

NATIONAL news

be inseminated, Drs. Christine Brody and Douglas Fenton said that because of their personal religious beliefs about gay people, they would not administer the treatment. No other doctors within the medical group were available or willing to perform this procedure, so she was forced to go outside her health plan to receive services.

Benitez sued the clinic based on a California law outlawing discrimination by business establishments, including health care facilities, along with other legal claims. A state court in San Diego dismissed her entire case last year, ruling that a federal law bars a state civil rights claim against doctors whenever the services are paid for through an employer-provided health plan. This ruling clarifies that the federal law does not release providers from their obligation to serve all their patients equally.

ARKANSAS

The American Civil Liberties Union is challenging officials at Jacksonville Junior High concerning repeated punishment of a 14-year-old student for being openly gay. In a letter sent March 13, it demanded that they stop violating Thomas McLaughlin's rights and remove from his record all unconstitutional disciplinary actions taken against him by March 21 or face legal action.

"My school forced me out of the closet when I should have been allowed to come out to my family on my own terms and when I thought it was the right time. And now the school has been trying to shove me back into it ever since," McLaughlin said. "I'm through with being silenced, and I don't want this happening to other gay kids at my school."

McLaughlin's troubles began last year, when a school official called his mother to tell her he was gay. Although he was not ready to reveal his sexual orientation to his parents yet, they were accepting and understanding.

"It's shameful how Jacksonville Junior High School has trampled on Thomas McLaughlin's constitutional rights to intimidate and silence him from being honest about who he is," attorney Leslie Cooper said. "If this were civics class, the school would be failing."

Now that McLaughlin has become more open about his sexual orientation, the school has made numerous attempts to punish and silence him for being out:

- School officials preached their religious views on homosexuality and forced him to read aloud from the Bible in clear violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment. This was done as punishment after McLaughlin, who is himself a Christian, disagreed with a teacher for calling him "abnormal" and "unnatural."

- In violation of his free speech rights, officials suspended him for two days for telling other students about being made to read the Bible in school. The principal and assistant principal also said that if he told friends why he was suspended, they would recommend expulsion.

- He is not even allowed to participate in typical teen-age conversations about crushes. In January he was punished for talking between classes with a female friend about a boy they both considered "cute." He was disciplined; the girl was not.

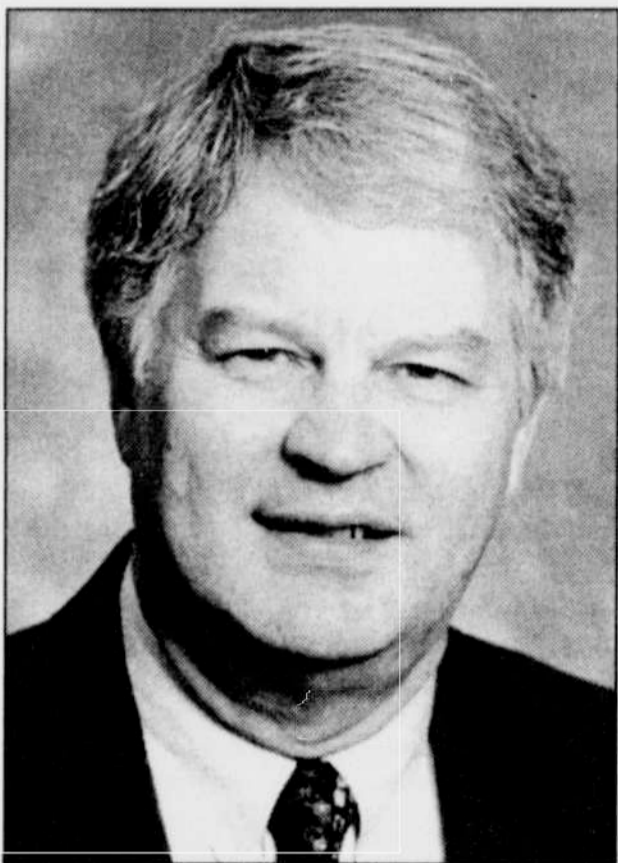
MINNESOTA

State Rep. Arlon Lindner recently said gay men and lesbians are "rewriting history" by claiming to have been victims of the Holocaust.

In a floor debate on his bill to strip queers of state human rights protection, the Republican upped the ante by attacking black people as well. He claimed that if Minnesota did not protect children from AIDS, the United States soon would become another "African continent."

The Log Cabin Republicans called for Lindner to step down March 13. His views clearly violate President Bush's "agenda of compassionate conservatism," according to executive director Patrick Guerriero.

"Lindner gratuitously attacks the gay commu-



State Rep. Arlon Lindner of Minnesota believes gay men and lesbians are "rewriting history" by claiming to have been victims of the Holocaust.

nity and now smears African Americans as well," he said. "He just doesn't get it. This is America in 2003—not some rural backwater circa 1953. Minnesotans should not stand for his indefensible rants.... His intolerance is breathtaking and deeply offensive all at the same time."

The Nazi campaign against homosexuality targeted the more than 1 million German men who, the state asserted, carried a "degeneracy" that threatened the nation's "disciplined masculinity." Denounced as "antisocial parasites," more than 100,000 were arrested under a broadly interpreted anti-gay law. About 50,000 men served prison terms as convicted homosexuals, while an unknown number were institutionalized in mental hospitals.

Others—perhaps hundreds—were castrated under court order or coercion. Analyses of fragmentary records suggest between 5,000 and 15,000 gay men were imprisoned in concentration camps, where many died from starvation, disease, exhaustion, beatings and murder.

Because women were valued primarily for their ability to bear children, the state presumed that lesbians were still capable of reproducing. They were not systematically persecuted under Nazi rule but nonetheless did suffer the loss of their own gathering places and associations.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Log Cabin Republicans called March 4 for GOP Gov. Craig Benson to withdraw the nomination of Gary Daniels to the state's Human Rights Commission.

The former state representative made anti-gay comments concerning civil rights legislation six years ago. Daniels called homosexuality unnatural, immoral and unhealthy in opposition to a bill being debated on the House floor.

"The Human Rights Commission, by its very nature, deals with issues of discrimination," said Patrick Guerriero, Log Cabin executive director. "Mr. Daniels has made it clear that he lacks the fair-minded perspective necessary to be a voice for inclusion and equality for all.... In a more inclusive America and increasingly inclusive Republican Party, there are other New Hampshire citizens more worthy of a gubernatorial appointment to the Human Rights Commission." □



Craig Benson

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