

STARR NEWSLETTER

PARENTS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS ALLIED WITH THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY

www.pflagLA.org

Thank You!

President's Message

As we begin the new year, I am looking back at 2018 with a deep sense of gratitude for all PFLAG Los Angeles has been able to accomplish during the year.

It's all because of you, our wonderful supporters. This message is a thank you, from me and all the people who have been helped by our work.

First to our members and donors. Your contributions make our work possible. As many of you know, we get no financial support at all from PFLAG National. In fact, we pay \$15 from each membership to National to help fund their valuable projects. Without your financial contributions we have no way to pay rent, website hosting fees, printing costs for our popular educational brochures, and the helpline bills. The support, education, and advocacy we provide would come to a halt. You are our partners and our heroes.

Second, a thank you to all the participants in the Speakers Bureau, especially to the wonderful speakers who trek off to all parts of the greater Los Angeles area and share the story of their lives. No engagement is too big or too small for these dedicated volunteers. From the Museum of Tolerance to a Girl Scout Troop, they change hearts and minds, and help create a climate of acceptance for LGBTQ persons. Deep thanks also go to Melanie Woloz and Liz Mullen who coordinate the engagements and train the speakers. Getting the appropriate volunteers for the right engagement and providing all the information for a seamless connection is a huge job.

A shout out goes to all of our meeting leaders.

Every month they show up to greet participants with warmth, acceptance, and enthusiasm. They create a climate where people feel safe to discuss difficult situations and emotions, and environment where healing, reconciliation, and hope can grow. Their steadfast reliability and commitment to the meeting is remarkable and deeply appreciated by participants, officers, and board members.

Thanks to the PFLAG Los Angeles officers and board.

Each and every one of you gives your time in countless ways--taking minutes, writing thank you notes, keeping accounts, answering help lines and online information requests, attending meetings, acting as facilitators, arranging meeting speakers, and overseeing the website--to name only a few. More than that, you think deeply about the long term health of the chapter and offer wise, practical suggestions to today's issues and tomorrow's challenges. You make my job doable and a joy.

Finally, a HUGE thank you to Chris Haiss, who has edited this newsletter longer than I have been a PFLAG Los Angeles member. He started as "interim editor" more than 18 years ago and gets better with every edition.

My appreciation for all of you knows no bounds. Even more important, each and everyone of you have improved circumstances for countless LGBTQ persons and their loved ones, strengthened families, and saved lives.

SUPPORT EDUCATION ADVOCACY

Our Stories

— Barry Mason, Dedicated PFLAG Dad

I started attending PFLAG meetings around 2000 because my wife Karen was having a problem with our son coming out to us as gay. She was 100% supportive but still had trouble inside herself. I went with her more to support her than my son, who I completely supported. At the meetings I saw how so many other people had trouble dealing with their children, most of whom were supportive and some who just couldn't accept homosexuality. I observed that most people who didn't stand with their kids were from religious backgrounds.

I was raised by parents who never talked badly about other people because of race, religion or sexual identity. The few people that we knew who were gay were friends of ours and my parents only spoke of their good qualities and our friendships. Growing up in Burbank, I never experienced any homophobic talk and thus didn't have any negative thoughts drilled into my head. As an adult, when I met gay people, it was always in a work environment so there was nothing but professional relationships and nothing negative. When I got into my own wholesale magazine business in the late 1970's, some of my customers sold gay magazines in their stores and I was exposed to that genre along with many other types of magazines that I knew nothing about previously. I did not judge the content of the magazines. I was concerned only that I was shipping the proper quantities to the various customers at the right prices, basically just doing business. Eventually, our business moved to West Hollywood; we had to hire more and more employees and many of them were gay. Sometimes I would go to lunch with them and they would tell me about their lives. The one thing that all of them mentioned was that by 5 to 8 years old, they realized something was different about themselves from other kids and only realized what it was when they became

teenagers. I realized that from what they told me that being gay was something built into them and nothing they chose.

