



# With Change, Challenges

In the 36 years that Lambda Legal has been fighting for equality, I don't think there has ever been a moment when so many victories and opportunities are before us at the very same time that we face such enormous challenges.

In the last year, we made significant progress, and in the year ahead, opportunities abound. For example, we are waiting for a decision in our marriage-equality case in Iowa, argued before the state's Supreme Court in December; we are working closely with our colleagues at the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) and the ACLU on our challenge to the validity of Prop 8 in California; and we have pending cases defending the civil rights of workers, parents and children, and people with HIV.

There is hope and expectation in the air as President Obama and his administration take office. There are many states in our country where there is little law to protect LGBT people against discrimination, but that may soon change. We hope that this year we will see enactment of a fully inclusive Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA), a hate crimes law, repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and implementation of policies to end governmental discrimination against people with HIV. And when new laws are enacted, Lambda Legal will have the responsibility to make sure they are properly enforced and applied. Strategic legal work must establish precedents that will protect LGBT people and people with HIV for years to come.

But these are also challenging times, not only for millions of individuals and businesses who are facing economic losses, but also for nonprofit organizations like Lambda Legal who depend completely on contributions to support our work. Many people do not realize that we must raise our entire operating budget every year. We rely on thousands of individual donors and many foundations and corporations that support our mission. This model has kept us working and growing for more than 35 years. When people and

organizations make contributions to Lambda Legal, that money goes directly into our work as we make the case for equality.

But when our supporters are hurting, our organization is hurt too. We feel the pinch. As prudent stewards of our funding and our future, we had to make the difficult decision in November to eliminate positions and reduce other expenses by approximately 10 percent. We are committed to protecting Lambda Legal's core mission and winning as many battles as ever. We are letting our supporters know that we are not holding back and asking them to do all they can to help so that we can make the most of the opportunities ahead.

Our strategy is simple: We are keeping our eyes on the long-term effectiveness of Lambda Legal and making short-term adjustments to keep our civil rights work moving forward.

Great opportunities and big challenges — sometimes they come at the same time. We are using all our talent and resources as strategically as we can. And we are moving ahead with a plan to keep our organization strong for the future. Seizing opportunities and overcoming challenges — that's what Lambda Legal does best.

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