

NATIONAL

Republican Senate Leader Bill Frist believes gay families do not constitute a family unit. He made the remarks Jan. 23 at the Conservative Political Action Conference Reagan Banquet.

After asking the audience, "What is family?" the Tennessean said, "The issue before us today is that activist judges in Massachusetts are intent on destroying the traditional definition of family." Frist added that he supports amending the U.S. Constitution to ban same-sex marriage.

As a result of President Bush's command that the country "defend the sanctity of marriage" in his State of the Union address Jan. 20, Republicans unleashed a rash of anti-gay legislation. GOP members of the Arizona House of Representatives and the Virginia House of Delegates introduced resolutions the day after the speech that voiced support for the Federal Marriage Amendment.

"Millions of American families are legally threatened because lawmakers like Sen. Frist simply pretend that they don't exist," said Dave Noble, National Stonewall Democrats executive director. "We have continually heard what the Republican leadership is against, but we have yet to hear what it is for. Congressional Republicans still have no plan that addresses legal inequality faced by gay families."

Addressing the Republican National Committee's winter meeting Jan. 29, chairman Ed Gillespie blasted "unelected, activist judges" for recognizing marriage equality in Massachusetts while ridiculing U.S. Sens. John Edwards,



Republican Senate Leader Bill Frist of Tennessee told conservatives last month that gay families do not exist

D-N.C., and John Kerry, D-Mass., for opposing 1996's Defense of Marriage Act.

He said the presidential candidates' position is that "a gay couple should be able to get married in John Kerry's Massachusetts, move to John Edwards' North Carolina, and Tarheel State citizens would be compelled to recognize that marriage." Gillespie continued to mock the records of both senators in an effort to demonstrate that they are "out of sync with most voters" on social issues.

When elected as RNC chairman last July, Gillespie was hailed by gay Republicans as a moderate party activist; however, his tenure has seen a torrent of anti-gay attacks. Most recently, he told ABC News that it would be the fault of gay families if Republicans chose to use same-sex marriage as a wedge issue in the 2004 election.

He also has pledged that the RNC will codify its support for the Federal Marriage Amendment in its national platform this summer. Additionally, under Gillespie, the RNC's Web

site continues to attack Democratic presidential candidates for supporting queers.

Meanwhile, the RNC dismissed a nationwide queer voter mobilization program recently launched by the Democratic National Committee. Press secretary Christine Iverson reacted to the "Pride at the Polls" effort by stating Jan. 27, "We don't target our voter outreach on sexual orientation."

DNC chairman Terry McAuliffe was quick to criticize her remark. "After President Bush's anti-gay comments during the State of the Union address, and now Iverson's clear ignorance of the 1.1 million GLBT Americans who voted for Bush in 2000, it is now evident how little respect Bush has for GLBT Republicans," he said.

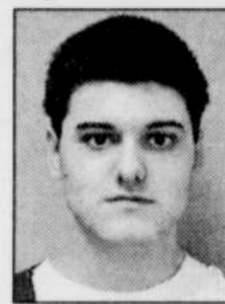
KANSAS

The Kansas Court of Appeals ruled Jan. 30 that it is constitutional to give a bisexual

teen-ager a sentence 13 times longer than a straight teen-ager would receive for the same crime. The 2-1 decision upholds the state's "Romeo and Juliet" law, which gives much lighter sentences to heterosexual teen-agers who have sex with younger teens but specifically excludes gay teen-agers.

Matthew Limon is serving 17 years in prison, instead of the 13 to 15 months he would have faced if he were heterosexual. In June, the U.S. Supreme Court vacated his conviction and instructed the appeals court to give it further consideration in light of the historic ruling on sexual intimacy in *Lawrence vs. Texas*.

In its decision, the court gave three explana-



Matthew Limon

tions for sentencing gays so much more severely: that doing so will reduce the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, that doing so encourages "traditional sexual mores" and that doing so promotes procreation and marriage. "The court's opinion in this case defies comprehension, and we intend to seek an appeal," said Dick Kurtenbach of the American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas and Western Missouri.

MASSACHUSETTS

Openly gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank has declined a solicitation from the Boy Scouts of America asking him to endorse a new national service initiative called Good Turn for America. In a letter sent Jan. 27 to chief executive Roy Williams, the Massachusetts Democrat expressed surprise at the organization's request, considering it has characterized gay men as unfit to associate with, and he declined to engage in an act of "hypocrisy."

"Where there is much about what the Boy Scouts do that I admire and I am a former Scout myself, I was under the impression that you considered people like myself to be unworthy of association with the Boy Scouts," Frank wrote. "I am a gay man, which, according to your policy as I read it in various court decisions, means that I am neither 'morally straight' nor 'clean.' Why do you want a person you so characterize to be signing a tribute to you?"

OHIO

The Legislature passed a bill Jan. 21 that not only prohibits marriages between same-sex couples but also precludes the "recognition or extension of the specific statutory benefits of a

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