

Oregon District Judge Rules Denial of Health Care Benefits for Same-Sex Couples Constitutes Discrimination

Chief Judge Ann Aiken of the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon ruled July 25 that the denial of health care benefits to the same-sex partner of a U.S. District of Oregon court employee constitutes unlawful discrimination.

Per a press release from Stoel Rives LLP—whose retired attorney Pamela Jacklin represented the plaintiff pro-bono—Margaret Fonberg, a longtime law clerk now working for U.S. District Magistrate Judge Thomas M. Coffin, filed the discrimination complaint after she tried to enroll her domestic partner in her employer-offered federal health care plan during the 2009 annual enrollment period, but was declined by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The OPM cited the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) as the basis for its decision. DOMA defines “spouse” as an opposite-sex partner in a legal marriage, and OPM determined the federal family health benefits plans that covered employees, spouses and other family members could not be extended to same-sex couples.

Judge Aiken ruled that the denial of benefits to Fonberg and her partner constitutes sex discrimination and discrimination on a basis unrelated to job performance. The decision breaks new ground in the ongoing legal argument over same-sex benefits, as it finds DOMA’s denial of benefits discriminatory even though Fonberg and her partner are not legally married.

Per the release, Aiken agreed with Fonberg’s argument that if either Fonberg or her partner were male, not female, “Fonberg’s compensation would include insurance benefits for her partner.”

involved stayed together and continued to play. This led to an influx of queer-identified punk groups with few options for releasing their particular brand of music. Enter: Punk Start My Heart “Records.”

The crew behind the label is accepting donations via online fundraising site Kickstarter, with a goal of raising \$6,000 by August 26 to fund the release of their first three records. Through the Kickstarter campaign, the label would utilize funds to cover pressing and printing costs for a 7-inch vinyl release from Fagatron, a split 7-inch from Fucking Lesbian Bitches and NO/HO/MO, and a full 12-inch LP by Forever.

Incentives for donations to fund the project range from PSMH tote bags and mix tapes to larger goodies like a digital scrapbook of a recent tour by NO/HO/MO, Fucking Lesbian Bitches and Forever.

Just a few weeks after the deadline hits for PSMH’s fundraising goal, the second installment of the Not Enough! Festival gets underway September 17-18 at an as yet undecided location. The all-ages event is slated to feature brand new film, visual art, music and more.

To donate to the Kickstarter campaign for Punk Start My Heart Records, search for “Punk Start My Heart” at kickstarter.com. For updates on the Not Enough! Festival happening in September, visit notenoughpdx.tumblr.com.



A Q Patrol volunteer recruits another for the cause.

Punk Start My Heart Takes to Kickstarter to Kick Label into Gear

Upstart queer/feminist punk rock record label Punk Start My Heart Records seeks help to get its fledgling imprint off the ground.

PSMH began as a booking collective dedicated to setting up shows for women, people of color and queer-identified musicians. The group’s influence eventually paved the way for the First Annual Not Enough! Festival in 2010. Following the festival—a two-day queer music and art fest in which performances, bands and art pieces are created specifically for the event for first-time exposure—many of the bands

Q Patrol Struggling to Get Volunteers Out on the Streets

An email sent to *Just Out* once again outlined the dire need for volunteers with availability to contribute to Portland’s Q Patrol. Q Patrol has experienced a steady decline of available volunteers to stoke its numbers on weekend patrols.

“If Q Patrol is going to survive, we need a better response to our availability requests,” read the email to Q Patrol volunteers.

A recent gathering at Red Cap Garage to generate new volunteers and promote Q Patrol’s monthly trainings yielded no new volunteers, reported co-founder Samuel

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SUITCASES FOR KIDS

Portland Luggage Co. and Portland Metropolitan Rotary with Children’s Services jointly have launched a program to provide travel ware for foster children moving from one family home to another. “We found that many foster youngsters are faced with packing their clothing and personal belongings into cardboard boxes, grocery bags, even plastic garbage bags,” said Portland Metro Rotary Secretary Douglas Porter.

Both Portland Luggage locations offer up to 20% off purchases for customers who donate a suitable travel ware item (suitcase, duffel bag, backpack). Usable or repairable items will be refurbished and distributed on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

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