



Advocating for Change

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At Lambda Legal, we spend most of our time making the case for equality in the courts—but we also fight for freedom in the community and in the chambers where laws are made.

During Pride season, Lambda Legal staff, members and volunteers can be found in cities and towns around the country marching, handing out fact sheets, answering questions and having fun. We enjoy seeing so many LGBT folks, friends and allies getting together to share their pride. Please check out the list of pride events (see page 5) where Lambda Legal will be marching or have a booth—and come by and visit us!

I have been traveling around the country quite a lot recently to speak at events and meet our members and supporters. One of my most frequent destinations is our nation's capital, Washington, D.C. More federal and congressional offices have been opening their doors to the LGBT community. Lambda Legal has been in the room and at the table, making the case for equality.

For 37 years, we have been bringing—and winning—high impact cases to court on behalf of LGBT people and people living with HIV. Just this spring, we won a federal court decision striking down a law in Wisconsin that had barred certain medical treatment for transgender people in prison. We also won a decision from New York State's highest court affirming the parental rights of a non-biological lesbian mother.

Even when we don't win in court, though, we move forward and make change. When our client Janice Langbehn received a call from Air Force One and heard the voice of President Obama on the line, she knew that her fight had an enormous impact on the lives of other LGBT families facing medical crises. Here's what happened:

First a tragedy occurred—and a hospital treated a lesbian couple in an outrageous and discriminatory way. We sued the hospital on behalf of Janice and her family but the court found that even though what had happened to Janice was terribly wrong, there was no legal recourse. We never want to

lose a case, and our hearts were breaking for Janice, but we all kept fighting. Lambda Legal and Janice kept the story alive with community organizing, public speaking and work with the media—and the story reached the ears of the President. Even though we lost a battle in court, we won the war. The change ordered by the President will be more far-reaching than the court could have ordered in Florida.

But at Lambda Legal, we also know that the better our laws and government policies are, the more protected people are from unequal treatment, and the more equipped Lambda Legal's attorneys are to fight injustice. That's why we push for change and provide expert advice to White House officials and members of Congress.

We are not lobbyists, but legislative leaders count on our attorneys to provide crucial information, expertise and support on the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA), repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and other matters vital to the communities we serve. I joined one of our plaintiff couples from Iowa and Rep. Jerrold Nadler as he introduced the Respect for All Marriages Act, which would eliminate DOMA. We were also proud when our client Vandy Beth Glenn, fired from her job because of her gender identity, was one of four individuals invited to tell her story and testify in support of ENDA at a congressional hearing.

After years of winning groundbreaking cases to protect the rights of LGBTQ youth in schools, we assisted the drafters of the federal Student Nondiscrimination Act introduced in January. We have collaborated with many partners to pursue LGBT equality in immigration and health care reform. And after years of advocacy by Lambda Legal and many others, the travel ban on people with HIV was finally lifted, along with the ban on federal funding for syringe exchange programs.

Making the case for equality means covering all the bases: the courts, the community, the White House, the halls of Congress and the offices of federal officials. That's how we make change and demonstrate our pride.

On behalf of Lambda Legal, we wish you all a happy pride season!