



MAKING IT HAPPEN

LAMBDA LEGAL ANNUAL REPORT 2002



Cover:
Alicia Heath-Toby (left) and
Saundra Toby-Heath, see
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Bill Flanigan, see story
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(photo by Sven Wiederholt)

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Lita (left) and Lydia Ramos,
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Derek Henkle, see story
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I CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN.

For 30 years, Lambda Legal has made that statement of resolve a reality for countless people nationwide.

As a direct result of our work in 2002, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people and those with HIV or AIDS are living their lives more openly and being treated more fairly. Same-sex couples have more of the benefits and rights married couples take for granted. More lesbian and gay parents will be judged based on their parenting skills instead of their sexual orientation. LGBT youth will be safer at school. Our communities have more tools to protect and expand their rights.

Make no mistake — there's still a tremendous amount of work to be done. But in the pages that follow, highlights of Lambda Legal's work in 2002 show how far we've come, how far we have to go and how we're going to make it happen.

OUR FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

Our goal is simple: to tear down the barriers that prevent lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgendered people and people with HIV or AIDS from living fully and equally. To make it happen, Lambda Legal shapes the major forces in our lives — what's legal and what's possible. We're changing the landscape with our three key strategies:

IMPACT LITIGATION We carefully select which lawsuits to pursue — so that a Lambda Legal case has the potential to make the biggest difference for the greatest number of LGBT people and people with HIV or AIDS nationwide. Whether we're rolling back discrimination, establishing new legal rights or enforcing those that already exist, our lawsuits create a world of new possibilities, every day, for each and every one of us.

EDUCATION We know our legal victories don't happen in a vacuum, and we know victories mean more than court rulings. Using our lawsuits and our unique voice, Lambda Legal shapes public opinion about our lives and why discrimination is wrong. We also give LGBT people and those with HIV or AIDS the information, advice and tools they need to fight discrimination in their neighborhoods, schools and jobs — moving our victories from law books into people's lives.

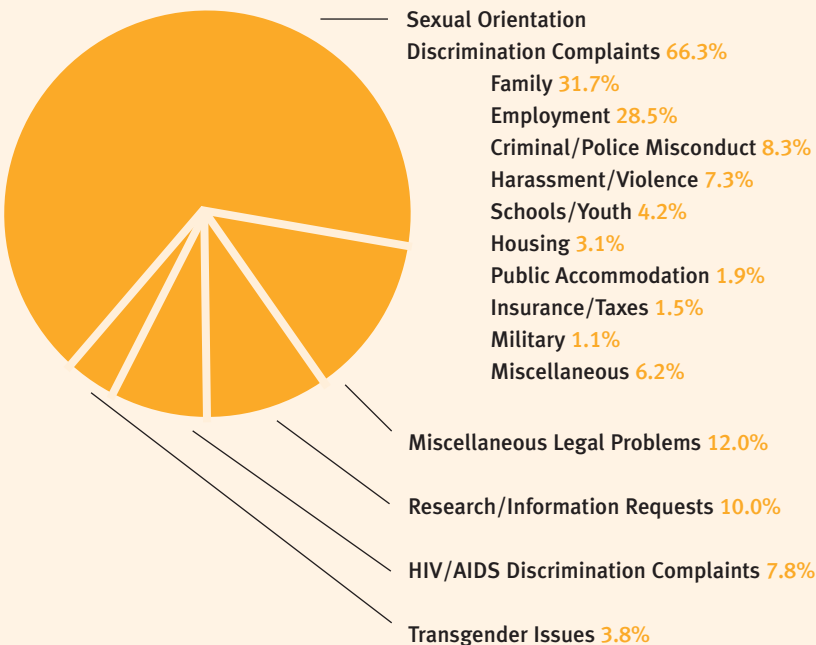
POLICY ADVOCACY Courts sometimes can't or won't take on the discrimination that too often tarnishes our lives. So Lambda Legal works directly with lawmakers, policymakers and businesses to win fairness for LGBT people and for those with HIV or AIDS. We draft legislation, fight back when the right-wing attacks civil rights laws, and persuade corporations and organizations to treat their employees and clients equally.

ANSWERING CALLS FOR HELP

Thousands of people every year call Lambda Legal's Help Desks — sometimes coming out and fighting back for the first time in their lives. A fraction of these callers become clients in our precedent-setting lawsuits, but every person who dials Lambda Legal's phone number finds the support, resources and referrals that can change their lives.

This year, 4,000 people called Help Desks at our national headquarters and our four regional offices around the country. Calls for help rose nearly 20 percent this year — our biggest jump in recent memory.

The calls range from questions about taxes to discrimination in the military, but they all have one thing in common: they're from people who are LGBT or have HIV or AIDS — people who desperately need help and have finally found it.



BATTLEGROUND FOR FAIRNESS The areas where Lambda Legal struggles for greater equality are as broad as life. We fight so that people can be themselves — partners, parents, students, employees and neighbors — every day and everywhere without apology or discrimination.

PROTECTING RELATIONSHIPS Regardless of how long they've been together, how completely their lives are intertwined or how deeply they love each other, most same-sex couples are treated like strangers under the law. Lambda Legal fights for our relationships to receive the same respect, rights and protections as heterosexual couples. In 2002, our fight for same-sex couples reached new heights when we filed a lawsuit seeking full marriage rights in New Jersey, helped craft a powerful domestic partnership law in California and gave LGBT people first-ever tools to establish life planning documents.

SECURING FAMILIES The real challenge of parenting is shaping the person your child will become. But many lesbians and gay men fight just to start and keep families. Lambda Legal has revolutionized the way judges, lawyers and officials treat lesbian and gay parents — but gay parents are still often judged based on their sexual orientation, rather than what kind of parents they'll be. This year we broke new ground, helping win the right for people to adopt their partners' children in Pennsylvania and forcing Virginia to let lesbians and gay men adopt children.

PROTECTING YOUTH LGBT young people are often at risk in the very places they most need support — in schools and social service systems. Lambda Legal fights for LGBT youth to have education and services without violence or harassment. That means pressing schools to protect all students, supporting gay-friendly teachers and fighting for gay-straight clubs. Our work on behalf of youth leapt forward in 2002 with a landmark settlement that lets students be safely out at school and a groundbreaking initiative that will help LGBT youth in foster care nationwide.


WINNING FAIRNESS AT WORK There's enough to worry about at work without having to hide who you are. Lambda Legal fights for equal benefits for partners, equal protection from harassment and an equal chance to get hired and get ahead. In 2002, we won a court ruling that will help protect LGBT employees from sexual harassment and we made a school district pay for the severe anti-gay harassment of a lesbian teacher.

FIGHTING AIDS DISCRIMINATION People with HIV and AIDS often have strong legal protection from discrimination — but in daily life we still face bias from employers, health-care providers and the government. Lambda Legal works to make sure people with HIV or AIDS have equal access to health care and insurance coverage, and that their right to privacy is respected. This year we took on a dentist who had brazenly violated the law by refusing to treat a man with HIV and we secured a solid victory for low-income people with HIV and AIDS whose records were confiscated by the government.

MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFER We should be able to feel safe where we live, hang out, shop and eat. Lambda Legal works to make sure safety hits home by fighting for people who are targets of violence and by empowering LGBT people with information and strategies to be treated more fairly. This critical work rose to prominence in 2002 with an unprecedented effort to connect with LGBT Latinos and our fight to hold a pair of judges accountable for their extreme anti-gay bias.

FIGHTING GOVERNMENT ABUSE All anti-gay discrimination is intolerable, but it's particularly painful when our own tax dollars are used to discriminate against us. Lambda Legal works to ensure that the government protects LGBT people like everyone else and helps prevent the government from singling out LGBT people for discrimination. These efforts took an historic turn in 2002 when Lambda Legal persuaded Arkansas' Supreme Court to strike down the state's sodomy law and the U.S. Supreme Court to consider striking down the nation's remaining sodomy laws.





Until we win full recognition of and respect for our relationships, lesbian and gay couples will continue to face the day-to-day personal tragedies and outrageous acts of discrimination that we see so often in our work at Lambda Legal. Therefore, we fight to win equality for same-sex couples, and at the same time show these couples how to protect themselves.

SUPPORTING SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

- **Fighting for the right to legally marry**
- **Securing equal benefits when partners die on the job**
- **Improving California's domestic partnership benefits**



“I have a huge hole in my heart and in my soul because I wasn’t allowed to be with Robert when he needed me most — when he was dying. I felt helpless when the hospital staff didn’t treat me as family and let me be with him. Without the support of Lambda Legal there is no way I would have been able to fight for justice for myself and for Robert.”

BILL FLANIGAN, plaintiff in Lambda Legal’s first-of-its kind lawsuit against a hospital for not giving a same-sex couple emergency medical visits.



“Marriage is a solemn and public covenant between two people. When those two people are of the same sex, we need to be able to call it what in fact it is: a marriage. We need to seek to make the changes needed to accomplish this goal.”

BISHOP JOHN P. CRONEBERGER, Episcopal Diocese of Newark, who spoke in support of Lambda Legal’s marriage equality lawsuit in New Jersey.

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO LEGALLY MARRY

The fight for marriage equality took a dramatic step forward this year when Lambda Legal filed an historic lawsuit seeking full marriage rights for lesbian and gay couples in New Jersey.

Josh is 9 years old. He doesn't understand why his parents, high school sweet-hearts who have been together for 27 years, aren't married. Like every other state in the country, Josh's home state of New Jersey won't let his parents get married because they are both women. So his parents, Maureen Kilian and Cindy Meneghin, are denied recognition, respect and a wide variety of protections, benefits and responsibilities designed to support and protect families. Sometimes this means paying steep legal fees to piece together protections, like second-parent adoptions so that Josh and his sister, Sarah, will be legally related to both parents. But there's no automatic fix when the hospital doesn't let Maureen visit Cindy or when one mom can't get on the other's health plan. "Often, our entire life together counts for less than a day in the life of two people who meet in Las Vegas and get married on the spot," Maureen says.

That's why Maureen and Cindy joined six other lesbian and gay couples in Lambda Legal's lawsuit for marriage equality in New Jersey. With a powerful legal case and an aggressive grassroots effort that's building strong and wide-ranging community support, we're fighting both in the courthouse and in the court of public opinion.

THE IMPACT In New Jersey and elsewhere, we've won some rights that most Americans take for granted — fairness at work, protections from violence and the right to adopt children. But LGBT people want — and deserve — more: full equality, including the right to marry. Winning our case in New Jersey would be a crucial stepping stone to making same-sex couples equal everywhere.

MAKING HISTORY

1990: Persuaded TWA to change its frequent flier program to include unmarried couples.

1993: After four years of litigation, New York City becomes the largest municipality to offer health benefits to domestic partners.

1996: First-of-its-kind ruling from Hawaii Supreme Court paves way for marriage for gay couples; victory later quashed by voter initiative.

2002: Filed lawsuit for full marriage equality in New Jersey.

SECURING EQUAL BENEFITS WHEN PARTNERS DIE ON THE JOB

This year, Lambda Legal convinced the federal government to recognize a gay surviving partner for the first time, as we continued fighting for those who lost their loved ones on Sept. 11, 2001.

Peggy Neff called Sheila Hein “my entire world and my soul mate, my closest confidante and my best friend.” They had been together for 18 years until, on Sept. 11, 2001, Sheila died at work in the Pentagon. When her remains were found in the rubble after the terrorist attack, she was wearing the gold ring Peggy had given her years earlier. When Peggy applied for assistance from a Virginia state fund for people whose loved ones die on the job, she was rejected — with a note that offered condolences for the death of her “friend.” She turned to Lambda Legal, and we represented her before the federal government’s fund for people whose loved ones died on Sept. 11. This year, she received \$500,000 from the fund and became the first lesbian or gay surviving partner ever acknowledged by the federal government.

Justice for Sheila and Peggy is just the beginning, though. Our case on behalf of Larry Courtney, whose partner of 14 years died at the World Trade Center, helped persuade the New York State Legislature to pass a law giving spousal workers’ compensation benefits to lesbians and gay men whose partners died at work on Sept. 11. But Bill Valentine, whose partner of 21 years died just weeks after Sept. 11 when he was working as a flight attendant on a plane that crashed in New York, won’t be helped by that new law. Lambda Legal pushed forward with his case this year.

Almost a third of LGBT callers to Lambda Legal’s Help Desks want assistance to protect their families.

The most recent U.S. Census counted 594,000 households in the U.S. headed by same-sex couples.

THE IMPACT Just as we work for equal treatment in daily life, we’re fighting for equal support should our loved ones be lost. The uncertain fate of lesbian and gay surviving partners after Sept. 11 underscored for all Americans the stakes in our struggle for equality. Our work on behalf of these brave survivors helps lay the groundwork for protecting same-sex couples every day of the year.

IMPROVING CALIFORNIA'S DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS


Lambda Legal helped strengthen California's domestic partner law this year — providing more protections and benefits to thousands of same-sex couples.

The horror has been all too familiar to lesbians and gay men in California: a same-sex partner dies suddenly without a will, and relatives lay claim to the life the couple shared — their home, their business, their bank accounts, all of their belongings. Even though California provides rights for married couples if one spouse dies without a will, the same isn't true for registered domestic partners. Lambda Legal helped draft and pass a law this year that would automatically entitle domestic partners to a share of their partners' privately owned assets — a critical step in making sure lesbians and gay men don't suffer financial crisis in addition to personal tragedy when a partner dies.

To take domestic partnership rights even further, Lambda Legal played a leading role in drafting a comprehensive bill in California that will provide registered domestic partners many of the state rights and responsibilities of marriage. As introduced in the legislature, the bill would provide full community property rights, parental and financial rights, and joint state tax filing status. If passed, the bill would be a tremendous step forward for domestic partners statewide.

THE IMPACT By lending our legal expertise when legislation is being crafted, Lambda Legal helps make sure laws will help as many LGBT people as possible. Domestic partnership laws like California's are strongest when they provide as many of the same rights of marriage as possible — and thanks to the laws we're helping to write, thousands of same-sex couples will have more of the protections that married couples take for granted.





