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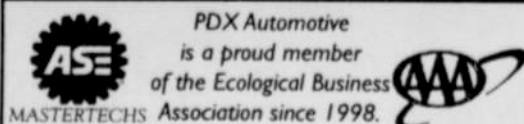
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NATIONAL

Foley Scandal Called
'Pure McCarthyism'

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force on Oct. 5 condemned emerging attempts to shift responsibility for the congressional page scandal by blaming gay Republican staffers for supposedly covering up prior reports of predatory behavior by former U.S. Rep. Mark Foley, R-Fla.

Discussions of a supposed network of closeted gays have swept blogs and major news networks. There are allegations, for example, that gay former Foley aide Kirk Fordham, the recently resigned chief of staff for Tom Reynolds, R-N.Y., worked to play down complaints about Foley's behavior. Fordham said more than three years ago he had "more than one conversation with senior staff at the highest level of the House of Representatives asking them to intervene."

"The GOP has only one response when it's in trouble—'blame the gays,'" said Matt Foreman, executive director of NGLTF. "First, they floated the excuse that past complaints about Foley weren't pursued because Republicans didn't want to look like they were 'gay-bashing.' Then, they dispatched henchmen like Tony Perkins and Pat Buchanan to offer the blood libel that gay men are prone to pedophilia. Now—in another signal of desperation—it is clear they plan to poison the debate further with allusions to a shadowy network of closeted gay Republicans who closed ranks to protect Foley. The parallels to McCarthyism are chilling."

CALIFORNIA

AIDS Activist Dies

Activist Jeff Getty, a member of ACT UP San Francisco, died of heart failure Oct. 9, following a cancer treatment. The 49-year-old was reportedly HIV-positive since 1980.

Getty was known in the early 1990s for a two-year fight with the Food and Drug Administration to allow an experimental bone marrow transplant from a baboon to see if the HIV-resistant cells could benefit humans. The experiment, conducted in December 1995 at San Francisco General Hospital, was unsuccessful. Getty, however, benefited from emerging protease inhibitor therapy.

He left the Bay Area and relocated to Joshua Tree in 2002. He is survived by his longtime partner, Ken Klueh.

California Court Rejects
Challenge to Marriage Law

In a 2-1 decision that will be appealed to the California Supreme Court, a divided panel of the

California Court of Appeal ruled Oct. 5 that California might continue to bar same-sex couples from marriage.

In a strong dissent, Justice Anthony Kline wrote, "The right to marry is of fundamental importance for all individuals."

Shannon Minter, legal director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, who argued before the court, said, "We are optimistic that the California Supreme Court will affirm the trial court's historic ruling and strike down one of the last remaining laws to discriminate against an entire group of people in this state."

In April 2005, San Francisco Superior Court Judge Richard A. Kramer ruled that barring same-sex couples from marriage unconstitutionally discriminates on the basis of gender and violates the fundamental right to marry. The ruling by the Court of Appeal will be appealed to the California Supreme Court by plaintiffs and the city and county of San Francisco, which argued a companion case challenging the exclusion of gay and lesbian couples from the ability to marry.

"We know that history is on our side," said Jeanne Rizzo and Pali Cooper, two of the plaintiffs in *Woo v. California*, who have been together more than 16 years.

In 2005, the California Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 849, the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act, which would have ensured equal treatment under the law by allowing same-sex couples to marry in California. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill.

Census Data Show Queers
in Every District

The Williams Institute for Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy in Los Angeles released a report Oct. 11 analyzing new demographic data about gay, lesbian and bisexual U.S. citizens. The study examined recently released data from the American Community Survey, part of the U.S. Census Bureau. The study includes estimates of the queer population in states and notes a significant increase in the number of self-identified same-sex couples nationwide.

The study documents a 30 percent increase in same-sex couples in the United States over five years, from nearly 600,000 couples in 2000 to almost 777,000 in 2005. The increase is five times the 6 percent rate of growth in the U.S. population.

"Most likely, as stigma associated with same-sex partnering and homosexuality decreases, more same-sex couples are willing to identify themselves as such on government surveys," said Gary Gates, senior research fellow at the Williams Institute and author of the study.

Aside from a more welcoming cultural climate, however, the turbulent political landscape for gay people might also be a large factor pulling couples out of the closet. According to the Williams study, the 10 states with the largest increases in same-sex couples were the sites of some of the nastiest political battles and biggest gay losses since 2000, such as Washington and New Hampshire. The rest of the surge of gay couples came from the Heartland, including Ohio, Minnesota, Colorado, Iowa



Activist Jeff Getty has died in California.