

NATIONAL news

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CALIFORNIA

State Sen. William "Pete" Knight, R-Palm-dale, filed suit Sept. 22 in the Superior Court of Sacramento County to block implementation of the Domestic Partners Rights and Responsibilities Act of 2003.

The measure, which Gov. Gray Davis signed into law Sept. 19, grants to all registered domestic partners, both same-sex and opposite-sex, the overwhelming majority of state rights, benefits and responsibilities enjoyed by legally married spouses. However, domestic partners will not be permitted to file joint tax returns and will not receive any of the marital privileges granted under federal law, nor will their relationship be recognized in most other states.

Knight is a well-known opponent of equality for queer Californians. He served as the author of 2000's Proposition 22, which attempted to prohibit the state from recognizing marriages between same-sex couples performed in other jurisdictions.

"This lawsuit proves that Pete Knight and his allies do not support families," said Geoffrey Kors, Equality California executive director. Assembly Bill 205 "is a law that protects all California families, not just narrowly defined families that meet with the approval of the religious right. Family values should mean that all families are valued. By filing this lawsuit, Knight is arguing that the government should discriminate against families that he does not value."

During the Proposition 22 campaign, spokesperson Robert Glazer stated March 6, 2000, on Fox's *The Edge with Paula Zahn* that the measure "was so narrowly defined, with just 14 words, not just for simplicity's sake but for the legal impact. It will not affect domestic partnership rights. It will not affect hospital visitation rights or child custody rights or inheritance rights."

Knight claims AB 205 nullifies many aspects of Proposition 22 and goes against the voters' wishes. However, Californians make a clear distinction between domestic partnership rights and marriage, according to a recent Field Poll that found widespread support for extending specific legal protections and obligations to same-sex couples. About 72 percent are OK with legal recognition in areas of family rights, such as hospital visitation and medical power of attorney. About 61 percent support granting financial dependence status, including pension benefits, health insurance and family leave.

COLORADO

Saying that one of the nation's largest HMOs may cost a Denver man his life by refusing to cover a kidney transplant because he has HIV, Lambda Legal filed a formal appeal Sept. 22 with Kaiser Permanente and asked it to reverse its denial in light of a range of scientific data and the man's personal health history and experience.

"To deny our client the care he needs, Kaiser is ignoring published reports on organ transplants for HIV and not looking at its patient's individual health status," attorney Hayley Gorenberg said. "In the last seven years since the advent of better treatments for people with HIV, the medical community nationwide has learned a great deal about organ transplants. Kaiser's decision denying this man's transplant is not based on good medicine or sound science, and it may cost him his life."



William "Pete" Knight

John Carl, 53, began experiencing kidney failure in the fall of 2001 and receives dialysis three times a week. This summer, he requested coverage for a kidney transplant, but Kaiser denied his request in late July, saying, "kidney transplantation for HIV-positive patients is contraindicated...due to its experimental status and unfavorable outcomes."

Gorenberg said Kaiser's justification is simply untrue. "It's flat-out wrong that kidney transplants for people with HIV are experimental and have unfavorable outcomes. There's a solid and growing body of scientific and medical evidence that clearly shows HIV does not significantly affect the outcome of kidney transplantation."

MICHIGAN

The Board of Commissioners of Lapeer County last month passed a viciously anti-gay resolution that supports an amendment to the state constitution defining marriage as an institution strictly between one man and one woman. While two other Michigan counties, Jackson and Oakland, have passed similar resolutions, the Lapeer resolution was especially mean-spirited as it linked gay and lesbian U.S. citizens with rampant disease and painted gay parents as a threat to "innocent children."

"The resolution...is particularly malicious as it plays upon deep-seated prejudices by twisting data to the point that it flies in the face of both expert opinion and research as well as basic common sense," said Seth Kilbourn, Human Rights Campaign national field director. "The Lapeer County resolution is an assault on gay and lesbian citizens of Michigan and their loved ones, and it helps fuel anti-gay discrimination that can lead to hate violence."

Jeffrey Montgomery, Triangle Foundation executive director, condemned the measure. "This resolution has nothing to do with county governance and everything to do with marginalizing and discriminating against gay men and lesbians by propagating lies and dangerous slander."

The Lapeer resolution cited a biblical reference as a further reason for denying civil marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples.

"No one is trying to alter the religious definition of marriage," Kilbourn said. "This is about equality under the law. Denying rights and protections to one group of Americans based on the religious views of some is blatant discrimination and is contrary to founding principles of this country."