Across the country, lesbian and gay parents are creating caring and nurturing homes for their children. But too often these homes are threatened by discrimination in adoption, custody and visitation rights. Lambda Legal helps mothers and fathers win the legal recognition they need so they can concentrate on what should matter most — being good parents.

PROTECTING LGBT PARENTS AND THEIR KIDS

- Fighting for the right to start families through adoption
- Combating bias to keep families together
- Securing families through second-parent adoption



“It took over 10 days to get Linda’s body from the coroner. He wouldn’t give it to me, so I had to track down the father who had abandoned her. As soon as Linda’s relatives saw that, they assumed I had no rights at all and took our daughter. I was ready to lose my mind. Lambda Legal got back my child, and my sanity.”

LYDIA RAMOS, whose partner of 14 years died suddenly, setting off a chain of events that led to the couple’s daughter being taken from Lydia.



“Not having a birth certificate wasn’t easy for him even as a 5-year-old, and he didn’t even know it. He couldn’t register for school; he couldn’t join a little league team. He had no social security number, so I couldn’t put him on my health insurance. Thankfully, this ordeal is over and we can now go on with our lives.”

CHERI GOLDSTEIN, plaintiff in Lambda Legal’s case that forced Mississippi to issue a birth certificate listing both her and her partner as the parents of the child they jointly adopted.

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO START FAMILIES THROUGH ADOPTION

Lambda Legal won a victory this year that paves the way for lesbians and gay men in Virginia to adopt — in a case that broke down another wall of bias in one of the states that's most hostile to our families.

Ten years after she adopted her son from foster care in Washington, D.C., Linda Kaufman wanted to bring another child into her family. Linda, an Episcopal priest who lives in Northern Virginia, was carefully screened by D.C. adoption officials, who said that she is an excellent mother and would provide an ideal home to another child. But none of that mattered to officials in Virginia, who must also approve the adoption. For two years, they prevented Linda from even applying — using the state's sodomy law to justify discrimination against gay people seeking to adopt.

Lambda Legal, along with the ACLU of Virginia, took Virginia to court. This year, in a far-reaching settlement, the state agreed to allow Linda's adoption to proceed and to begin processing similar adoption applications from lesbians and gay men statewide. As a result, Linda is preparing to welcome another child into her home — leaving one less child languishing in D.C.'s troubled foster care system.

THE IMPACT Hardly any state in the country officially prohibits lesbians and gay men from adopting children, but officials in many states still refuse such adoptions. This case is one more building block in our decades of work forcing states to treat lesbian and gay parents fairly. And it's another victory against the ripple effects of bigotry, striking a blow for kids who are denied good homes because of anti-gay bias.

MAKING HISTORY

1977: Helped a lesbian foster mother retain custody of her foster children.

1996: Won second-parent adoption rights in Illinois.

1999: Helped convince New Jersey Supreme Court to grant visitation rights to non-biological parents.

2002: Virginia officials agree to stop considering sexual orientation in out-of-state adoptions.

COMBATING BIAS TO KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER

In a case that's become a powerful force for educating communities nationwide about our families, Lambda Legal got Lydia Ramos' daughter back after the girl was taken by relatives of Lydia's deceased partner.

Lydia Ramos never realized that her family was so vulnerable. For 14 years, she and her partner, Linda Rodriguez, provided a loving home for their three children. They raised two children from Lydia's previous relationship and a younger daughter Linda gave birth to and named after Lydia. At times, Lydia and Linda considered hiring a lawyer to prepare legal documents that would protect their children and property if something ever happened to one of them. But they worked multiple jobs to make ends meet and couldn't afford that legal work.

Then the unimaginable happened: Linda was killed in a car accident. For Lydia, the devastation of losing the love of her life was suddenly compounded by the fear that she might never see her daughter again. Linda's relatives took Little Lydia during the funeral and for weeks refused to tell Lydia where she was. Fortunately, Lydia found Lambda Legal. We quickly obtained an emergency order requiring Little Lydia's return, and later secured an order that gave Lydia permanent guardianship. As a result, Lydia is able to focus on what's really important — raising her daughter.

Hundreds of gay parents call Lambda Legal's Help Desks each year for advice, referrals and support.

49% of lesbian and gay people hope to have or adopt kids one day.

THE IMPACT While Lambda Legal often secures legal precedents that help in other cases around the country, sometimes we're fighting for community precedents — victories that correct a terrible wrong and educate LGBT people about their rights. Thanks to our intervention, Lydia has her daughter back and gay parents have a powerful reminder of why they need to take steps to legally protect their relationships with their children.

SECURING FAMILIES THROUGH SECOND-PARENT ADOPTION

By defending second-parent adoptions in California — and helping make them legal in Pennsylvania — Lambda Legal again expanded its work this year to protect gay and lesbian families.


On both coasts this year, two lawsuits were poised to change the landscape for lesbian and gay parents who want to solidify their families through second-parent adoption. So Lambda Legal intervened in both cases to fight for gay parents and their children in those states. In Pennsylvania, same-sex couples sought a statewide ruling giving their children a legal connection to both parents instead of just one. Meanwhile, in California, more than 15 years of second-parent adoptions were jeopardized after an appeals court issued a shocking ruling saying that they were not permitted under state law.

In second-parent adoptions, the same-sex partner of the child's biological parent can adopt the child without affecting the biological parent's rights — so both parents are fully recognized and protected legally. In these two cases, thousands of families' legal rights and daily lives were at stake. Health insurance companies, the government, schools, day-care centers and countless other institutions recognize parents only when they are legally related to children.

Lambda Legal strengthened the parents' position in the Pennsylvania case, and the state Supreme Court ruled that second-parent adoptions are legal. In California, we're helping persuade the California Supreme Court that second-parent adoptions are not only legal in the state, but that they've been an effective tool for family stability and security.

THE IMPACT The second-parent adoption rights we fought for this year — and that we've paved the way for in states all around the country — often determine whether people are seen and treated as the parents of their own children. Our efforts in Pennsylvania and California this year were a leap forward for thousands of parents and their children.





For so many lesbian and gay employees, the workplace has become a hiding place — where we shield who we are out of fear for our careers. Or worse, we are harassed and discriminated out of our jobs. That's why is it so important to all of us at Lambda Legal to fight to make the workplace fair for LGBT employees.

WINNING FAIRNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

- Protecting LGBT employees from sexual harassment
- Helping LGBT employees be out at work
- Supporting gay teachers in our nation's schools



“Coming out has had a tremendous impact not only on me and my partner, but on so many other people. At a police chiefs’ conference, a chief told me that one of his officers came out at a staff meeting because of me. He said, ‘If Chief Ron can do it, so can I.’ Just as I gave him the confidence to come out, Lambda Legal gave me the confidence to do it.”

CHIEF RON FORSYTHE, who worked with Lambda Legal and became the first openly gay police chief in the country.



“There are no words to describe how happy I am that my case is over — and no words to describe how sad I am not to be teaching. But I have found justice by adding teeth to an anti-discrimination law that others can now use. And I am so proud that Lambda Legal and I were able to do that.”

DAWN MURRAY, on the settlement of her seven-year lawsuit against a school district where she faced vicious discrimination and harassment because she is a lesbian; she now fights for the rights of other teachers as a union representative for the California Teachers Association.

