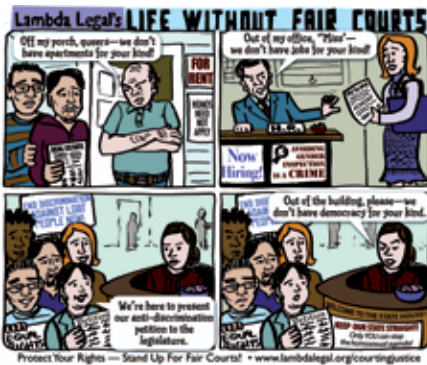


# LAMBDA LEGAL FINDINGS

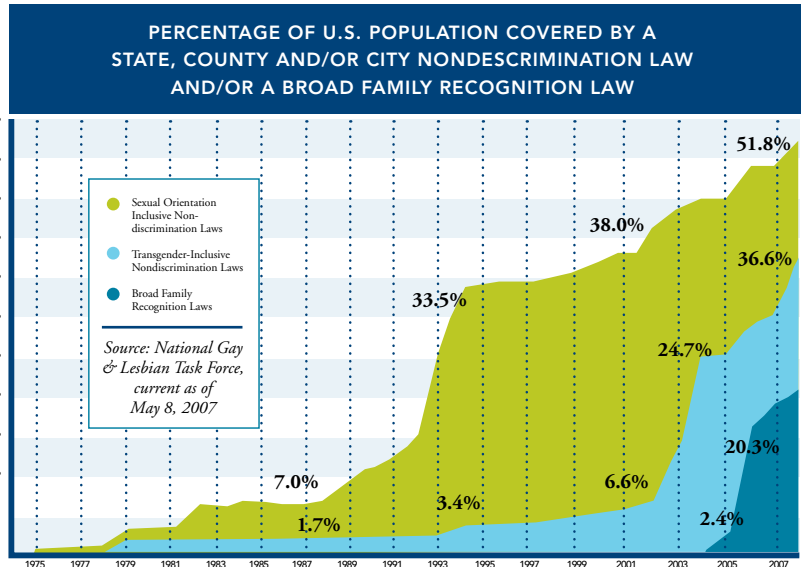
## “Life Without Fair Courts” CONTEST UPDATE

*This spring, Lambda Legal and Prism Comics, with media sponsor the Advocate, joined forces to host a nationwide graphic art contest about what life would look like without fair courts. Our panel of celebrity judges has narrowed the field to five finalists — and now we need your help! Visit [www.lambdalegal.org/courtingjustice](http://www.lambdalegal.org/courtingjustice) to cast your vote for the winner and find out more about Lambda Legal’s Courting Justice campaign. The contest ends **July 15, 2007**, so cast your vote today!*



We've Come A Long Way!

- For the first time in history, **more than 50 percent** of all people in the U.S. live in a jurisdiction that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.
- In just five years, the percentage of people protected from discrimination based on gender identity and expression has jumped from **5% to 37%**.
- **One in five people** in the United States now live in a state that offers broad rights and responsibilities to same-sex couples.



## ON THE DOCKET

### ON THE BORDER

Lambda Legal secured asylum for Jorge Soto Vega, who suffered death threats and police beatings in his native Mexico because he is gay. Jorge fled Mexico for Los Angeles 15 years ago fearing for his life. Despite this persecution, his initial application for asylum was denied because the judge ruled that he could hide his sexual orientation if he chose. Lambda Legal challenged the decision and secured asylum for Soto Vega when the court overturned the initial decision, emphasizing that you shouldn't have to hide your sexual orientation to avoid being persecuted.



Lambda Legal won asylum for Jorge Soto Vega, who was persecuted because he is gay.

**IMPACT:** Our victory in this case helps lay a firm groundwork for asylum claims based on antigay persecution, while also highlighting that it is wrong for the government to force LGBT people to stay in the closet to survive.

