



LEAH GREENBERG/REX USA

ACT UP protesters block traffic during a demonstration in New York City.

for safer-schools legislation, showing the collective power of the emerging youth movement to create change in California."

Young people from across the state gathered in Sacramento for the event. Some youth met buses in their hometowns in the middle of the night to join their peers at the Capitol. Seven lawmakers and sexual minority community leaders joined youth leaders on stage at various points of the day, encouraging the students to raise their voices and educate the public about their experiences at school.

FLORIDA

City Elects HIV-Positive Mayor

According to reports from *The Sun-Sentinel*, Oakland Park, Fla., has elected its first HIV-positive mayor.

Larry Gierer, 51, was sworn in March 21. He had been elected to the City Commission in 2001. The former model and actor joins two other gay Floridian mayors, in North Miami and Pahokee.

One of Gierer's priorities will be bringing a personal face to the AIDS crisis affecting Broward County. An emerging gay district, Oakland Park's Wilton Manors neighborhood has an estimated 40 percent of residents who identify as gay and lesbian.

Florida Trans City Manager Fired

Despite a fight to hold onto his job, the city manager of Largo, Fla., was fired by a 5-2 City Commission vote March 24. Steve Stanton, who announced in February that he was transitioning to become a woman, was fired from the job he held for 14 years.

The vote came over the objections of the mayor.

Stanton has not yet announced whether he will take legal action.

NEW YORK

27 Arrested at NYC Rally

ACT UP commemorated its 20th anniversary of AIDS activism March 29 with a rally in New York City that drew an estimated 800 people and resulted in 27 arrests.

The group brought out 50 body bags, symbolizing the 50 Americans who die each day because of insufficient health insurance.

The protesters, who met at Federal Plaza and headed down Broadway, stopped at five sites of government and corporate power historically viewed as responsible for thousands of AIDS deaths and for the United States' health care crisis. At City Hall, they demanded that the city expand access to health

care for all poor people and people with HIV. They stopped at Trinity Church, the site of ACT UP's first public action 20 years ago, to remember those who died of AIDS or because of insufficient health care. The crowd swelled at the New York Stock Exchange, as chants condemned profiteering by insurance and health care companies.

The protest concluded at the Wall Street Bull statue, as the fervent group observed those engaging in civil disobedience. The 27 people who laid down in the street in front of traffic were arrested by police.

Fourth New York State Gay Legislator Elected

Matthew Titone became the fourth gay member of the state Assembly to serve in Albany in a special election March 27 to replace Assemblyman John W. Lavelle. Lavelle, who died of a stroke in January, was a strong supporter of gay rights.

Both assemblymen were Democrats in a solidly Democratic district.

Titone, 46, ran unsuccessfully for a state Senate seat last year. Aside from gay civil rights, his key issues are the state budget, the high cost of health care and education. 10

Compiled by JAYMEE R. CUTI

**Matthew Titone, an openly gay man, was elected to the New York Assembly.**

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