PROTECTING LGBT EMPLOYEES FROM SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This year, Lambda Legal helped secure a major legal precedent that will protect LGBT employees from a common form of harassment on the job — and brings us closer to full equality in the workplace.

Medina Rene, a gay butler serving high-profile guests at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, was subjected to offensive cat-calling and physical harassment on a regular basis by his supervisor and co-workers. They grabbed his crotch and buttocks and routinely referred to him as “she” and “her,” mocking him for being “like a woman.” Medina fought back and sued for sexual harassment. But amazingly the courts initially told him he had no case because he was targeted for harassment based on his sexual orientation, which isn’t included in federal laws that prohibit sexual harassment.

Lambda Legal stepped in on Medina’s behalf and told a federal appeals court that employees should be protected from sexual harassment regardless of whether they’re gay or straight. We argued that the harassment Medina suffered was based partly on gender stereotypes — that he faced hostility because he didn’t look or act the way his boss and coworkers thought a man should. The federal appeals court agreed, in a ruling that has broad implications for LGBT employees. As a result, LGBT workers have strong new protections, employers have been put on notice to address sexual harassment equally, and Medina has hope that his former boss and co-workers will finally be held accountable.

THE IMPACT There is no federal law prohibiting anti-gay discrimination or harassment on the job, and only 14 states have laws protecting gay employees. By securing a strong federal appeals court ruling that includes LGBT employees in existing sexual harassment laws, we gained an important building block that brings us one step closer to full equality. In the process, we added a powerful tool to our arsenal to protect LGBT employees, since so much anti-gay harassment in the workplace is sexual in nature and rooted in gender stereotypes.

MAKING HISTORY

1978: Professor fired for being gay is reinstated in his job.

1988: MCI adopts company-wide nondiscrimination policy after we sue on behalf of a fired gay employee.

1998: Ended Puerto Rico police department disciplinary rule that prohibited officers from “associating with homosexuals.”

2002: Helped win federal appeals court ruling that sexual harassment of a gay employee because of gender stereotypes is illegal.

HELPING LGBT EMPLOYEES BE OUT AT WORK

This year when a gay police chief became the nation's first to come out, he turned to Lambda Legal for help — and together we sent a critical message to LGBT people everywhere that they can be out at work and still pursue their dreams.

From a young age, Ron Forsythe knew that there were no gay police chiefs and that there never had been. So he stayed deeply closeted as he rose through the ranks in a small-town police department in Northern California. When he finally became the Chief of Police in Suisun City, he worked even harder to keep his secret, only dating men who lived several hundred miles away. But then Ron met the love of his life, Matt Holden; eventually, the couple decided they wanted to start a home together. Almost immediately, Ron, a 27-year veteran of the force who won numerous awards for his innovative approaches to law enforcement, faced rumors and innuendo, and his job — the one job he always dreamt of having — was in jeopardy.

He turned to Lambda Legal for help. We gave him the legal advice he needed, and then began working with him in support of his decision to come out — both to his staff and to the world. Ending his silence empowered Ron and exposed the bias of those who had been trying to undermine his career. The day we broke Ron's story in the media, he took Matt to the staff holiday party. "I hope that this may make a difference for anyone else who may be trying to make the same decision," Ron says. We're continuing to work with Ron and protect his job, but we've already helped break down a major barrier with his story.

Almost **a third** of LGBT callers to Lambda Legal's Help Desks face discrimination at work.

Only **14** states have laws banning anti-gay discrimination on the job.

THE IMPACT We move closer toward winning full equality for LGBT people when the public has a greater understanding of our lives and sees us as neighbors, friends and co-workers — and in positions of responsibility that defy stereotypes. Ron's courageous decision to come out helps young people see that being gay doesn't need to be a barrier to pursuing any professional dream — including being a police chief.

SUPPORTING GAY TEACHERS IN OUR NATION'S SCHOOLS

Lambda Legal made significant strides this year in protecting gay teachers from discrimination — in the process helping the students who benefit from their support and guidance.

A seven-year chapter in Dawn Murray's life finally came to a close this year with a favorable settlement ending her lawsuit against the San Diego County school district, where she was an award-winning high school biology teacher. Dawn was denied a promotion because administrators didn't want a lesbian "that close to the kids." For years, she faced relentless anti-gay harassment from fellow teachers and administrators, including name-calling, homophobic graffiti and the vandalizing of her classroom. Dawn sued the school district — in large part because she felt the harassment taught terrible lessons to her students. During the lawsuit, Lambda Legal secured an important precedent in the battle against anti-gay discrimination against school employees in California. This year's settlement awarded Dawn \$140,000 and requires annual training on anti-gay discrimination for the school district's employees on sexual orientation discrimination.

Meanwhile, Lambda Legal used its victory on behalf of two Michigan teachers to help other teachers and LGBT activists fight similar discrimination. The two gay teachers were forced to dismantle displays they had created for lesbian and gay history month, part of a school-wide campaign of "respect and dignity for all." Lambda Legal helped secure a decision that reversed the school's actions, and this year we used the victory to support an education campaign aimed at preventing discrimination like this from happening again.

THE IMPACT We know — both from our own experiences and from national education reports — that the type of anti-gay harassment Dawn faced and the discrimination the two Michigan teachers fought can create an unsafe environment for LGBT students. By working for gay teachers, we're fighting two battles — one against employment discrimination and the other for youth who need to learn that it's all right to be gay and it's not all right to discriminate.



All young people spend huge amounts of time at school, and some youth live in foster care. But too often, these places are hostile and unsafe for LGBT youth. At Lambda Legal we work to free LGBT young people from harassment and violence, and help them get what they need to become healthy and happy adults.

FIGHTING FOR LGBT YOUTH

- Holding schools responsible for LGBT students' safety
- Helping LGBT foster youth transition into healthy adults
- Taking on dangerous "abstinence-only" programs in schools





“Settling my lawsuit means kids in my former school district will be able to be out at school. But also through the education campaign that I’m working on with Lambda Legal, hopefully students will learn how to fight for their right to an education — and not lose years from their childhood, like I did.”

DEREK HENKLE, plaintiff in Lambda Legal’s case against a school system that allowed years of anti-gay abuse.



“Having such a wonderful resource at out fingertips has taken out a great deal of leg work and afforded us the time and energy to think of even more ways youth can be protected in schools and how that should be done. The publication offered such a thorough breakdown of strategies to use that it has become a living document as we continue our work.”

NATALIE RETENELLER, director of the Louisville Youth Group in Kentucky, who uses a guide Lambda Legal published with the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN).

HOLDING SCHOOLS RESPONSIBLE FOR LGBT STUDENTS' SAFETY

A landmark settlement Lambda Legal won for a gay student in Nevada this year helps protect LGBT students nationwide from harassment and, for the first time, affirms that they have a constitutional right to be fully out at school.

From the time Derek Henkle came out on public-access television when he was 14, his life in the Reno, Nevada, school system was a nightmare. "I would be spit on, and I would be punched, and I would be kicked," he remembers. "I was humiliated every day." School administrators and teachers stood by while other students harassed, threatened and beat Derek. One assistant principal actually laughed after students tried to tie Derek to a truck and drag him down the street. Rather than addressing the anti-gay harassment and violence, school administrators transferred Derek to other schools — as if he were the problem. At 16, Derek, who had been in a program for "gifted and talented" students since the fourth grade, was forced to resort to adult education classes — where it was impossible to obtain a high school diploma.