### ON THE CLOCK

As firefighters and paramedics, Larry deGroen and Faun Patzer put their lives on the line for the people of Bellevue, Washington. George Einsetler assists the public at their most vulnerable as a lead 9-1-1 dispatcher for the city. All three are in committed relationships and are being denied valuable family benefits offered to their heterosexual married coworkers. Lambda Legal filed a lawsuit on their behalf against the city of Bellevue on April 17, 2007, making a splash in local and state media outlets and securing a strong editorial supporting our claim in the *Seattle Times*. Six days later, the city council directed staff to develop a strategy to implement domestic partner benefits, which will be brought before the city council for a vote.

**IMPACT:** While we hope Bellevue’s city council will do the right thing for its residents, Lambda Legal will press forward with our case to establish the right of gay and lesbian public employees in Washington to receive the same family benefits for their committed life partners that married heterosexual public employees receive.



Larry deGroen (right) and his domestic partner Tom Dixon are fighting for equal benefits and equal rights in Bellevue, Washington.

Not long ago, it would have been unthinkable that a lawyer working on behalf of the LGBT community would be appointed to a prominent public position in the government — but at Lambda Legal, we’ve had two lawyers recently leave our ranks for just that reason. This spring, Director of Constitutional Litigation Patricia M. Logue was sworn in as an associate judge on the Cook County Circuit Court in Illinois, while Staff Attorney Alphonso David was appointed as the special advisor to the commissioner of the Division of Human Rights for New York State. Logue’s 14 years on staff at Lambda Legal began with opening Lambda Legal’s Midwestern Regional Office in Chicago in 1993 as Managing Attorney and heading all operations there for five years. She has worked on a wide variety of state and federal matters, serving as one of the lead attorneys on Lambda Legal’s landmark case *Lawrence v. Texas*, which struck down the nation’s remaining sodomy laws in 2003. In his time with Lambda Legal, David worked on cases that pushed the envelope for same-sex couples and their families, securing respect for the parental rights of nonbiological gay and lesbian parents and working

# Lambda Legal SALUTE



extensively on Lambda Legal’s marriage-related litigation in New York. Their work has helped changed the landscape for LGBT people and people with HIV, and we thank them for their leadership. We are proud to see them continue to lead as public officials.

QUOTABLE

## Marjorie Hill



“Before AIDS had a name, Gay Men’s Health Crisis was already making a difference in the lives of the people most directly affected. Despite monumental progress in research and treatment, there is still no cure and no vaccine. It is my hope that together with Lambda Legal and other longtime partners in this fight against AIDS, we at GMHC will continue to make a difference here and now.”

— Marjorie Hill, Chief Executive Officer of GMHC Accepting a Liberty Award on behalf of GMHC at Lambda Legal’s 21st Annual Liberty Awards National Dinner in New York City

## AT HOME



A Florida judge upheld alimony for Julio Roberto Silverwolf, a transgender man, after his ex-husband tried to stop payments. Silverwolf’s ex-husband alleged that Silverwolf’s transition from female to male was the legal equivalent of death and therefore ended his obligation to pay alimony. Lambda Legal convinced the judge to reject this contention, and Silverwolf’s alimony will continue. At the same time, the judge also cited a 2004 precedent holding that a transgender person’s post-transition sex is not recognized under Florida statutes — ultimately making this a mixed decision for the transgender community.

**IMPACT:** Respect for a transgender person’s gender identity should not come at the expense of other rights. Lambda Legal will continue to press forward to see that all transgender people are respected and treated fairly in Florida and across the country.

## AT SCHOOL

Nancy Wadington attended Holmdel High School in New Jersey and survived nearly three years of verbal and physical harassment from other students because she is a lesbian. Despite her complaints, the school administration did not take effective measures to protect Wadington. Lambda Legal filed a lawsuit to make sure that laws protecting students from violence and harassment are enforced. The school then filed a separate lawsuit against the students who abused Wadington, attempting to shift the blame to the very students it failed to discipline effectively. Last month a judge saw through this tactic and dismissed the case. Wadington’s case will proceed to a jury.

**IMPACT:** Wadington’s case highlights the violence that many LGBTQ youth still face in schools today, even in states like New Jersey where the law explicitly protects them. Lambda Legal is making sure such laws are more than just words on paper.



Nancy Wadington was harassed for years at her high school in New Jersey because she is a lesbian.