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PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, their families, and their friends through

SUPPORT to cope with an adverse society

EDUCATION to enlighten an ill-informed public

ADVOCACY to end discrimination and secure equal civil rights.

**Q is used as an inclusive term for the sexual minority LGBTQ+ spectrum.**

# **Oregon Central Coast Chapter**

**November 2019**

## **Take Action**

Despite the dangers of ex-gay therapy, U.S. bishops are increasing the number of these conversion therapy workshops hosted by Andrew Comiskey's Living Waters with the philosophy that people can "pray the gay away." According to the American Psychiatric Association, such attempts to change a person's sexual orientation can lead to "depression, anxiety and self-destructive behavior," and are not medically justified.

Tell the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to immediately release a statement clarifying that their teachings do not endorse ex-gay conversion therapy. <https://act.faithfulamerica.org/sign/comiskey-workshops>

Tell the House of Representatives to stop conversion therapy, still legal in 31 states. <https://act.credoaction.com/sign/end-conversion-therapy?t=18&akid=34629%2E1033482%2EWWiutb>

On October 18th, members of the Wilcox High School (CA) Varsity football team chanted homophobic slurs at a male cheerleader. Tell the football coaches and the administration that this situation needs to be investigated. <https://www.change.org/p/wilcox-high-school-administration-and-football-coach-consequences-for-homophobic-football-players-at-adrian-wilcox-high-school>

**November 20**

## **Transgender Day of Remembrance**

To memorialize those who have been murdered as a result of transphobia.

## Activists Move Against Nonconsensual Surgeries

On October 26, Intersex Awareness Day, activists accelerated the momentum to end nonconsensual surgeries on the 1.7 percent of babies with chromosomal, genital, or other differences putting them outside a medical definition of “male” or “female.” Many of these “modifications” to match social expectations can cause sterilization, deprivation of sexual sensation, or irreversible reinforcement of a gender assignment that doesn’t match the person’s identity.

Last year, California passed the first-ever legislation in the U.S. to acknowledge the existence of intersex people that stated these nonconsensual intersex surgeries have been condemned by Human Rights Watch, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture. False claims from urologists forced a lawmaker to withdraw a bill to ban medically unnecessary surgeries before a child could consent to them.

Bills to ban nonconsensual intersex surgeries on children have been introduced in Iowa, Nevada, Texas, and Connecticut but not passed. Iowa did sign a measure banning funds to address the offensive term “hermaphroditism” as part of an anti-Q bill banning Medicaid funding of gender-affirming surgery for Iowans. Colorado, however, included intersex issues in a sex education law, and Cook County (IL) passed a resolution condemning Trump administration’s “restrictive view of sex and gender” which validated the “false binary notions” used to justify “harmful, non-consensual surgeries” on intersex children.

At least two states, including California and New York, plan to introduce legislation addressing nonconsensual surgeries in the upcoming year, and lawmakers in New Jersey and Connecticut have expressed an interest in banning these surgeries.

### PGMC Celebrates Four Decades

The Portland Gay Men’s Chorus is celebrating its 40th anniversary of performing throughout North America and China championing Q causes at home and abroad. On November 2, they will announce a new Artistic Director at their celebratory gala, “What We Do For Love.”

The 40 years have been full of highs and lows. PGMC sang at the first Gay Games in 1982. They were the first LGBT chorus to sing at an inaugural event of a major elected official: Secretary of State Barbara Roberts in 1984. They were the first gay chorus to sing the National Anthem at a Portland Trail Blazers game in 2016. They were the first Western gay chorus to perform in China. Yet through the years, the chorus lost at least 155 members to the AIDS epidemic.

By now, 25 percent of the chorus isn’t gay, and at least one of the members isn’t a man. Dru Van Hengel said, “I come because I think the mission and the message here are really strong and they resonate with me very fully. I just feel so grateful that I get to be a part of that.”



# Politics on Our Side

An excellent website tracking current Q bills in the United States. <https://www.freedomforallamericans.org/2019-legislative-tracker/>

**Ames (IA):** The city has refused to remove its rainbow crosswalks after the Federal Highway Administration declared that the colors violated federal rules. Two crosswalks use colors of the rainbow-POC flag, a third side colors of the transgender flag, and the last side, the colors of the gender nonbinary flag. The directive complained about the unsafe crosswalks that are “distracting” for car drivers, encourage loitering, and confuse drivers.



