

Clock In for Equality May 15, 2007

SOUNDING THE ALARM FOR WORKPLACE RIGHTS



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>> Several employees schedule a meeting with their company's human resources director to discuss the need for domestic partner benefits.

>> A union holds a forum to educate its members about the importance of including protections for transgender workers in their union contract.

>> Community members meet with a legislator to discuss the harassment and discrimination lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees often face at work and the need for legal protections.

Each one of these actions can be an important, incremental step toward winning equality for LGBT people and people with HIV in the workplace. Ordinarily, each will go relatively unnoticed. No stories will appear on the six o'clock news. No articles will be written for the local newspaper. They might not even generate enough attention to be a topic for discussion in the workplace break room.

But what if thousands of people across the country did something to stand up for workplace equality on the same day? Actions that might make a tiny blip on the national radar can collectively have a much broader impact.

"Clock In for Equality" is Lambda Legal's national day of advocacy and education to advance workplace equality for LGBT people and people with HIV. On Tuesday, May 15, 2007, there will be coordinated actions happening in workplaces and communities across the country. Our goals for the day: to educate the public about the harassment and discrimination LGBT people and those with HIV face at work, to increase support for efforts to win legal protections for LGBT employees and those with HIV and to activate LGBT people and allies to fight for workplace fairness.

So far, more than 60 national, statewide and local partner organizations have signed on to participate in the day, including the

Equality Federation of Statewide LGBT organizations, the Latino Commission on AIDS, the National Association of LGBT Community Centers, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the National Center for Transgender Equality, Out and Equal Workplace Advocates, PFLAG, HRC and Pride at Work.

It's About Time

LGBT people and those with HIV continue to face discrimination in the workplace. In Lambda Legal's 2005 Workplace Fairness Survey, 39 percent of respondents reported experiencing some form of discrimination or harassment in the workplace because of their sexual orientation during the past five years. Additionally, workplace fairness remains the number one issue for callers to Lambda Legal's Help Desk.

Despite the tremendous strides we've made in recent years, including a growing number of corporations enacting nondiscrimination policies and providing equal benefits, there are still no federal protections for lesbian and gay workers in the private sector. Only 18 states and the District of Columbia currently ban workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and only nine states protect workers based on gender identity. Meanwhile, recent polls show that close to 90 percent of people in the United States think lesbians and gay men should have equal rights in the workplace.

Set Your Clock for May 15

Sign up now at www.lambdalegal.org to join the organizations and individuals who have pledged to "Clock In for Equality" by taking action on May 15 to help advance efforts to win increased protections for LGBT people and people with HIV. You can take action at work, in your community, with a group or individually. Once you sign up, you'll be able to download an action guide along with talking points, action ideas, sample flyers, press materials and other "Clock in for Equality" tools and resources. Our online center will keep you connected to people and organizations participating in the day.

SIX WAYS YOU CAN CLOCK IN FOR EQUALITY

1 Wear a "Clock In for Equality" button to work and encourage your coworkers, friends and family to do the same.

2 Take Your Partner To Work! If you're in a same-sex relationship, bring your partner's picture to work and display it.

3 Invite your supervisor or manager to lunch to talk about the need for strong nondiscrimination policies.

4 Recruit your friends, family and coworkers to join our workplace advocacy campaigns online.

5 Host an ally breakfast or luncheon honoring someone who has taken significant steps to support LGBT and HIV workplace rights.

6 Join efforts to pass local, state or federal legislation that bans discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.