Fortunately, Derek soon found Lambda Legal. We filed a federal civil rights lawsuit on his behalf. The case built on a landmark Lambda Legal victory in 1996 which, for the first time, held school officials accountable for failing to protect gay students. Derek's case went a step further with an historic settlement that protects students' constitutional right to be open about their sexual orientation at school without retaliation. As for Derek, he received \$450,000 and a letter in his academic file explaining why his education was cut short. With these, Derek is moving on with his life and attending college in the fall.

THE IMPACT With LGBT youth coming out at younger ages, their rights to be open at school are increasingly important. It's no longer enough to force schools to protect students who are perceived to be gay — this case also makes it clear that students have a right to be fully out at school and protected from harassment.

MAKING HISTORY

1974: Helped force the University of New Hampshire to treat a gay student group like every other campus group.

1996: Won first federal appeals court ruling that schools must protect gay students from harassment and violence.

2000: Supreme Court rejects our lawsuit on behalf of James Dale and upholds Boy Scouts' anti-gay policy. Public support and funding for Boy Scouts plunges.

2000: Gay-straight student alliance case sets federal precedent that GSAs must be allowed to meet under same rules as other student groups.

2002: Won groundbreaking settlement for student Derek Henkle, making Reno, NV, a blueprint for LGBT-affirming policies and training in schools.

HELPING LGBT FOSTER YOUTH TRANSITION INTO HEALTHY ADULTS

An historic partnership that Lambda Legal launched this year with the nation's oldest, largest and most influential child welfare group will fundamentally change the way LGBT youth are treated in the nation's foster care systems.

Life in foster care isn't easy for any young person. But compounded with the harassment and violence that LGBT youth already face, it can be truly unbearable. Often it's adults — child welfare professionals — who make the biggest difference between a young person who leaves foster care badly damaged and one who is equipped to become a healthy adult. Lambda Legal forged a wide-ranging joint effort with the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) this year that, for the first time, will make LGBT youth a clear priority for children's agencies nationwide. We'll work with CWLA to reevaluate standards, trainings and publications that are used by the group's 1,200 member agencies, which serve 3 million youth and their families each year.

While this partnership is a first, fighting for youth in foster care is nothing new for Lambda Legal. Our Foster Care Project began in 2000 and reached new heights this year when we worked with child welfare officials in Illinois to develop the state's first policy outlining how to meet the needs of LGBT youth in foster care. We also conducted trainings about LGBT issues for child welfare officials in Chicago and continued aggressively pursuing statewide foster care reform in California, Connecticut, New Jersey and New York.

Two out of five young people nationwide don't feel safe in school because they are LGBT.

There are **1,680** publicly listed Gay-Straight Alliance clubs in high schools nationwide.

THE IMPACT By bringing together the nation's most powerful child welfare advocates and the leading group fighting for LGBT foster youth, this partnership marks a turning point for youth in foster care nationwide. Educating and supporting the "on-the-ground" professionals who work with LGBT foster youth daily is going to give countless young people a much-needed shot at healthy adulthood.

TAKING ON DANGEROUS “ABSTINENCE-ONLY” PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

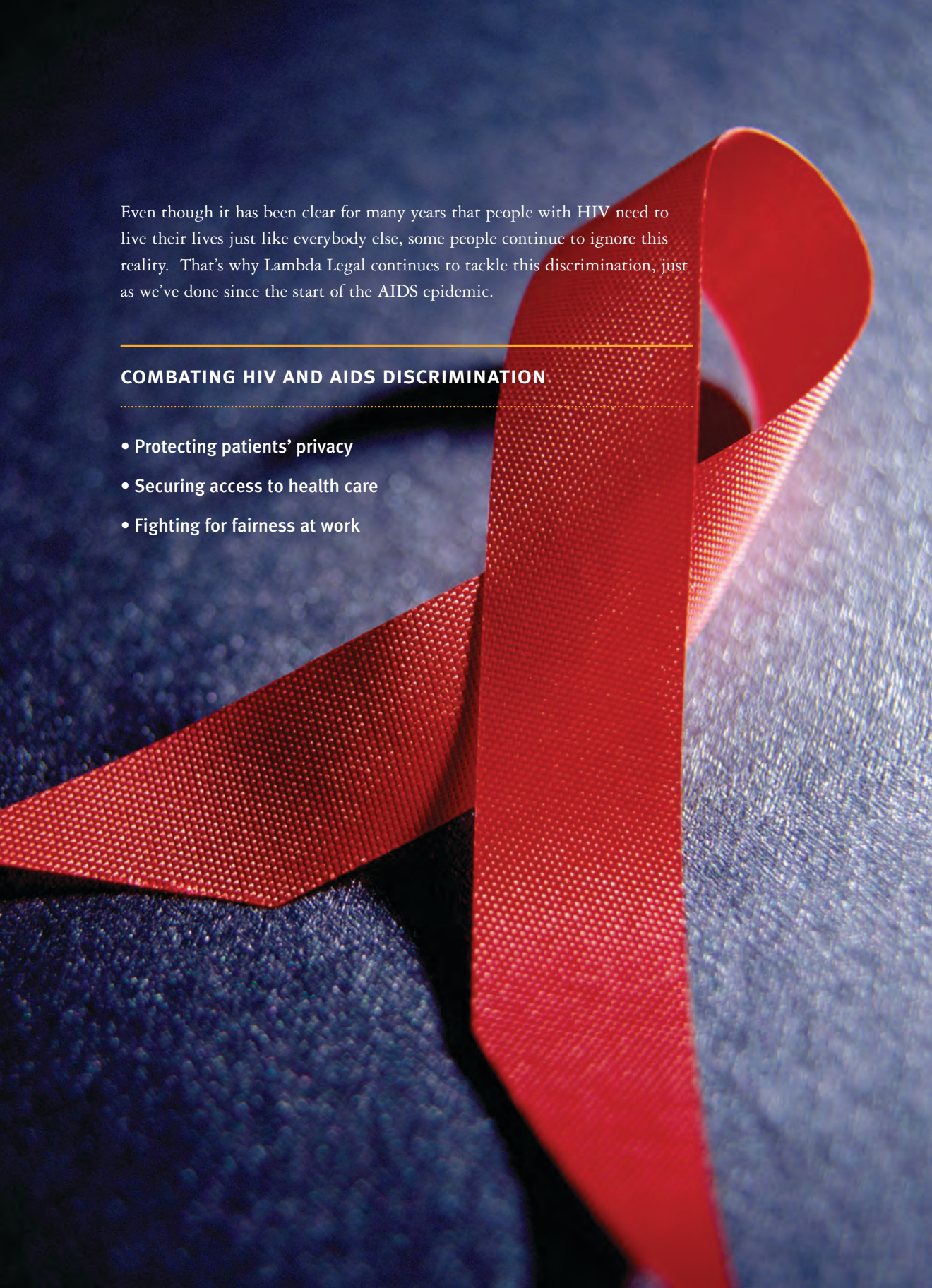
As “abstinence-only” programs in schools continued expanding this year, Lambda Legal called attention to the dangers of excluding information on LGBT youth and on HIV — and helped communities combat this dangerous trend.

