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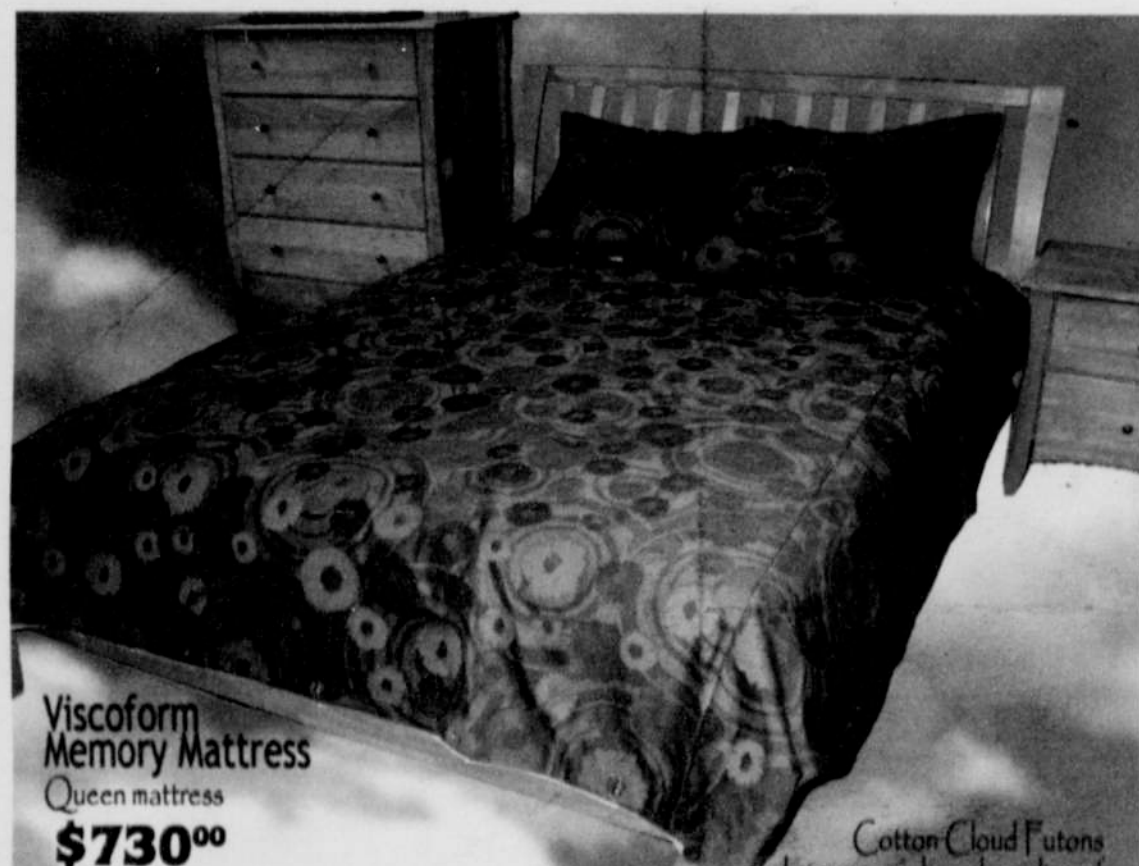
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national

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Study Probes Asian Same-Sex Families

The Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law released *Asians and Pacific Islanders in Same-Sex Couples in the United States: Data from Census 2000*, a study on Asian and Pacific Islander (API) same-sex families, Aug. 11. The study has been published in *The Amerasia Journal*, a national API interdisciplinary publication.

The study shows that more than 38,000 API people in the United States identified themselves as living with a same-sex partner in 2000. More than half of these couples are raising children.

The study highlights obstacles faced by API same-sex families, especially those with children, because they lack the legal protections offered by marriage.

"Census 2000 data quantify that Asians and Pacific Islanders represent a significant portion of the country's gay and lesbian families," said Gary Gates, co-author of the study and senior research fellow of the Williams Institute. "Many API same-sex couples, particularly those with children, are economically vulnerable, especially as they lack the support and protections that marriage provides to other American families."

Andy Marra, Asian-Pacific Islander media manager for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, said, "This research offers a rare opportunity for the media to explore API same-sex families and can give people a glimpse of the issues that impact their lives."

