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New CDC Data: HIV Continues to Disproportionately Affect African Americans and Latinos

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released new national HIV surveillance data Nov. 17 from 33 states for 2001 to 2004.

The data show that HIV continues to disproportionately affect African Americans and Latinos. African Americans accounted for more than half of all HIV diagnoses from 2001 to 2004, a rate of diagnosis more than eight times higher than among whites. Latinos accounted for 18 percent of all HIV diagnoses from 2001 to 2004, and their rate of diagnoses in 2004 was more than three times higher than among whites. By risk category, men who have sex with men of all races continued to account for the largest number of diagnoses from 2001 to 2004—44 percent of all HIV diagnoses, and 61 percent of diagnoses among men.

"The CDC data—like the aftermath of Katrina—underscore the profound racial injustices that continue to afflict our nation," Matt Foreman, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force executive director, said in a statement. "No feeling person can be anything but appalled that African Americans are becoming infected with HIV at a rate eight times that of white people. No gay or bisexual person can think that HIV/AIDS is no longer a problem for our own community when nearly two-thirds of new infections among males are from men having sex with other men.

Clearly, the Bush administration's de-funding, de-prioritizing and de-gayng HIV prevention programs has been nothing short of a disaster, and we call upon Congress to act immediately to begin to address this tragedy."

U.S. Bishops Interpret Newly Released Vatican Document

Men with homosexual inclinations are not automatically barred from becoming priests under a new "Instruction" published Nov. 29 by the Vatican, according to Bishop William S. Skylstad, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

But men who principally identify as gay, and who support "gay culture," should not seek to enter the priesthood, he said. Skylstad issued a statement setting out how the Vatican document is to be implemented in the U.S. church.

U.S. Condemns Forced Medical Therapy for Gays in UAE

The U.S. State Department called for an end to the forced hormone therapy of several same-sex couples captured by police at an October gay wedding in

the United Arab Emirates. The couples are being held in Abu Dhabi and will undergo "psychological, medical and sociological treatment," said an Arab official.

In a related development, a resolution adopted Nov. 22 at the Gay & Lesbian Leadership Conference in Seattle calls on governments around the globe to abolish laws that punish queer citizens. "As the LGBT community continues to gain voices at all levels of policy making and implementation, it's incumbent that we continue to speak up for those whose voices are silenced in countries that deny them rights simply because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender," said Chuck Wolfe, president and CEO of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund and the Gay & Lesbian Leadership Institute.

Savage Calls on Democrats to Protect Privacy

Author and columnist Dan Savage is calling on

Democrats to sponsor a privacy amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would put to rest the debate concerning divisive issues such as abortion and gay rights.

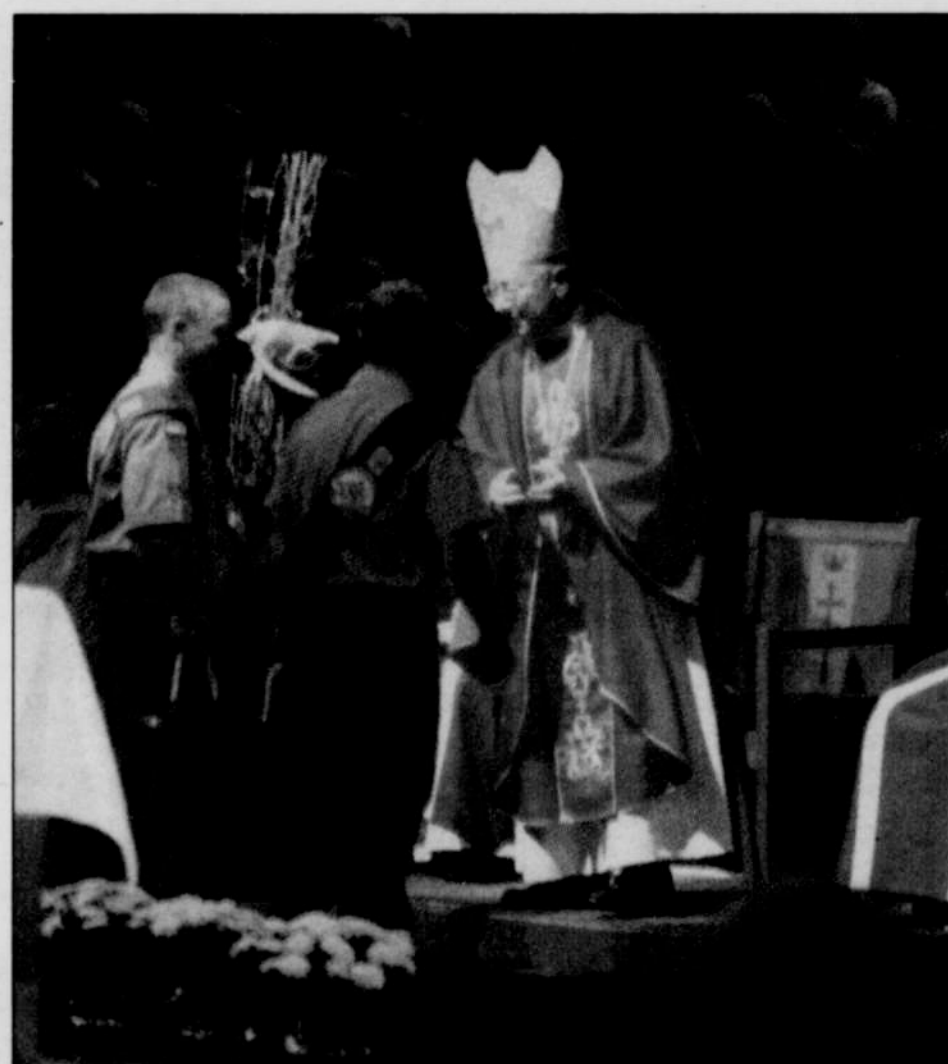
"If the Republicans can propose a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, why can't the Democrats propose a right-to-privacy amendment? Making this implicit right explicit would forever end the debate about whether there is a right to privacy," he wrote Nov. 18.



Dan Savage (left) just wants a little privacy. He is pictured here with his son and partner.

Naval Academy Grads Ask Group to Spell Out Anti-Discrimination Policy

The U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association will not consider an anti-discrimination policy when it meets this month because the agenda is full and it already has an open-door attitude toward graduates of all sexual orientations, said a representative. USNA Out, composed of gay academy grads, is pressing for an explicit anti-discrimination policy.



Bishop William S. Skylstad will wield the homophobic edict of the pope: No gays in the priesthood. Here, he is presented with five apple trees by two Boy Scouts on the event of his 25th year in the diocese of Spokane.