Increasingly, federal tax dollars are being funneled to public schools in 49 states to replace comprehensive sex education with “abstinence-only” programs that are riddled with inaccurate and distorted information — particularly about HIV/AIDS and LGBT people. One widely used “abstinence-only” workbook calls same-sex intimacy “unnatural” and says it carries a greater risk for HIV transmission because “body openings are used in ways for which they are not designed.” Both because these programs contribute to anti-gay hostility in schools and because they withhold accurate information on HIV-prevention, they are a public health hazard for youth nationwide.

That’s why Lambda Legal launched a public education campaign this year that focuses on the serious dangers of “abstinence-only” programs and gives communities powerful new tools to fight them. We published “Tell Me The (Whole) Truth: School Supplies To Get Real Sex Education,” an action kit that arms people with in-depth information, strategies for changing opinions, and sample letters to decision-makers and the media. We also give teachers and youth groups in every state practical tips on what they can do in classrooms to fight “abstinence-only” programs, and we continue using the media to highlight the fight for comprehensive sex education.

THE IMPACT Decisions to teach “abstinence-only” programs are made at the local level, and we’re helping shape that debate by turning our expertise into tools that local communities can use to fight back. At the same time, we’re shaping debate nationwide and building support for accurate, comprehensive, inclusive sex education.





Even though it has been clear for many years that people with HIV need to live their lives just like everybody else, some people continue to ignore this reality. That's why Lambda Legal continues to tackle this discrimination, just as we've done since the start of the AIDS epidemic.

COMBATING HIV AND AIDS DISCRIMINATION

- Protecting patients' privacy
- Securing access to health care
- Fighting for fairness at work



“I was told that I was no longer qualified to be a foster parent. They said I was highly contagious and not a good role model for the children — and that crushed me. After Lambda Legal stepped in to help, the agency backed down. Usually I have to fight battles myself. This time I had an ally.”

JONIA WILLIAMSON, who called Lambda Legal’s Help Desk after she was prevented from completing the necessary classes to become a foster parent because she has HIV.



“When I first learned that the U.S. State Department so blatantly refused to hire people living with HIV as Foreign Service Officers, I was shocked and then angry. Fortunately, the AIDS Project at Lambda Legal was there to help me challenge this outdated policy that has kept me, and others like me, from serving our country abroad.”

LORENZO TAYLOR, who Lambda Legal is helping fight the State Department’s policy of preventing highly qualified people with HIV from serving as Foreign Service Officers.

PROTECTING PATIENTS' PRIVACY

When state officials in Florida seized dozens of patients' confidential medical records from an AIDS clinic serving low-income communities this year, Lambda Legal stepped in and won a critical victory.

Patients at South Florida's largest AIDS clinic didn't know anything about a state Medicaid fraud investigation that was underway — it had nothing to do with them, and they weren't accused of any wrongdoing. But when state officials took their confidential records, it became their business. Many patients couldn't get their prescriptions because their files were gone. Others were afraid that their families, friends or employers would find out they had HIV or AIDS. In all, 134 patients' records were taken. Not surprisingly, the number of people visiting the clinic dropped by half. People who were already leery of seeking out HIV and AIDS services were afraid that their private medical records would be available to state investigators to use however they pleased.

Lambda Legal quickly stepped in on behalf of the patients and asked a judge to protect their privacy and limit the state's use of their medical records. The judge adopted Lambda Legal's suggestions and issued a ruling ensuring that the records of all 134 patients will remain confidential. Patients who were waiting for their files to be returned so they could get prescriptions now have the medicine they need, and other patients have the security of knowing that their medical information remains confidential.

THE IMPACT This victory is one of the first under a state law guaranteeing privacy of HIV-related medical information — so it will be a strong precedent in Florida and in other states with similar laws. But it's also an important victory for the low-income patients at this clinic, who would not have been able to fight and win this battle without Lambda Legal.

MAKING HISTORY

1983: In the first AIDS discrimination case in the nation, won a ruling that it's illegal to discriminate against people with AIDS.

1989: Pressured makers of AZT to lower its price by 20 percent.

1996: Helped stop military policy of dismissing all HIV-positive service members.

2001: Helped convince federal appeals court that a family cannot be denied foster children just because a child in the home has AIDS.

2002: Used new Florida privacy law to keep patients' medical files private at an AIDS clinic under state investigation.

FIGHTING FOR FAIRNESS AT WORK


This year, Lambda Legal fought for a police officer with HIV who was rejected for a job at a city police department in a case that's not just for one policeman — but for the rights of all people with HIV to pursue their careers.

Richard Roe, a name selected to protect his identity, is a quality police officer who wanted to continue his chosen career with a local police department in Illinois. From early on, he emerged as a clear favorite for the job. With his previous experience, he easily passed the initial screening requirements, including a physical ability test, a written exam and a psychological evaluation. But at the mandatory medical examination, Richard tested HIV-positive. Another doctor — chosen by the police department — said Richard was fully able to do the job and that he did not pose a threat to others. Still, the department refused to hire him.

Lambda Legal filed a lawsuit in state court on Richard's behalf. We're fighting for Richard to be judged based on his skills and qualifications — instead of being kept out of a uniform because of irrational fear.

THE IMPACT HIV discrimination isn't just illegal; it keeps people from pursuing their professional dreams. With Richard's case this year, we hope to send a clear signal to employers that they can't discriminate against people with HIV — even in professions that involve physical danger or exertion.





What we want, and what we fight for every day, is a world where members of our community can live the same life as everybody else. Sometimes Lambda Legal makes this happen with lawsuits; other times we help out by providing educational guides and “action kits” that community members can use to protect themselves from discrimination.

MAKING COMMUNITIES SAFER

- Helping underserved communities fight back
- Taking on biased judges
- Helping transgendered people amend their birth certificates



“With all of our medical needs, we felt like we needed to make sure that our relationship would be respected by hospital staff in case of an emergency. So we simply followed the instructions in Lambda Legal’s hospital visitation kit. Even though we can’t march in support of LGBT rights, we can do something. We can make a difference.”

PETER GOODMAN, who, along with his partner, Curtis Miller, used Lambda Legal’s hospital visitation action kit to convince the Yale-New Haven Hospital in Connecticut to respect same-sex couples as families.



“I didn’t feel like the police took any real interest in my assault until Lambda Legal arrived. And no one would have heard my story. If it weren’t for Lambda Legal, I would have been completely lost after I was attacked. I am eternally grateful.”

DAVID OTT, who was brutally beaten at a New Jersey diner because he is gay. Lambda Legal helped win a conviction in the criminal case against his assailants.

HELPING UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES FIGHT BACK

Our community education work reached new heights this year with the launch of Lambda Legal's unprecedented initiative to provide practical and accessible information that helps LGBT Latinos know their rights and how to fight for them.

