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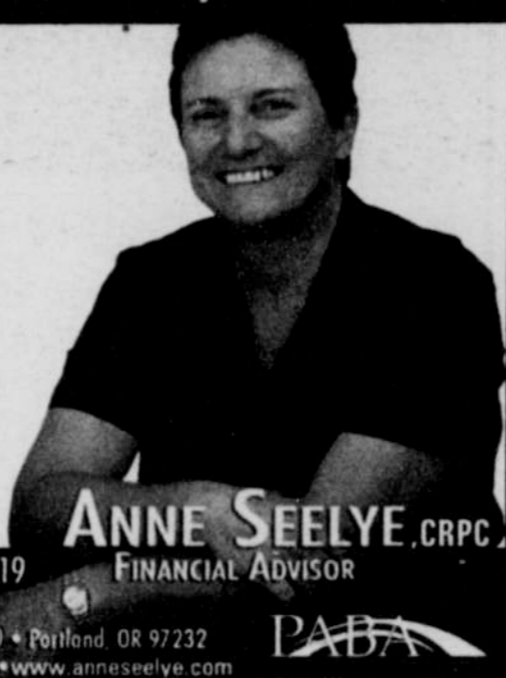
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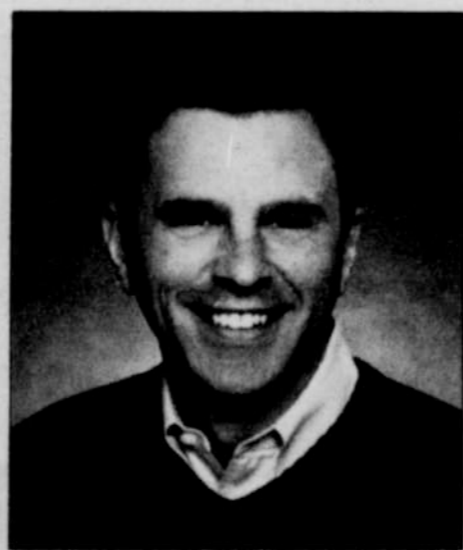
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# national

## NATIONAL

### Half of Americans Protected from Discrimination

For the first time, more than half the U.S. population will live in jurisdictions that outlaw discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, according to an analysis of census data and laws released May 9 by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

In addition, nearly 40 percent of the population will now live in jurisdictions that protect transgender people from discrimination—a sevenfold increase since 2000—and one-fifth of Americans will live in states that offer same-sex couples broad rights under state law—more than an eightfold increase since 2004. NGLTF said the 2006 elections and years of work at the grassroots level were responsible for the surge in legislation.

"This is a historic and long-overdue milestone. At long last, a majority of Americans will now live in jurisdictions that protect people from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation," said Matt Foreman, NGLTF executive director. "As important, protections for transgender people and broad rights for same-sex couples are surging from coast to coast."

Since Jan. 1, the legislatures in four states have passed nondiscrimination laws. Three of those states—Iowa, Oregon and Colorado—moved to extend protections to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, and Vermont passed a bill amending its existing nondiscrimination laws to include transgender people. As a result, the percentage of the U.S. population living in jurisdictions protecting gay, lesbian and bisexual people from discrimination will rise to 52 percent, crossing the halfway mark for the first time. The laws of Iowa, Oregon and Vermont prohibit discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations, among other categories; Colorado's law covers employment only.

## CALIFORNIA

### Name Equality Act Passes Assembly

The California Assembly passed legislation May 7 that would give all married spouses and domestic partners, regardless of their gender, equal opportunity to change their family name when they marry or register as domestic partners.

Lawmakers approved Assembly Bill 102, the Name Equality Act, by a 45-20 bipartisan vote.

The bill is authored by Fiona Ma, D-San Francisco, and co-sponsored by Equality California and the three California affiliates of the American Civil Liberties Union.

State law makes it difficult for a husband to take his wife's last name upon marriage, forcing couples to request a name change in court. Similarly, domestic partners have faced costly and lengthy court proceedings to change their last names after registering with the state. The bill would remove gender bias from both marriage and domestic partnership applications, allowing each spouse or partner, regardless of their gender, the same opportunity to select a new name.

"AB 102 would make it possible for all newly married and registered couples to obtain legal recognition of their chosen family name without unfair and undue hardship," said Geoff Kors, Equality California executive director. "With this legislation, Equality California continues to work toward its mission of ensuring equality for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Californians."

