

An existing law known as the Solomon Amendment already requires universities to give the military the ability to recruit and interview students without signing a sexual orientation-inclusive nondiscrimination policy, even if the schools require such policies from other prospective employers. Although many universities grant military recruiters access to students, the legislation would require universities to certify such access or risk losing all federal funding.

"This isn't about recruiting," said Sharra E. Greer, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network law and policy director. "Military recruiters already have access to colleges and universities. Other employers who discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation are not allowed anywhere near college campuses. The Department of Defense is simply trying to maintain its form of federally sanctioned discrimination on our nation's campuses. This bill is unnecessary and unfair."



Marty Meehan

U.S. Rep. Marty Meehan, D-Mass., a member of the House Armed Services Committee, sharply criticized the bill in remarks made on the House floor. He called it "a drastic solution to a problem that doesn't even exist."

"The bill we are debating today was reported by the committee under the guise of promoting equal access for military recruiters on America's college and university campuses," Meehan said. "In reality, this bill is designed to force universities to violate their own policies against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and to undermine pending lawsuits that challenge the so-called Solomon Amendment."

The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation expressed concern March 16 about comments made by rapper 50 Cent in an interview appearing in the April issue of *Playboy* magazine.

"I ain't into faggots," he said. "I don't like gay people around me, because I'm not comfortable with what their thoughts are. I'm not prejudiced. I just don't go with gay people and kick it—we don't have that much in common."

GLAAD encouraged 50 Cent to get to know the sexual minorities community, predicting he will find that he has more in common with queers than he thinks.

"As a public figure, 50 Cent must realize that his words can have huge impact," said C. Riley Snorton, people of color media manager. "We applaud his honesty in talking about the murder of his bisexual mother and appreciate his acknowledgment that he is not comfortable with gay people. We know that confronting homophobia can indeed be uncomfortable. But honesty is always the first step in overcoming the desire to judge those who are different than us and in overcoming prejudice. A good way to start would be to attend GLAAD's annual media awards. I'd like to invite 50 Cent as my personal guest."



Rapper 50 Cent made homophobic comments in an interview with *Playboy* magazine

sex abuse, expose children to domestic violence and spread HIV to foster children. "Policy affecting the lives of Arkansas' foster children should be based on what's best for the children, not baseless myths," attorney Leslie Cooper said. "This ban flies in the face of years of sound research on the children of gay parents and the positions of every national child welfare organization."

TENNESSEE

The Tennessee Court of Appeals struck down a court order March 24 that told a gay parent not to do anything that "exposes" his son to "the gay lifestyle." The court went on to say that "neither gay parents nor heterosexual parents have special rights" and that courts should follow the same principles in placing limits on visitation and custody for both gay and straight parents.

The decision came in the case of Joseph Hogue, who was sentenced to two days in jail in September 2002 for telling his son that he is gay. The judge who imposed the sentence ruled that Hogue had violated an earlier order the judge had made prohibiting him from "exposing the child to...his gay lifestyle." The Court of Appeals said the order was so unspecific that it could not be enforced.

"This is a significant decision for gay and lesbian parents," said Ken Choe, a staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union's Lesbian and Gay Rights Project. "Courts have no business telling parents how to raise their children, and they especially have no business telling parents to be dishonest with their kids."

In January, the appeals court cleared Hogue of contempt because telling his son that he is gay was not part of the restraining order. However, the court went on to say that the restraining order itself was valid. Following a request by the ACLU, the court reversed that decision.

ARKANSAS

A trial opened March 23 in a case challenging an Arkansas policy that prevents gay people and anyone living in a household with a gay adult from being foster parents in the state. The trial will be held in the Circuit Court of Pulaski County.

"By enacting a policy that bars gay people from being foster parents, the Child Welfare Agency Review Board has sacrificed the interests of foster children in order to make a misguided political statement against gay people," said Rita Sklar, American Civil Liberties Union of Arkansas executive director. "This trial will expose that hypocrisy for exactly what it is."

The ACLU brought a lawsuit against the board in 1999 on behalf of four prospective foster parents, charging that the policy violates the equal protection guarantees of the state and federal constitutions.

The state relied on a series of shopworn, unscientific stereotypes about gay people to support the ban on foster parenting. For instance, it claimed that children are always better off with a mother and a father and that gay people are more likely to commit child

sex abuse, expose children to domestic violence and spread HIV to foster children.

"Policy affecting the lives of Arkansas' foster children should be based on what's best for the children, not baseless myths," attorney Leslie Cooper said. "This ban flies in the face of years of sound research on the children of gay parents and the positions of every national child welfare organization."

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