Language, cultural and economic barriers — and facing additional bias based on race — make it that much harder to fight anti-gay and HIV-based discrimination. Time and time again, Lambda Legal has been the only support for LGBT people or those with HIV and AIDS who didn't know where to turn, weren't sure how to protect themselves, or couldn't afford to. This year, we took our commitment to helping communities further than ever, launching Proyecto Igualdad, or Project Equality, which works with LGBT Latinos to build greater awareness of existing rights and stronger capacity to gain more legal protections. Through bilingual educational materials, community trainings and legal assistance, Proyecto Igualdad addresses major life issues like family, immigration, HIV and AIDS, employment discrimination and police harassment.

Proyecto Igualdad is part of Lambda Legal's ongoing work with underserved communities, including people of color, youth and transgendered people. The importance of this work was highlighted this year in Georgia, when Lambda Legal worked closely with an African-American community group to respond to an anti-gay hate crime at Morehouse College. As a result of our partnership, the college agreed to take concrete steps to address homophobia on campus.

THE IMPACT Having rights but not being able to exercise them is essentially the same as not having rights at all. By partnering with communities to distribute information and tools to protect our relationships, our children, our jobs and ourselves, Lambda Legal is helping make sure our victories impact and improve the lives of all LGBT people and those with HIV or AIDS.

MAKING HISTORY

1991: Helped keep anti-gay initiative off the ballot in Riverside, CA, helping activists in other communities over the next decade.

1996: Helped convince the U.S. Supreme Court to strike down an anti-gay constitutional amendment enacted by Colorado voters.

1997: As part of ongoing efforts to reform the Los Angeles Police Department, played a key role in case of LAPD's first openly gay police officer.

2002: Launched Proyecto Igualdad to inform LGBT Latinos about their rights and expand legal protections.

TAKING ON BIASED JUDGES

In our continuing efforts to make the court system fair for LGBT people, Lambda Legal brought ethics charges against two anti-gay judges this year — making the case that prejudice doesn't serve justice.

We fight tirelessly to win our clients their day in court — and when they finally get there, we want to make sure they get a fair hearing. This year, we took on two judges whose personal anti-gay beliefs undermined the possibility of a fair hearing for any lesbian or gay person who appeared before them. In a ruling in a child custody case, Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore focused on the fact that the mother was a lesbian, writing that gay people were “abhorrent” and “an inherent evil.” Meanwhile, in Mississippi, Justice Court Judge Connie Wilkerson wrote a letter to the editor railing against legal protections for same-sex couples, saying in part: “In my opinion, gays and lesbians should be put in some type of mental institute instead of having a [domestic partnership] law like this passed for them.”

Communicating these extreme anti-gay views so publicly, and so unnecessarily, clearly called into question the ability of each judge to set aside their personal beliefs and be open-minded in court. Therefore, Lambda Legal filed formal ethics complaints against both judges this year. Unfortunately, the ethics charge was dismissed in Alabama. But in Mississippi, a commission recommended that the state Supreme Court penalize Judge Wilkerson and publicly reprimand him, marking the first time in Mississippi, and the second time in a Southern state, that a commission recommended penalizing a judge for anti-gay bias.

10% of Lambda Legal's Help Desk callers request copies of our publications, resource lists, and other tools to help change their communities.

62% of lesbian and gay people nationwide consider issues related to their sexual orientation when they decide where to live.

THE IMPACT Lambda Legal has consistently fought bias among judges and lawyers. Anti-gay bias in the courtroom creates an atmosphere of prejudice that circumvents justice. It's not fair to our clients, to LGBT people seeking a fair hearing or to the law. These ethics complaints tell judges that they must dispense justice to all, regardless of sexual orientation.

HELPING TRANSGENDERED PEOPLE AMEND THEIR BIRTH CERTIFICATES


After Lambda Legal scored a victory this year for a transgendered man looking to change his Virginia birth certificate, we launched an educational campaign for transgendered people in other states who need to change their basic identity documents.

After receiving a hysterectomy, a double mastectomy, hormone therapy, a name change and a court order to amend the gender on a birth certificate, actually getting the amended certificate was supposed to be the easy part. But that wasn't the case for one transgendered man in Virginia. Lambda Legal had to threaten to sue before government officials finally followed state law. The hold-up? He didn't undergo a full phalloplasty — a costly and often-unsuccessful genital reconstruction procedure that only a small percentage of female-to-male transsexuals undergo. Faced with Lambda Legal's impending lawsuit, Virginia officials finally relented and granted the birth certificate amendment.

Most state laws allow transgendered people to amend their birth certificate to reflect changes in gender but, as in this case, many officials ignore these laws and deny the change. That's why Lambda Legal followed up on the Virginia case by releasing a user-friendly state-by-state guide of laws and policies to help transgendered people better fight for their rights to an amended certificate. Our client in Virginia finally won his four-year battle for an accurate birth certificate — and others now have the tools to do the same.

THE IMPACT Sometimes, our cases help Lambda Legal create educational tools to address a common problem faced by LGBT people. When what's in the law books doesn't match what officials say and do, knowing your legal rights can make the difference between getting what you need and needing to do without.





Using laws and taxpayer dollars to single out gay people for abuse is an affront to equality and the basic protections guaranteed in our Constitution. Yet police don't always protect our community, and we still have laws that make us criminals just because of who we are. Lambda Legal works to tear down government-backed discrimination so LGBT people can live as equal citizens.

ENDING GOVERNMENT MISTREATMENT OF LGBT PEOPLE

- Challenging sodomy laws before the U.S. Supreme Court
- Making police protect LGBT people equally
- Striking down Ohio's law against same-sex flirting



“By challenging Arkansas’ sodomy law, I was very humbled and proud to be part of something that tore down so much fear. Personally, I had a lot of fear as a mother when I came out — fear that my child could be taken away from me because I’m gay. Now, no one can use this law to persecute a mother in Arkansas just because she is a lesbian.”

ELENA PICADO, one of seven plaintiffs in Lambda Legal’s case this year that struck down Arkansas’ law criminalizing sex between lesbian and gay couples.



“I lost my job because of sexual orientation and religious discrimination — not because of my job performance. It’s one of those things that you don’t think can happen, and then it does. But being backed by Lambda Legal helped turn that hurt, betrayal, shock and disappointment into power. I now feel like maybe something is going to change, and others won’t have to go through what I did.”

AIMEE BELLMORE, plaintiff in Lambda Legal’s lawsuit against taxpayer-funded United Methodist Children’s Home in Georgia, which fired her and refused to hire a Jewish man because they didn’t conform to the organization’s religious beliefs.

CHALLENGING SODOMY LAWS BEFORE THE U.S. SUPREME COURT

In an historic move this year, the U.S. Supreme Court decided to hear Lambda Legal's case against Texas's "Homosexual Conduct" law, giving us the chance to eliminate the nation's remaining sodomy laws — and the anti-gay discrimination they are used to justify.

Late one evening in September 1998, Houston police burst into John Lawrence's home and found him having sex with Tyron Garner. The officers were responding to a false firearms report called in by an acquaintance — but arrested John and Tyron for violating Texas's "Homosexual Conduct" law, which makes oral or anal sex a crime only for same-sex couples. John and Tyron spent the night in jail, were convicted, paid fines and are now considered sex offenders in several states.