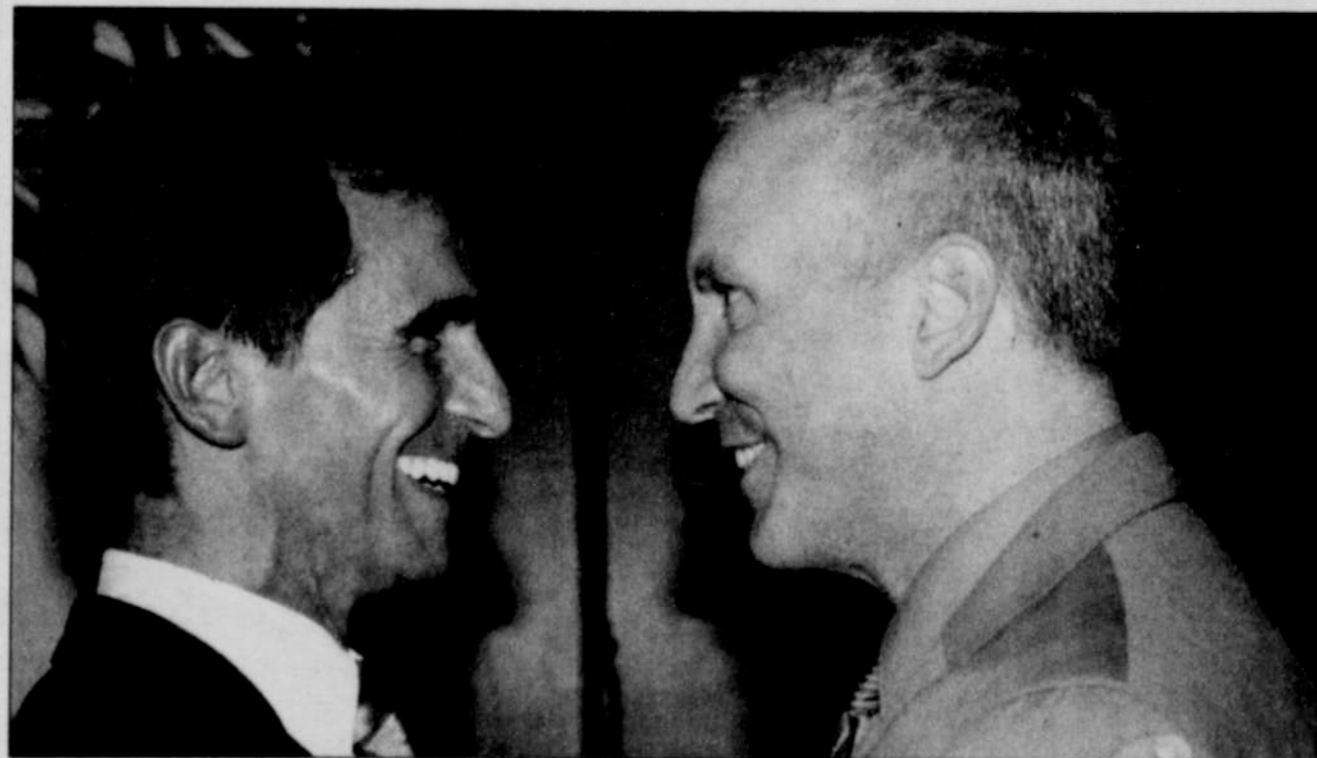
Seven states—Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New York and North Dakota—recognize a husband's right to take his wife's last name upon marriage. While Massachusetts allows same-sex couples who are legally married to change their surnames, California would become the first state to allow domestic partners to change their names if the proposed bill becomes law.

### Trans President Elected to SF Police Commission

The San Francisco Police Commission announced May 11 the election of openly transgender Commissioner Theresa Sparks as its new president.

Sparks, who joined the commission in 2004, has a long history of advocating for the transgender community, including working on a set of transgender-specific policy reforms adopted by the commission in 2003. With this election, she becomes the city's first openly transgender president of a major commission and likely the city's highest-ranking transgender official.

"I feel honored to have been selected for this position by my fellow commissioners," said Sparks. "While I think it is important to recognize the historic step they've taken to make San Francisco a city in which everyone, regardless of our gender identity, can meaningfully contribute, I am thrilled for this opportunity to represent all of the people of San Francisco."



Equality California executive director Geoff Kors (right) collaborated with Assemblymember Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, to help pass California's Name Equality Act.