

EQUALITY ILLINOIS

FEBRUARY 2010 E-NEWS

February First Friday, celebrating volunteers

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Report on the January 5 event with Sen. Cullerton

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Homophobia is Expensive: National study assesses taxpayer cost of government homophobia.

Williams Institute Study Estimates 66,000 LGBT People Are Serving in the US Military; Lifting Don't Ask/Don't Tell Would Add Almost 50,000 New Members and Save Taxpayers Hundreds of Millions of Dollars

In January, the nationally recognized Williams Institute released a research brief that updates estimates of the number of lesbian, gay, and bisexual men and women serving in the US military along with the cost of the Don't Ask/Don't Tell policy.

The study also updates prior estimates of the cost of the Don't Ask/Don't Tell policy made by the government's General Accountability Office and the Palm Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Key findings from the analyses are as follows:

- An estimated 66,000 lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals are serving in the US military, accounting for approximately 2.2% of military personnel.
- Approximately 13,000 LGB people are serving on active duty (comprising 0.9% of all active duty personnel) while nearly 53,000 are serving in the guard and reserve forces (3.4%).
- While women comprise only about 14% of active duty personnel, they comprise more than 43% of LGB men and women serving on active duty.
- Lifting DADT restrictions could attract an estimated 36,700 men and women to active duty service and 12,000 more individuals to the guard and reserve.
- Since its inception in 1994, the "Don't Ask/Don't Tell" policy has cost the military between \$290 million and more than a half a billion dollars.
- The military spends an estimated \$22,000 to \$43,000 per person to replace those discharged under DADT.

Learn more about the study at www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute.

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PROP 8 TRIAL TRANSCRIPTS AVAILABLE ONLINE

The American Foundation for Equal Rights has started to post transcript of the federal trial challenging Proposition 8 on its website at <http://www.equalrightsfoundation.org/our-work/hearing-transcripts/>

Available immediately are the transcripts from all past days of trial. Please note that while the Foundation hopes to post these transcripts daily, their availability is subject to change. These transcripts may be read, linked to and quoted from, but not reposted or sold in any way.

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Dear Consortium Members:

Although we primarily work in higher education, I thought it would be a great idea to pass this on to our students and colleagues, as many of them may know individuals that are eligible.

PFLAG National scholarships available for 2010:

\$5,000 scholarships, \$2,500 scholarships, \$1,000 scholarships!

Review the following eligibility requirements:

You are a graduating senior entering higher education for the first time in 2010 (if you graduated in 2009 and took a year off you are still eligible to apply).

You self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) or as a straight ally

You demonstrate an interest in service to the LGBT community.

You have applied to an accredited higher education institution.

In order to be considered for a scholarship, you will need to submit:

A complete application form

A one page essay

A high school transcript

One letter of reference

A release form

Application Process:

Send your high school transcript, letter of reference and the release form in one packet to PFLAG National (see address below).

PFLAG National

1726 M St. NW, Suite 400

Washington, DC 20036

Submit your application and essay online (if you prefer, you may submit a hard-copy of your application and essay). For online submissions, you will be assigned a reference number; this number needs to appear on the cover of your packet

containing the reference, transcripts and release form that you send to PFLAG National.

The deadline to apply for the PFLAG National Scholarship is March 12, 2010.

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Portuguese same-sex marriage bill passes

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As expected, Portugal's Parliament passed a bill Jan. 8 to legalize same-sex marriage. The vote was 125-92 with seven abstentions.

President Aníbal Cavaco Silva is not expected to veto the bill, but even if he does, it would delay the law only by a few weeks. Should Cavaco Silva sign the bill, the first gay marriages will happen in April.

Socialist Prime Minister José Sócrates said legalizing same-sex marriage "rights a wrong" and increases freedom and equality.

The bill specifically excludes access to adoption for married same-sex couples.

"This is the main step towards same-sex civil marriage in Portugal, but not the last one," said correspondent João Paulo from PortugalGay.pt. "The president can still delay the implementation of the law."

The board co-chair of the European Region of ILGA, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, said same-sex marriage is rapidly becoming the norm in Europe.

"It is truly a fantastic start of 2010 for LGBT people in Portugal and Europe as a whole," said Martin K.I. Christensen. "It is clear that a European consensus is fast emerging on marriage equality."

In addition to signing or vetoing the bill, President Cavaco Silva has a third option, correspondent Paulo said. He could send it to the Constitutional Court because of the adoption exclusion.

The court would then pronounce the bill constitutional or not. If the court said it is constitutional, Parliament would pass it again in the same form. If the court said it is unconstitutional, Parliament likely would pass a bill that legalizes same-sex marriage and opens adoption to married same-sex couples, which neither the president nor the prime minister supports.

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Mexico City gay marriage law takes effect in March

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Mexico City's law allowing same-sex marriage will take effect in March.

It was approved by the Legislative Assembly on Dec. 21 and published in the official register on Dec. 30.

Legislators voted 39-20 for the bill, which redefines "marriage" as "the free uniting of two people."

The bill also explicitly legalizes adoption by gay couples.

Federal benefits, such as pension, inheritance and social-security rights, will remain off-limits to married gay couples without changes in federal law to recognize the Mexico City marriages.

City officials say they hope gay couples will come from around the world to get married. The city is working with travel agencies to offer packages that include flights, hotel, sightseeing, a wedding and a banquet.

Same-sex marriage also is legal in Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain and Sweden; in Argentina's Tierra del Fuego province; and in the U.S. states of Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. It will become legal in March in Washington, D.C., and in Portugal later this year.