The humiliation and fear that John and Tyron experienced that night hangs over lesbians and gay men in 12 other states that still have sodomy laws. These laws are used to justify anti-gay discrimination in employment, parenting, and even free speech. That's why Lambda Legal has worked this case from a small courthouse in Texas all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which has only heard a handful of gay rights cases. The court agreed to revisit its infamous 1986 ruling in *Bowers v. Hardwick*, which upheld Georgia's sodomy law in a decision dripping with anti-gay language. We've used the case to spark unprecedented national dialogue about equality for lesbian and gay Americans.

THE IMPACT Lambda Legal has always understood that sodomy laws are one of the biggest obstacles to achieving equality because they are a statement by our own government that we are second-class citizens. These laws brand us as criminals and are used to justify a wide range of discrimination in daily life. At the Supreme Court, we have a chance to get rid of these laws once and for all, and to secure a strong legal precedent that will pave the way to equality in other areas.

MAKING HISTORY

1980: Struck down New York's sodomy law.

1981: Persuaded military to stop "dishonorable discharges" of lesbians and gays; policy changes to "honorable discharges."

1994: Col. Margarette Cammermeyer, highest ranking lesbian or gay man ever removed from military, returns to work.

1997: Persuaded IRS to reverse denial of tax-exempt status to gay groups and undertake sensitivity training.

2002: Convinced U.S. Supreme Court to review Texas sodomy law and consider overturning court's prior anti-gay decision upholding similar law in Georgia.

MAKING POLICE PROTECT LGBT PEOPLE EQUALLY

This year, we continued our long battle to hold law enforcement officers in Nebraska accountable for the death of Brandon Teena, putting police nationwide on notice that they are responsible for protecting everyone in their communities.

Nine years after her child was brutally murdered, JoAnn Brandon still misses finding roses at her door. Her child — raised as Teena Brandon, a girl, but living as Brandon Teena, a man — left a rose at JoAnn's door frequently, as a simple reminder that he loved his mother and always would. The tragedy of Brandon Teena's murder is by now familiar to anyone who saw the movie "Boys Don't Cry." In 1993, two male acquaintances discovered Brandon's physical sex and raped him. When Brandon reported the rape to the Richardson County police, the local sheriff was abusive and accusatory. Amazingly, the sheriff refused to arrest the rapists and took no steps to protect Brandon, despite strong evidence that his life was in danger. Within days, the men tracked Brandon down and murdered him.

Lambda Legal fought for JoAnn, suing to hold law enforcement officials accountable for failing to protect Brandon. As a result of our years-long struggle, we won a unanimous Nebraska Supreme Court ruling that the sheriff's actions were "atrocious and utterly intolerable in a civilized community."

Nearly **10%** of LGBT callers to Lambda Legal's Help Desks are reporting some form of government mistreatment.

13 states still have sodomy laws.

THE IMPACT With this case, Lambda Legal sounded a wake-up call to police officers everywhere that the lives of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people matter — and that law enforcement will be held accountable if they don't protect LGBT people just like everyone else.

STRIKING DOWN OHIO'S LAW AGAINST SAME-SEX FLIRTING

Lambda Legal helped topple a state law this year that made it illegal to express romantic interest in someone of the same sex (i.e.: “flirting while gay”) — wiping out yet another law that imposed one set of rules for gay people and another for straight people who engage in the same behavior.

Eric Thompson never suspected that making a pass at someone would land him in jail. But that’s exactly what happened when he said a few flirtatious words to a jogger one day. When the jogger asked to be left alone, Eric complied. But the jogger complained to a nearby police officer, who then arrested Eric. Had the jogger been a woman, Eric could have been cited and fined \$100 for disorderly conduct. But since the jogger was a man, Eric was charged with a first-degree misdemeanor, convicted and sentenced to six months in prison.

Lambda Legal supported Eric’s appeal to the Ohio Supreme Court, where we argued that the flirting law violated both the federal and state constitutions by limiting freedom of speech and targeting gay people for separate, harsher treatment. Ohio already has state laws about expressions of sexual interest that are unwelcome, regardless of sexual orientation — so the state’s anti-gay law clearly set out to snare lesbians and gay men. The Ohio Supreme Court unanimously agreed and struck down the 28-year-old law.

THE IMPACT Like sodomy laws, Ohio’s “flirting while gay” law singled out lesbians and gay men for unfair punishment and fostered hostility and discrimination against gay people. By winning Eric’s case, we struck another blow against criminal laws that enshrine anti-gay bias.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

This year has been nothing short of historic. In every area of our work, Lambda Legal broke new ground and reached new heights in 2002. As a result, we're positioned as never before to achieve even more in 2003 and beyond.

We're making history at the U.S. Supreme Court. We're fighting for full marriage rights in New Jersey. We're making schools protect our next generation. We're making health care accessible for people with HIV or AIDS. We're making room for our families in every state. We're making our own communities stronger and better equipped. Together with clients, volunteers, staff, board members — and most of all, supporters — we are making it happen.

The people in this report are our clients — their names are on the legal papers in our cases, and their stories change hearts, minds and laws. But every one of our cases is also on behalf of all LGBT people or those with HIV or AIDS. When we sued the state of Virginia to let Linda Kaufman adopt a child from Washington, D.C., this year, we won the right for every lesbian and gay man in the state who has tried to adopt similarly — and we helped gay parents in Tennessee or South Carolina or Wyoming or wherever we decide to take this fight next, emboldened and strengthened by another hard-fought victory.

That's "impact litigation." We set our sights on full equality, we choose our battles strategically, we leverage the best and brightest legal minds around, and we get the most bang for our buck. The results are tangible and they're all around us. Just one example: In 2002 alone, dozens more Gay-Straight Alliances formed in schools nationwide. Lambda Legal won the case that forces schools everywhere to allow these clubs to exist as a safe haven for our youth.

We had such banner success in 2002 in part because we have three decades of hard work under our belt. In 2003 Lambda Legal celebrates 30 years of cutting-edge litigation, education and policy advocacy that have delivered real results in people's lives — as couples, parents, students, employees and fully

equal citizens. We've built a solid foundation and a track record of success that gives us the strength to reach for what once seemed impossible. When Lambda Legal opened for business in one room of a supporter's apartment in 1973, even we couldn't imagine that we would accomplish so much.

Today, from our national headquarters and our four regional offices around the country, we are a powerful force for change — not just in courtrooms, but in board rooms and living rooms nationwide. The reach of Lambda Legal's work can be seen in the car-loads of people who drove four hours each way to attend a town hall meeting on sodomy laws that we held in Birmingham, Alabama, and in the line of people standing in a hallway in Morristown, New Jersey, straining to hear our town hall meeting on our marriage case and wiping away tears when our clients shared their stories. All across the country, people are connecting to our work more deeply than ever. That's because we aren't talking just about lawsuits — we're talking about their lives.

Even though it's been 30 years, we've only just begun. Over the next year, we're launching some of the most innovative legal efforts and energetic educational initiatives our community has ever seen. Together, we're building on our history to shape the future so LGBT people and those with HIV or AIDS can live their lives and pursue their dreams.



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Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, the transgendered, and people with HIV or AIDS through impact litigation, education, and public policy work.

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