During the George W. Bush administration, Trump-appointed head of the highway administration Nicole Mason, who was earlier accused of impeding efforts to lower greenhouse gas emissions. She lacks jurisdiction over Ames’ streets, and the federal government has no prohibition on colors. The two white lines comply with the federal definition of a crosswalk. The first rainbow crosswalk was painted in 2012 at the intersection of San Vicente and Santa Monica Boulevards in West Hollywood.

**Georgia:** Skyler Jay was largely responsible for changing the policy on trans health care coverage by his employer, the University System of Georgia which oversees 26 state colleges and universities in the state. The transgender man called out USG during an

appearance on *Queer Eye* after his health care denied transition-related care because of USG’s direction. After Jay sued USG, it reimbursed him for his medical expenses and changed its policy for its 60,000 employees.

**Missouri:** A St. Louis jury ruled in favor of Sgt. Keith Wildhaber, awarding him almost \$20 million in damages, after Police Chief Jon Belmar denied Wildhaber a promotion to lieutenant because he was “too gay.” Wildhaber claims that homophobia was rampant in the police force. Since his employment with the department in 1994, Wildhaber received top marks on tests and reviews for promotion but was passed over for 23 promotions. The review board told him he should “tone down your gayness” to be promoted. Wildhaber filed a civil rights complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2016 and was transferred across the county.

The jury foreman said that the \$20 million award was a message against discrimination. Belmar had already been disciplined for bad oversight in the Ferguson protests and faced several other EEOC complaints and lawsuits, including by Nikki Brown, a black female police officer who wrote her doctoral dissertation on the culture in the St. Louis Police and its lack of accountability.

**South Dakota:** The Oglala Sioux Tribe became the first tribe to pass a hate crimes law that includes sexual orientation and gender identity after it earlier passed an ordinance allowing marriage equality. Monique Mousseau began fighting for the ordinance after she was fired in 2005 for not ending her relationship with Felipa DeLeon. Married, they suffered so much persecution on the reservation that they moved away in 2009. South Dakota, the location of the reservation, does not have protections for Q hate crimes.

## Conversion Therapy Does Harm

A new study determined that conversion therapy is damaging for transgender people and worse for transgender children. What a surprise! Medical professionals, long aware that gender identity can't be changed, finds this treatment unethical.

Of 27,000 transgender respondents to a survey, 13.5 percent had been subjected to conversion therapy and were twice as likely as the rest of the sample to have attempted suicide.

For adults subjected to conversion therapy before they were ten, the suicide risk was four times higher.

Two-thirds of the therapy was by psychological professionals; the remaining third came from religious figures such as priests or pastors. Yet the increase in suicide attempts were the same for both secular and religious practitioners.

One person promoting conversion therapy admitted that he claimed to cure children who were not transgender.

Another naysayer decided after reexamining data that a good assessment of children with gender dysphoria can be accomplished.

Conversion therapy for children, according to the study, can result in life-long mental problems.

Also, a Cornell University meta-study concluded that "93 percent [of studies] found that gender transition improves the overall well-being of transgender people, while 7 percent report mixed or null findings. We found no studies concluding that gender transition causes overall harm."

## More Politics on Our Side

**United States:** House Democrats filed a resolution to condemn HUD Secretary Ben Carson for referring to trans women as "big, hairy men" when justifying his excuse for turning transgender people away from homeless shelters receiving federal funding. Later he said he thought transgender people would get "extra rights" if they are housed with their gender in the shelters. Rep. Katie Hill (D-CA) called Carson's comments "hurtful, bigoted, and [not representing] the feelings of this Congress." Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL) said that "Carson's history of homophobia and transphobia go beyond simply being offensive." One of these is to use religious exemptions to discriminate against Q people in federal housing programs, shelters, and organizations.

**Northern Ireland:** Same-sex marriage become legal for the first time in this region of the United Kingdom, bringing Northern Ireland in line with the rest of the UK.