NATIONAL

The Republican National Committee will move to oppose civil recognition of same-sex marriages in its 2004 platform, *The Washington Times* reported Sept. 23. Chairman Ed Gillespie also referred to gay U.S. citizens as intolerant bigots.

"I think when people say, 'Well, no, that's not enough that you accept me for who I am, you have to agree with—and condone—my choice,' that to me is religious bigotry and I believe that's intolerant," he said. "I think they are the ones who are crossing a line here."

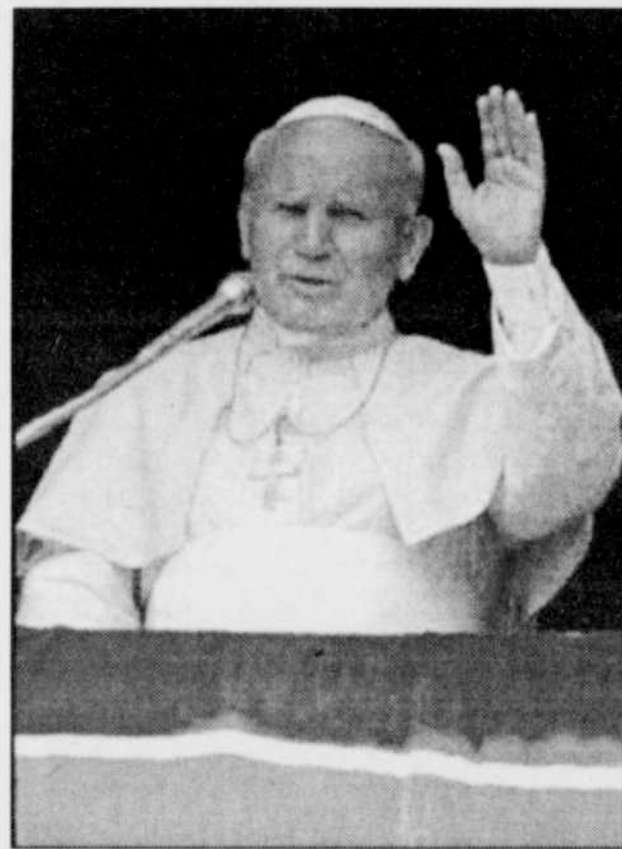
Dave Noble, National Stonewall Democrats executive director, strongly denounced the remarks. "Gillespie is the one displaying

his bigotry, not gay Americans," he said. "Suggesting that someone is a bigot because they want the legal right to visit a dying partner in the hospital is wrong and, frankly, disgusting."

Gillespie said that although a decision hinges on the outcome of a potential marriage ruling in Massachusetts, the RNC seems ready to support a constitutional amendment outlawing recognition of same-sex relationships. He noted that he sees no difference between civil unions and same-sex marriages.

"The last thing the GOP needs to do is to pattern the 2004 Republican convention after the 1992 Houston convention, which started a culture war in America," said Patrick Guerriero, Log Cabin Republicans executive director. "Log Cabin's message is clear: For our party to be a pro-family party, we must value all American families. We should not marginalize gay families. And, to be true to our conservative roots, we should not tinker with the sacred United States Constitution to score temporary political points."

Responding to concerns of religious freedom and tolerance and Catholic Church teachings in the article, Guerriero, a Catholic, added: "The last time I checked, the Catholic Church was opposed to the war in Iraq and the death penalty. I doubt we will see those planks in our platform."



Pope John Paul II

Prominent media coverage of the Catholic Church sexual abuse scandals has reinforced inaccurate and misleading stereotypes of gay men as child abusers, according to a new study.

The report, titled *Subtle Stereotyping: The Media, Homosexuality and the Priest Sexual Abuse Scandal*, analyzed the content of 1,326 news articles reported in the *Boston Globe* during the first year of the scandal. Throughout the coverage, readers were exposed to an average of two articles a week that tied homosexuality to child sexual abuse.

The study's authors, psychologists Glenda Russell and Nancy Kelly, suggest the *Globe's* linkages were not necessarily intentional. However, as Russell adds: "Linkages don't have to be intentional to be harmful. The stereotype of gay-man-as-pedophile gets used in many policy contexts to justify discrimination and violence against gay people."

Russell serves as acting executive director of the Institute for Gay and Lesbian Strategic Studies, which released the study Sept. 15. "When Catholic Church spokespeople began to place the blame for the abuse explicitly on



Ed Gillespie