Buenos Aires for two years.

The Argentine province of Río Negro passed a gay partnership law Dec. 17. It grants same-sex couples all the provincial rights that common-law opposite-sex couples have, except for access to marriage and adoption. To register, a couple must present two witnesses who can prove they have

The school board in the Vancouver, British Columbia, suburb of Surrey erred in banning three children's books from kindergarten and first-grade classrooms because they depict same-sex parents, Canada's Supreme Court ruled Dec. 20. The books in question were *Asha's Mums*, *Belinda's Bouquet* and *One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dads, Blue Dads*.

In a 7-2 ruling, the court said schools in the province are secular institutions and cannot base decisions on parents' religious concerns. The board "failed to consider the curriculum's goal that children at the K-1 level be able to discuss their family models and that all children be made aware of the diversity of family models in our society," Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin said.

Canada's gay cable network, PrideVision, announced more staff cuts Dec. 20 and put itself up for sale.

According to parent company Headline Media Group, the pay channel has not attracted enough subscribers. "Despite this challenge, Headline continues to believe in the viability of this one-of-a-kind network, both in Canada and abroad," chairman and CEO John Levy said.

Member of Parliament Scott Brison revealed he is gay Dec. 7 to keep from being outed as he seeks the federal Tory leadership post. The 35-year-old represents Nova Scotia's Kings-Hants district, a conservative, rural riding in the Annapolis Valley.

"As one who has never really been in the closet, it doesn't seem



Government officials have OK'd South Korean celebrity Harisu's request to change her name and gender