## Cities, Municipalities Protect Q People If States Refuse

Twenty-nine states provide no legal protection for Q employees from discrimination in the private sector, permitting bias and bigotry for legal firing, demoting, and general mistreatment. Dozens of municipalities, however, have Q nondiscrimination protections even exceeding anything that Congress has considered in its failed legislation. Some of those cities are in Georgia, where one of the plaintiffs in the Supreme Court case (p. 5) was fired for joining a gay softball team, and the number is growing.

Cities in Alabama and Mississippi are following suit with Birmingham and Montevallo. Mobile is on the verge of being another city without employment discrimination against Q people. In Mississippi, the capital, Jackson, and tiny town of Magnolia, population 2,257, have been joined by Clarksdale.

Fortunately, the Supreme Court ruling, even an anti-Q one, won't invalidate state and city-level protections.

[https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/non\\_discrimination\\_ordinances](https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/non_discrimination_ordinances) A map showing non-discrimination with a list of places in each state.

United States: <https://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/277-75/59294-while-supreme-court-waffles-cities-stand-up-for-lgbt-workers-rights>

# Supreme Court Hears Discrimination Case

Title VII protects employees against discrimination “on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin and religion.” The Supreme Court is hearing three cases about whether the word “sex” applies to sexual orientation and gender identity and whether anti-discrimination laws currently written in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 apply to LGBTQ people. Justice Neil Gorsuch said that in a firing because of sexual orientation, that person's sex is at least a “contributing cause.” Title VII’s statutory language clearly prohibits conduct where sex was “a motivating factor,” even if other factors also contributed to the decision.

In the 1998 case *Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services Inc.*, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that same-sex sexual harassment was illegal under Title VII, even though the authors of the law never intended it to mean that. Now employers argue that firing someone for their sexual orientation is not illegal as long as they fire both men and women equally, the same argument used to support bans on interracial marriage. If the Supreme Court rules against Q people, firing someone for sexual orientation and/or gender identity will remain legal in 28 states.

Gerald Bostock, an advocate for victims of child abuse and neglect working in Clayton County (GA) for over ten years, was fired after he joined a gay softball league because of “conduct unbecoming a county employee.” His lawyer, Thomas Mew, has three arguments to defend Bostock:

- (1) the word “sex” in the Civil Rights Act is linked to sexual orientation because being gay is identified with sexual attraction;
- (2) in *Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins* (1989), gender stereotyping is illegal under Title VII meaning that someone cannot be fired for not conforming to their expected gender roles; and
- (3) firing someone for sexual orientation is associational discrimination, and the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination because of association with others in a protected class.

Justice Samuel Alito argued that the intent of the law didn’t mean to protect Q people, but last month, Gorsuch published a book on judicial “textualism” which requires judges to rule on the language of the law and not legislative intent or desired outcomes. Gorsuch brought up the idea of stopping employment discrimination against Q people would create “massive social upheaval,” but over 20 states already forbid discrimination—without cataclysm.

Clarence Thomas, absent from the arguments because of the flu, can still vote against Q rights. Noel Francisco argued for discrimination on behalf of the U.S. Department of Justice.

[Above: Protesters opposing Q discrimination outside the Supreme Court building]



# People Who Make a Difference



In Indiana, where VP Mike Pence was instrumental in creating laws discriminating against Q people, Pete Buttigieg, gay mayor of South Bend, came in third in an Iowa poll. Another gay man, **Josh Owens** (left) has thrown his hat in the ring, this one for state governor. His likely opponent, incumbent Eric Holcomb, said during his 2016 election that Q issues aren't important. CEO of the digital strategy firm SupplyKick, Owens, 34, said in his first election ad: "I believe in an Indiana where all are welcomed, respected and pro-

protected—and I believe together, we can do it." WBIC reported that "he also wants to end discrimination of Hoosiers in the workplace and housing, including discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity." Owens lives with his husband, Andy, in Indianapolis.

As part of Sen. **Elizabeth Warren's** (D-MA) campaign, she calls donors to thank them—that that's the reason she called Zachary, a 19-year-old gay man, who works at a Circle K and gave \$3. He was so stunned when he answered the phone that he said, "You've gotta be kidding me." Then he asked Warren to "hold on one sec" so he could get his boyfriend to hear the conversation. Warren tells boyfriend Alex, "I'm calling my friend Zachary here to thank him for contributing to my campaign." She adds that Alex has "a good guy."



