

Equality **Across** America

On May 15, 2007, Lambda Legal launched a national workplace day of action **Clock In for Equality**. More than 200 partner organizations and people in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. joined us to raise awareness about the discrimination and harassment that lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people and people living with HIV continue to face on the job. Together, we held community events, luncheons, rallies and town hall meetings. People passed out stickers and buttons at work and engaged their co-workers and allies in conversation. Here are a handful of reports from the day's events:



LEFT: Panelists Pauline Park, Chair of NYAGRA (right), and Elizabeth Rivera, of TransJustice at the Audre Lorde Project sign Lambda Legal's petition to support the federal ENDA. RIGHT: Director of Education & Public Affairs Leslie Gabel-Brett kicks off the festivities at Lambda Legal's panel on transgender rights in the workplace in New York.

10:00 A.M. NEW YORK

The law firm Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP opens its doors for a Diversity Breakfast in its Midtown office, handing out Clock In for Equality buttons and encouraging the lawyers and staff to learn ways to be more effective allies to LGBT people and people living with HIV. Sonnenschein also supplied buttons to many of its other offices around the country to raise awareness companywide.

11:30 A.M. INDIANAPOLIS

At DowAgroSciences, the technical team has been working since early this morning setting up for this simulcast presentation. As Lambda Legal staff attorney Jim Madigan describes the state of legal protections for LGBT people and people with HIV in the workplace, Dow employees listen attentively. They learn that there is currently no federal law expressly protecting employees against sexual orientation discrimination or discrimination based on gender identity and presentation. Employ-

ees at eight additional Dow sites across the Midwest and South Central regions also see Madigan's presentation in real time video.

12:00 P.M. ATLANTA

Senior Staff Attorney Greg Nevins stands at a podium set up at one of Lambda Legal's flagship events, a community luncheon for workplace fairness. He talks about one of our plaintiffs, Izza Lopez, a transgender woman in Texas who had her job offer rescinded because her would-be employer claimed she had "misrepresented" herself as a woman on her application. A federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act, like the one that is currently pending in Congress, would explicitly protect LGBT people from exactly this kind of discrimination.

1:00 P.M. DALLAS

You can hear the clink of ice cubes as people finish their glasses of iced tea and leave their napkins on the table at the Hilton Lincoln

Center. A panel of human resources professionals from Deloitte, EDS and Ernst & Young has just wrapped up their remarks, and Lambda Legal's South Central Regional Director Dennis E. Coleman is thanking the crowd for coming to learn about the role that human resources plays in workplace equality. Currently 86 percent of Fortune 500 companies prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. While a much smaller number of company policies include gender identity and expression, that number is rapidly increasing.

1:30 P.M. NEW ORLEANS

The NO/AIDS Task Force is sitting down to a lunch meeting with staff and volunteers. Clock In for Equality buttons can be seen on people's T-shirts and lapels, and people are sharing their experiences with discrimination in the workplace. Many at the table commit to sending an email to their friends and acquaintances to encourage them to support LGBT people and people living with HIV in the workplace.

2:00 P.M. NEW YORK

The Gayglers, Google's LGBT Resource Group, are wrapping up a talk at their offices in Manhattan about the lives of LGBT employees at Google. The talk was open to all employees at Google and shown via video conference to their main headquarters in Mountain View, California, as well. The question & answer session is quite lively as the Gayglers discusses ways that Google can further its commitment to diversity and leadership as an LGBT-friendly corporation.

3:00 P.M. DALLAS/FORT WORTH

The Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport is teeming with travelers rushing to make their flights, while pilots, flight attendants and engineers work hard to see that those airplanes travel safely. American Airlines has posted notices to its employees, reiterating its commitment to providing a safe workplace for all employees. Members of GLEAM, the American Airlines LGBT Resource group, are distributing Clock In for Equality buttons and stickers to their co-workers on the tarmac.

4:30 P.M. WASHINGTON, D.C.

The last of the citizen lobbyists with the National Center for Transgender Equality climbs



One Clock In for Equality participant writes down the action he took that day and posts it to the wall at the LGBT Center in New York.

into the van to go home for the day. A Clock In for Equality button flashes on someone's backpack. These lobbyists have been meeting with legislators on Capitol Hill since 9:00 a.m., telling their stories and demanding change. More than 70 people had signed up to lobby for transgender equality in the workplace, representing more than 20 states.

7:00 P.M. ATLANTA, GA

A handful of committed activists stand on the steps of Georgia's capital building, raising their voices for workplace equality in the state and across the country. Lambda Legal Staff Attorney Beth Littrell and Gail Cowie of Just Equal take turns at the podium, rallying the crowd and pressing the importance of nondiscrimination laws for LGBT workers and their families. They say the contributions of LGBT workers and workers with HIV must be respected and rewarded.

8:00 P.M. NEW YORK

There is a lively discussion under way at the LGBT Center in New York. Elizabeth Rivera, the program coordinator of TransJustice at the Audre Lourde Project, is talking about the difficulties that transgender people face in finding employment. For many transgender people, the job hunt is complicated by the fact that their current legal documents, like driver's licenses and passports, may not match their other forms of legal identification, such as their birth certificates. Deputy Legal Director Hayley Gorenberg pointed out that many transgender people are wrongly viewed by employers as "lying" on their job applications when they indicate

their gender identity, leading to lost job opportunities and sometimes legal challenges.

9:00 P.M. SEATTLE

The Seattle Labor Temple is still buzzing with conversation and energy, as speakers from tonight's presentation mingle among the crowd and answer questions informally. Lambda Legal plaintiff Larry deGroen explains to a volunteer how his case with Lambda Legal seeks nothing more than equal benefits for equal work. Larry is a firefighter who serves the people of Bellevue, Washington. When his partner's father died and he made a request for bereavement leave to attend the funeral, his request was denied and he was forced to make up the day. If the city treated its gay and lesbian employees in committed relationships equally to its heterosexual, married employees, Larry would have been granted paid leave.

10:00 P.M. CHICAGO

DJ Emily gets ready to sign off on her Women on Women Music Program on WLWU 88.7 FM. WOW is a radio program devoted to female independent musicians in a cross-section of genres. She plays songs from Sonic Youth, Björk, Cibo Matto and PJ Harvey, and in between talks about Clock In for Equality. She says thousands of people taking action in their communities on the same day can make change. The experimental acoustic sounds of Daylight Basement's "Godspeed Girl" ends the show in Chicago. Meanwhile, people across the country reflect upon their day — and make plans to continue the fight with Lambda Legal tomorrow. **L**