Voting Rights Act Renewed

In a July 27 ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House, President Bush signed into law a 25-year renewal of the landmark 1965 Voting Rights Act, which bans racial discrimination in voting across the country. The act won bipartisan approval from both chambers of Congress during this legislative session.

"Only when we safeguard the right of all voters to cast their votes can our system of government be truly representative," said Human Rights Campaign president Joe Solmonese. "The coalition of civil rights organizations who made this renewal a reality should be commended by all Americans for their outstanding work to protect our most precious democratic exercise—the right to vote. A threat to any American's right to vote is a threat to our democracy."

The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, along with its coalition members, which include HRC, signed more than 100,000 reauthorization petitions and made 15,000 calls to congressional offices urging renewal of the Voting Rights Act. An aggressive grassroots education and organization effort was waged across the country by thousands of volunteers in their local communities.

NEW YORK

West Pointer Slams Gay Ban

A West Point graduate has earned an academic award and congressional recognition for a senior thesis arguing that the military's gay ban should be scrapped because it violates military values. A dozen scholars who study the military said this was the first they had heard of a military service academy giving an award for research on gays in the military.

U.S. Rep. Marty Meehan, D-Mass., a senior member of the House Armed Service Committee, issued a letter of commendation the week of Aug. 7

to honor Army Lt. Alexander Raggio, the paper's author, for taking a morally courageous position on the controversial topic. Although the West Point award was given last year, it took several months before he attained permission to publicize it. Raggio, who is heterosexual, graduated from West Point in 2005 and now leads a platoon of 35 to 40 soldiers.

His study, *Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Be: A Philosophical Analysis of the Gay Ban in the U.S. Military*, was written as a senior thesis for West Point's English Department, which gave it the BG Carroll E. Adams Award for best thesis. The award is presented each May to the West Point cadet who writes the best dissertation in art, philosophy or literature. The study also earned special recognition from the vice dean for education.

The thesis contends that "don't ask, don't tell" is out of step with the values of both the military and the nation and that widening the gap between civilian and military culture works to the detriment of both.

Center Renamed for Billie Jean King

The United States Tennis Association announced Aug. 3 that the USTA National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows, N.Y.—the world's largest public tennis facility and home of the U.S. Open—will be renamed the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center to honor the tennis legend and trailblazer whose pioneering efforts helped change the sport and launch the drive for gender equality in sports and in society. The official renaming ceremony will take place on opening night of the 2006 U.S. Open.

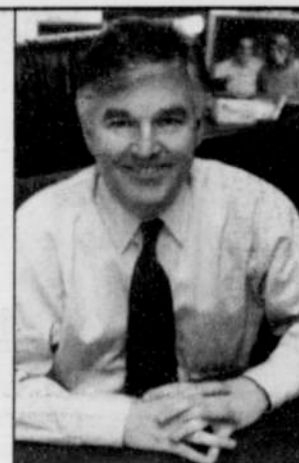
King, one of the most illustrious and celebrated athletes in history, is recognized for spearheading the women's movement in tennis by fighting for equal rights in the sport. Among the most decorated champions in tennis history—with 39 Grand Slam titles, including 13 U.S. Open titles—King's historic defeat of Bobby Riggs in the 1973 "Battle of the Sexes" was the most-watched tennis match in history. Her victory reverberated through both tennis and society, and proved a watershed moment for women and a galvanizing milestone of the 20th century.

MISSOURI

Missouri Might Get First Gay State Senator

Jolie Justus will likely become the first openly gay state senator in Missouri history after winning her Democratic primary Aug. 8. She will face a Republican opponent in November, but the district is considered a safe one for Democrats.

"In Alabama, Arkansas, Oklahoma and now Missouri, excellent candidates are winning historic races. Jolie's win is a testament to her courage, commitment and skill, but it also confirms that fair-minded voters everywhere care more about good government than they do about whether their representatives are gay or lesbian," said Chuck Wolfe, president and CEO of the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, which raised money for Justus' campaign from its national donor network.



U.S. Rep. Marty Meehan has introduced a bill that would let gays serve openly in the military.