**Rice students** supporting the Q community performed with the Rice marching band during halftime of a college football game with Baylor University on September 21, 2019, in Houston. The university's Marching Owl Band gave a skit and played pro-Q song "YMCA" by the Village People while dozens of students and alumni rushed the field with rainbow flags. Q students and alumni at Baylor, a private Baptist college in Waco, are fighting to be recognized. Baylor acknowledged that its administration refused to officially recognize and charter Gamma Alpha Upsilon (GAY in Greek letters), a Q-student group struggling to be recognized since its creation in 2011. Without that right, they cannot advertise events on campus, reserve university spaces for meetings, and get funding through student government. [Photo by Joe Buvid, Houston Chronicle]



## OCC PFLAG

The November meeting will focus on the Transgender Community. The Newport High School GSA is invited to share their Trans Day of Remembrance observance that they have annually held for several years.

## Russian Man Withdraws Suit against Apple

D. Razumilov has dropped his lawsuit against Apple because he believed that his iPhone made him gay. He claimed to be rewarded with 69 GayCoins, a cryptocurrency that is each valued at \$.02, when he downloaded a cryptocurrency app in 2017 on his iPhone.

When he received the message “Don’t judge without trying,” he started having sex with men and now has a steady boyfriend. Accusing Apple of “manipulatively pushing me toward homosexuality,” he wanted one million rubles (around \$15,000) for “moral suffering and harm to mental health.”

Razumilov still blames Apple for being gay, but he wants to avoid negative publicity after news of his case went viral.

## Media Matters:

Colin Firth and Stanley Tucci (right) will star in *Supernova*, their third movie together, this time a romance as life-long partners who travel throughout England after Tucci’s character, Tusker, develops early-onset dementia. The film was financed by BBC Films and the British Film Institute, with Quiddity Films and The Bureau producing and cinematography by Dick Pope.



Billy Porter, the gay 50-year-old actor who won an Emmy for Pray Tell in the FX ballroom drama *Pose*, has been cast to play the fairy godmother in Sony’s new live-action *Cinderella* movie, due out in 2021. In the modern-tale about an orphaned girl, Cuban-American singer and actress Camilla Cabello, magically finding love with a prince after her stepmother’s enslavement, Porter plays the wish-granting pixie.

## OCC PFLAG Calendar

**November 3, 11:00 am:** Out Oregon Coast Breakfast at Newport Café—Newport

**November 12, 4:00-6:00 pm:** LGBT & Allies Happy Hour, All Welcome!—Pacific Café, Olive St. north of PAC

**November 13, 6:00-7:30 pm:** PFLAG Meeting—Transgender Community, Newport High GSA Sharing Their Annual Trans Day of Remembrance Observance—St. Stephens, 9th & Hurbert, Newport

**November 15, 9:00-11:00 am:** OCC PFLAG Board meeting—My Safe Place, formerly My Sisters’ Place—Newport

**November 15, 5:00-7:00 pm:** Trans Support Group—Toledo Public Library, 173 NW 7th Street

**November 24, 11:00 am:** OUT OR Women at Nana’s for Lunch—NW 3rd and Coast Streets, Newport

**November 27, 6:00-7:30 pm:** Trans Support Group—St. Stephens, 9th & Hurbert, Newport

**The PFLAG OCC Basic Needs Grants provide emergency or urgent relief to LGBT+ people in Lincoln County. Individuals of any age who identify as LGBT+ (or their caregivers) and who demonstrate a financial need for medical aid, housing, transportation, or food can apply. The maximum grant is \$250. Much of the Grant’s resources come from other LGBT+ people and straight allies. Contact PFLAG OCC at [pflagocc@gmail.com](mailto:pflagocc@gmail.com) for an application.**



## Join PFLAG!

YES! I support the mission of PFLAG. Enclosed is my annual membership fee.\*

\_\_\_\_\_ Household (\$35)  
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\_\_\_\_\_ Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Includes membership in National PFLAG with affiliates in over 365 worldwide communities.

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