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NATIONAL news

**DENIAL OF MARRIAGE RIGHTS
COSTS SAME-SEX COUPLES HUNDREDS
OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS
OVER THEIR LIFETIME, REPORT FINDS**

As millions of married couples are signing and sending off their tax returns prior to the April 15 tax day deadline, a groundbreaking report released March 24 by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and Love Makes a Family of Connecticut reveals that same-sex couples face widespread economic disparities and hardships because they are denied equal marriage rights.

The report takes situations commonly faced by Connecticut couples and compares the economic benefits afforded to married opposite-sex couples to those available to same-sex couples. Two same-sex couples residing in Connecticut are profiled to show the real-life costs to them and their children of not being able to marry.

Economic Benefits of Marriage Under Federal and Connecticut Law is the first comprehensive analysis of the disparities same-sex couples in Connecticut face in federal and state income tax, Social Security benefits, gift tax, estate tax, worker's compensation and line-of-duty death benefits.

Given the passage of the federal Defense of Marriage Act in 1996, which allows the federal government to withhold recognition of same-sex marriages performed in any state, in the short run same-sex marriages in Connecticut would not be recognized by federal bureaucracies. However, many believe DOMA to be unconstitutional, and it is possible that in the future DOMA will be struck down or repealed.

It is also possible that a president and Congress more supportive of equal rights for queers will afford these federal protections to married same-sex couples. While same-sex couples in Connecticut would not be able to immediately access those federal protections, if they are allowed to marry they have the potential to access these protections in the future. However, if same-sex couples are only allowed to form civil unions, under the current legal framework they would not be able to access any federal benefits or protections.

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission," said Malcolm Lazin, executive director of Equality Forum.

Equality Forum prepared the application with advice from gay pioneers Frank Kameny and Barbara Gittings, who helped organize the first demonstration. The event was held July 4, 1965, at Independence Hall.

Gov. Ed Rendell is expected to unveil the historical marker May 1 during the National Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the GLBT Civil Rights Movement at Independence Hall. The 16-hour event includes a Gay Pioneers & 40 Heroes Tribute in front of Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell Center, the SundayOUT street festival, a concert with Cyndi Lauper, the Gay Icons Pavilion at Independence Visitors Center, an interfaith service with Bishop Gene Robinson at the historic Christ Church Philadelphia, conversations with gay leaders at the National Constitution Center, entertainers, celebrities and parties.

The national celebration is part of Equality Forum 2005, which features more than 100 programs, including 14 parties and 40 special events. More than 105 local and national nonprofit organizations and 29 national and international queer executive directors will be participating. A total of 32 states and the District of Columbia will hold state receptions April 30.

There is no registration fee for Equality Forum 2005, and all substantive events, including the national celebration, are free.

**ALABAMA BILL WOULD FORBID
GAY ADOPTIONS**

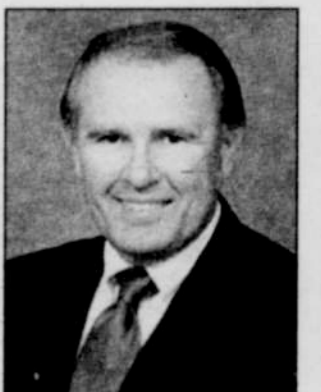
In Oregon, a measure before the Legislature would put homosexuals at the bottom of any list of people wanting to adopt—behind the usual suspects: straight married couples.

In Alabama, things are grimmer. The Legislature there is weighing a proposal that would make it illegal for a person who is gay to adopt a minor at all. The recently approved Marriage Protection Act, which acknowledges only unions between a man and a woman, effectively bars same-sex couples from adopting, and this proposal would seal the deal.

The proposal was put forward by state Sen. Hank Erwin Jr., R-Montevallo.

Current adoption policies do not preclude a gay individual from adopting a child, but because of the Marriage Protection Act, gay couples are deemed ineligible.

The 2000 census indicated Alabama had 8,109 same-sex partner households, representing about 0.5 percent of all households in the state. Sandy Holmes, program manager with the office of adoption for the Alabama Department of Human Resources, said 641 children in the state were awaiting adoption in February—272 of whom had no family identified to give them a permanent home, according to *The Montgomery Advertiser*.



Alabama state Sen. Hank Erwin Jr., R-Montevallo, is no friend of gay adoptive parents.



On July 4, 1965, 10 people carried signs in front of Independence Hall supporting gay emancipation. By July 4, 1969, 150 people participated. The annual demonstrations were abandoned in 1970 in order to join forces for the first anniversary of the Stonewall riots.

**MARKER TO BE UNVEILED
IN PHILADELPHIA: INDEPENDENCE HALL
DESIGNATED AS SITE OF FIRST
GAY AND LESBIAN DEMONSTRATION**

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has approved a historical marker recognizing the area around Independence Hall as the site of the first organized and annual gay and lesbian civil rights demonstration.

"We are thrilled that this important landmark has been approved unanimously by the

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