



The Southern Idaho Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender Community Center created this ode to censorship in the Western Days Parade on May 31.

tial determination of eligibility, citing unspecified "legal questions and policy issues" involved with the application. Day has provided all the necessary documentation to establish a legitimate parent-child relationship and has fulfilled all of the SSA's prerequisites. The SSA is required to determine whether or not the children are entitled to child insurance benefits as dependents of Day but has yet to do so for more than two years.

"As a parent, it is my job to provide for my children. Unfortunately, the SSA, who is supposed to help during a time of need, is standing in the way," said Day.

IDAHO
Gay Organization Hides Identity in Twin Falls Parade

The Southern Idaho Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender Community Center decried the "Western Days" Parade Committee's decision to allow gay people to participate in the community celebration under a cloud of secrecy May 29.

The Western Days Parade Committee told the center that it could enter the parade, but the group couldn't make any reference—on the parade entry or in literature, T-shirts or signs—to sexual orientation or gender identity. The parade committee gave strict instructions to the center that the words "gay," "lesbian," "bisexual" and "transgender" or any words similar may not be used anywhere during the parade. Rainbow imagery, symbolic of the gay community, was also prohibited.

Parade organizer Mary Anne Taylor stated that the float must match the description on the parade application, but when questioned by the media what that description was, organizers were unable to answer what that description was.

"Gay and lesbian people live in Twin Falls, Idaho; we work here, we have families and participate in our communities," said center president Brandi Jones. "We are part of our community every other day of the year, and we shouldn't be excluded from being part of our community on this one day."

For the first time in its 26-year history, the parade committee rejected the center's request to participate in the event last year.

This year, in accepting the parade entry, the

committee also forbade the center from talking about HIV/AIDS or any sexually transmitted infection prevention. Additionally, ignoring alarming rates of drug abuse in Idaho's Magic Valley, the parade committee is prohibiting the center from mentioning any type of drug prevention as a condition of participating in the parade.

"When Idaho faces rising rates of HIV/AIDS infections and epidemic increases in drug use, specifically crystal methamphetamine, we are proactively trying to educate the community to help people remain healthy and strong," Jones said. "Silencing conversation about these issues weakens our community because it leaves people uninformed and vulnerable."

The center joined the May 31 parade but made a statement about the censorship with its entry. The center's float was black and white, and a question mark appeared in place of words that might have denoted sexual orientation or gender.

NEW YORK
New York Alters Same-Sex Marriage Policy

New York Gov. David A. Paterson directed all state agencies May 14 to begin to revise their policies and regulations to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other jurisdictions, like Massachusetts, California and Canada, even though New York does not recognize same-sex marriage.

In a memo, the governor's legal counsel, David Nocenti, instructed the agencies that gay couples married elsewhere "should be afforded the same recognition as any other legally performed union."

According to a National Public Radio report, Paterson's directive "ordered state agencies to review their policies and to ensure they allow equal rights to married same-sex couples." The report continued to state that New York has a tradition of recognizing marriages that are legally performed in other states or countries.

Eliot Spitzer, Paterson's predecessor, introduced a bill into the state Legislature last year that would have legalized gay marriage. The bill passed in the Democratic-led Assembly, but the Republican-controlled Senate has yet to vote on it. 10

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