

strongly opposed an anti-gay constitutional amendment facing Wisconsin voters this November.

"The proposed ban on civil unions and marriage is a mean-spirited attempt to divide Wisconsin, and it should be defeated," Feingold said. "It discriminates against thousands of people in our communities—our co-workers, our neighbors, our friends and our family members. We shouldn't enshrine this prejudice in our state's constitution."

Feingold also expressed his support for the right of gays and lesbians to marry.

"Gay and lesbian couples should be able to marry and have access to the same rights, privileges and benefits that straight couples currently enjoy," he added. "Denying people this basic American right is the kind of discrimination that has no place in our laws."

As a result of this announcement, Feingold becomes the fourth U.S. senator to support marriage equality, along with Lincoln Chafee, R-R.I.; Edward Kennedy, D-Mass.; and Ron Wyden, D-Ore.

UTAH

24 Equality Riders Arrested at BYU

Two dozen activists were arrested April 11 on the campus of Brigham Young University during a demonstration designed to show the human cost of the school's anti-gay policies. The event was part of a nationwide protest tour by queer activists called the Soulforce Equality Ride.

The demonstrators carried Easter lilies onto campus in remembrance of queer members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who have committed suicide because of the church's stance on homosexuality.

"The lilies are symbolic of both life and death," said Haven Herrin, the ride's co-director. "It's particularly fitting during the Christian holy week that we remember those whose lives were not able to bloom because of the despair they felt from their church's teachings on homosexuality."

BYU junior Matt Kulisch, one of the students who participated in the action, cited his Mormon faith as part of his motivation for being arrested with the Equality Riders. "My church has always taught me the principle of standing for something true. My integrity demanded this message of God's love for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people be told in its entirety."

KENTUCKY

Governor Axes Protection for Gays

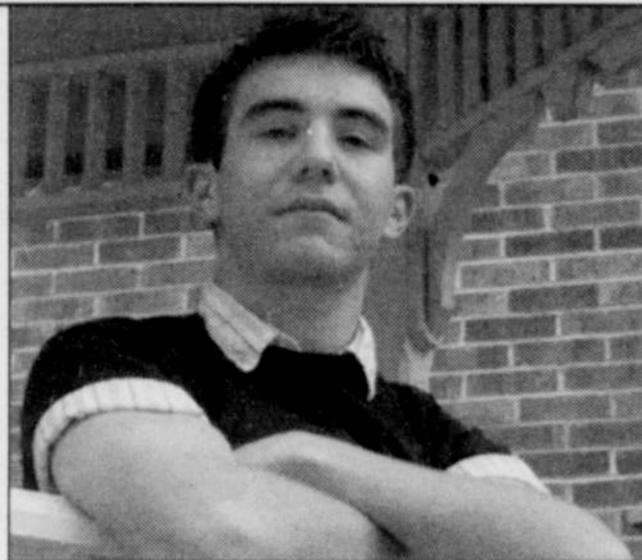
Kentucky's Republican Gov. Ernie Fletcher issued an executive order April 12 repealing anti-discrimination protections for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender state employees.

The order superseded a 2003 edict by his predecessor, Paul Patton, that protected state employees and job applicants from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The new policy forbids discrimination based on "race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, veteran status and disability" but does not mention sexual orientation.

"The governor's hypocrisy is outrageous and un-American," said Joe Solmonese of the Human Rights Campaign. "No one should be fired from their job simply because of who they are. Gov. Fletcher's backwards step does nothing whatsoever to move diversity forward and puts hardworking, tax-paying citizens at risk."

Ironically, Fletcher's order came on the same day he declared "Diversity Day."

"There is no better example of adding insult to



Sophomore Jason Johnson was kicked out of a Kentucky university because of his sexuality.

injury," said Solmonese. "On a day when the state was supposed to be celebrating diversity, Gov. Fletcher was removing an entire group of Kentuckians out of the law."

Expulsion Jeopardizes College's Funding, Accreditation

A Kentucky university's recent decision to expel a student for being gay might wind up costing the school a proposed multimillion-dollar college of pharmacy.

University of the Cumberlands, a private four-year college with about 1,700 students, bans homosexuality and extramarital sex as "not consistent with Christian principles." The school managed to draw a great deal of attention to this policy in early April, when campus officials discovered the home page of sophomore Jason Johnson on the popular social networking Web site MySpace.com. The page identified Johnson as gay, leading to his dismissal.

A gay rights group called Kentucky Fairness Alliance has responded with a petition demanding that Gov. Ernie Fletcher veto \$11 million in proposed funding earmarked for the creation of the new pharmacy school.

Moreover, the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education, which accredits pharmacy schools in the United States, requires that applicants prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. Without accreditation, a degree from the school would be largely worthless.

CALIFORNIA

Central Valley's Queer Prom Safe, Successful

Though organizers feared protests and possibly confrontation, an unofficial gay and lesbian prom celebration organized by high school students from the Central Valley city of Tracy went off without incident April 13.


Gay-friendly proms are commonplace in Southern California and the Bay Area. But in the more conservative valley, where the local economy is driven by commercial farming, the event was still a novelty, attracting visitors from a wide area.

"It's a way of getting more tolerance out in the Central Valley," Dane McKinley, 17, told *The (Stockton) Record*.

NEW YORK

Etheridge's Partner Expecting Twins

Singer Melissa Etheridge and her partner, actress Tammy Lynn Michaels, announced April 17 that the couple are expecting twins.

Etheridge wrote on her Web site: "We are thrilled to announce that Tammy is pregnant and expecting our twins sometime around this fall. To answer the obvious question: We used an anonymous donor from a [sperm] bank." 

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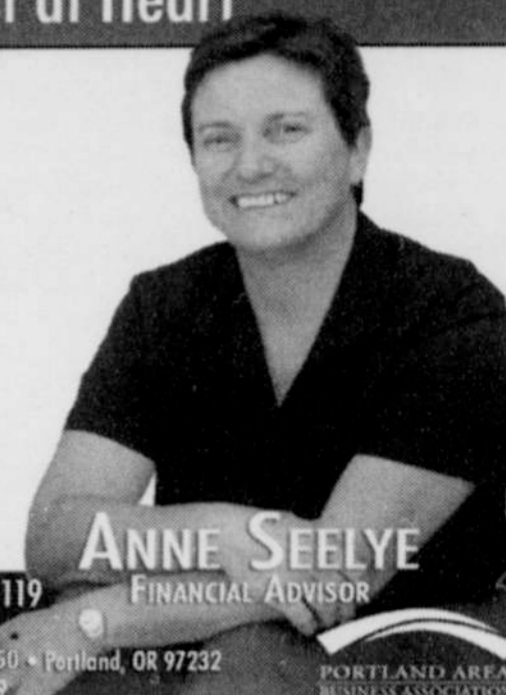
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