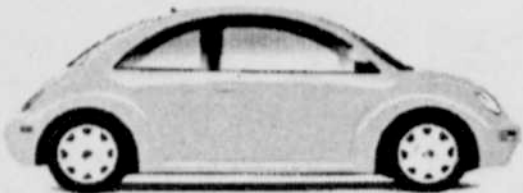


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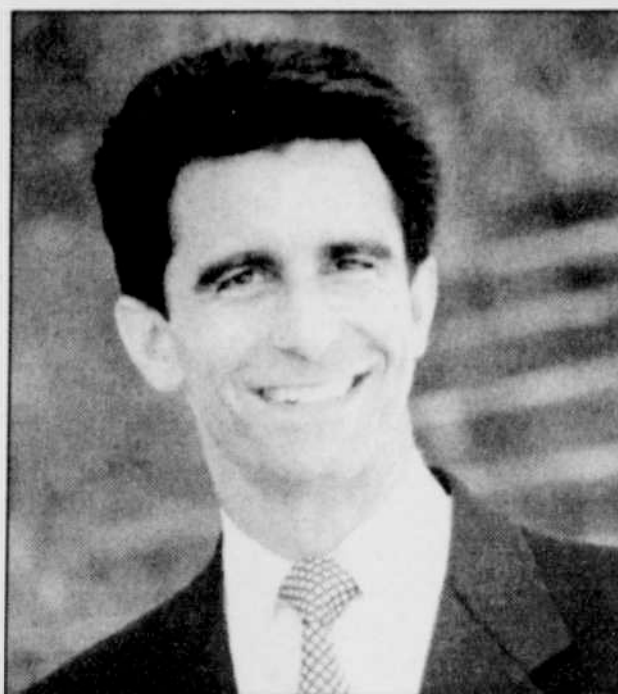
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NATIONAL news



Gay Assemblyman Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, successfully pushed trans-inclusive nondiscrimination legislation in California

CALIFORNIA

Democratic Gov. Gray Davis signed a measure Aug. 2 adding gender identity, appearance and behavior to the state laws prohibiting discrimination in employment and housing. This makes California the fourth state in the nation to prohibit such discrimination in housing and the workplace.

Assembly Bill 196, introduced by Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, also includes language that permits employees to dress consistent with their gender identity—a first-of-its-kind provision in a statewide nondiscrimination law. It becomes effective Jan. 1, 2004.

Minnesota, New Mexico and Rhode Island have statutes that explicitly prohibit discrimination based on gender identity. Courts and administrative agencies in five additional states—Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York—and the District of Columbia have interpreted either their sex or disability discrimination statutes to protect trans people in some circumstances.

"Let me put this in context of the day. The radical right has declared war on social progress—the pope, the president and the attorney general," said Leno, who is gay. "Every victory we can claim is resistance to the controlling regressive forces."

The California Supreme Court affirmed Aug. 4 the validity of second-parent adoptions, which permit both partners in a same-sex or other unmarried couple to establish a legal relationship with their children.

The 6-1 ruling in Sharon S. vs. Superior Court soundly reversed a lower court decision, which found that state statutes did not permit second-parent adoptions. In an October 2001 decision that sent shock waves throughout the state, the California Court of Appeal appeared to call into question the legitimacy of these long-standing adoptions. Even as modified a month later, the decision still created confusion in an area affecting thousands of children.

"This is a great victory for gay parents everywhere," said Jennifer Pizer, Lambda Legal senior staff attorney. "By affirming second-parent adoption, the California Supreme Court remedied an appalling lower court decision that ignored the best interests of children and created confusion where California families need clarity and stability."

Writing for the majority, Justice Kathryn Werdegard held that "second-parent adoptions offer the possibility of obtaining the security and advantages of two parents for some of California's neediest children." She also stressed the importance of providing legal protections and stability for children born to same-sex and other unmarried couples: "Unmarried couples who

have brought a child into the world with the expectation that they will raise it together, and who have jointly petitioned for adoption, should be on notice that if they separate the same rules concerning custody and visitation as apply to all other parents will apply to them."

NATIONAL

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays announced July 30 that Dick and Jane Gephardt have become members. The Democratic congressman from Missouri and his wife have long been openly supportive and accepting of their lesbian daughter, Chrissy.

According to PFLAG, Gephardt has taken every opportunity to speak positively of Chrissy to the media and at political events. He has made his daughter

an official part of his presidential campaign and acknowledges her partner, Amy, on his Web site.

"It is with great pleasure that we welcome Dick and Jane Gephardt into the PFLAG family," said Sam Thoron, PFLAG national president. "Their family values are clearly aligned with PFLAG's mission."

Gephardt already has begun to play an active role as a PFLAG member. He will speak at the

implement HIV prevention programs for gay and bi men, particularly within communities of color.

"The AIDS epidemic in the United States is far from over," said Harold Jaffe, director of the CDC's National Center for HIV, STD and TB prevention. "While effective treatments are cru-



U.S. Rep. Dick Gephardt, D-Mo., has made his lesbian daughter, Chrissy, an official part of his presidential campaign

cial in our fight against HIV, preventing infection in the first place is still the only true protection against the serious and fatal consequences of this disease."

Past estimates have indicated that up to one-third of those infected with HIV do not know their status. The CDC did caution that the study might reflect increases in HIV testing as well as potential increases in new infections.

NEW JERSEY

By a 55 percent to 41 percent margin, likely voters in New Jersey say gay couples should be able to marry, according to a telephone survey of 803 likely voters conducted July 15 to 19. It comes as a lawsuit to let New Jersey gay couples marry, filed last year by Lambda Legal, makes its way through state courts.

"Like all other parents, we want to dance at our children's weddings, including those of our lesbian and gay children," said Clarice Zieja, president of the Bergen County chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, which commissioned the survey. "It's really wonderful to

know that the people of New Jersey agree."

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The New Hampshire Board of Dental Examiners has revoked the license of a dentist in part for refusing to treat a lesbian.

According to published reports, the dentist confronted the woman in his waiting room after she identified a woman as her partner on her "get acquainted" card. In the presence of others, he said he would refuse to treat her, condemned same-sex marriage as against his beliefs and asked if she had AIDS. The dentist will be able to regain his license only after he demonstrates to a psychiatrist that he can practice dentistry in a professional manner.

The Gay and Lesbian Medical Association praised the disciplinary action July 23. According to GLMA board member and dentist Stuart Martin, while this is encouraging, it points to larger issues.

"First, New Hampshire is certainly one of the more sympathetic states. I suspect the scenario



Marcy, Kasey and Karen Nicholson-McFadden are among the plaintiffs seeking marriage equality in New Jersey

organization's Great Lakes Regional Conference in mid-October and help carry the message of acceptance, love and equality.

"It's clear that the Gephardts understand the importance of fairness and inclusion for all," said David Tseng, PFLAG executive director. "We look forward to working with them to build a just society where everyone can live in harmony with his or her own self and others."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released findings indicating HIV infections among gay and bi men rose 7.1 percent from 2001 to 2002. HIV diagnoses for gay and bi men have increased by 17.7 percent since the lowest point in 1999.

With nearly half of new infections occurring in gay and bi men, HIV is disproportionately affecting the sexual minorities community. In its strategic plan, the CDC recognizes that homophobia adversely affects prevention efforts. Consequently, it identifies the need to develop and

PHOTO BY BOB PILEGGI