When my son came out to us, my feeling was simply surprise since I was fully aware that he was made that way. By that time the AIDS crisis was going on big time (we had lost lots of our fine employees to it). My main concern with my boy was that he not do anything to get sick, or in trouble with homophobic people. I told him that and he promised to take good care of himself.

"When my son came out to us,
my feeling was simply surprise
since I was fully aware that
he was made that way."

At the PFLAG meetings I realized that I could help others by sharing my experiences and suggestions and since this problem is still going on, anything I can do may help them. Every meeting has new people showing up with similar concerns, so I keep going. I also volunteer to speak for our Speakers Bureau when I am available. [END](#)

**Your everyday purchases or gifts
can help PFLAG Los Angeles expand
its mission of support, education,
and advocacy.**

Go to smile.amazon.com and Amazon
donates to PFLAG Los Angeles

amazonsmile

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/95-3707419>

**PLEASE
SUPPORT
OUR
WORK!**

As an all-volunteer organization, our work is made possible only with the generous contributions of our donors. Your contributions support our monthly meetings, website, helplines, Speakers Bureau, and outreach to ethnic and faith communities. PFLAG Los Angeles is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and 100% of your donation supports our programs. When you make a donation of \$35 or more to PFLAG Los Angeles, \$15 of your donation goes to PFLAG National and makes you a member of PFLAG National as well.

Donate online at: www.pflagLA.org/join-donate

Happy New Year From Your Editor

— Chris Haiss

A new year has started and I'd like to share with you some remarkable things that have happened in regard to LGBTQ:

Ten LGB lawmakers were sworn into Congress on January 3. Here are the eight lawmakers who will serve in the House of Representatives: David Cicilline (D-RI), Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY), Mark Pocan (D-WI), and Mark Takano (D-CA), and the newly elected Angie Craig (D-MN), Sharice Davids (D-KS), Katie Hill (D-CA), and Chris Pappas (D-NH). And these are the two lawmakers who will serve in the U.S. Senate: Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), who, before becoming a U.S. Senator, was the first openly gay person elected to the House of Representatives, and the first open lesbian elected to Congress where she served in the House from 1999 to 2013 before winning her Senate seat. And Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) who is the first openly bisexual person in the Senate. Before she won her Senate seat, she served as the U.S. Representative from 2013 to 2019.

Congratulations to Skye Patrick, the director of the Los Angeles County Library, who was named 2019 Librarian of the Year by Library Journal, one of the most established industry publications. Skye Patrick is the first African American and the first openly LGBTQ+ person to serve as director of the LA County Library.

Thanks to Equality California (EQCA), 10 of EQCA's 17 (co) sponsored pieces of pro-LGBTQ legislation, including three

resolutions that were adopted by the Legislature, were signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown. Here they are:

Gender Health in Foster Care (AB 2119)

by Assemblymember (AM) Todd Gloria:

Child welfare agencies are required to assess the health needs of all young people in foster care, and to ensure they receive appropriate and timely care to address the needs identified by qualified professionals. This bill makes clear that, to meet this obligation for transgender and gender nonconforming youth, child welfare agencies must ensure access to clinicians who provide gender-affirming treatment consistent with established standards of care.

LGBTQ Cultural Competency Training for Law

Enforcement Officers (AB 2504) by AM Evan Low:

Requires the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (CPOST) to develop LGBTQ-specific training for peace officers and dispatchers. Improving peace officers' ability to communicate with and serve members of the LGBTQ community will assist them in responding appropriately to situations that involve LGBTQ people, with understanding and acceptance. AB 2504 will not only educate peace officers about the LGBTQ community and build more inclusive working environments, it will create new opportunities for dialog between law enforcement officers and the marginalized communities they serve.

Establishing Services for Youth

Experiencing Homelessness (SB 918)

by Senator Scott Wiener and AM Blanca Rubio:

Four out of ten young people experiencing homelessness in California's major cities identify [\(continued on next page\)](#)

PFLAG Volunteers Spread the Word

with education, activism

& advocacy through our

Speakers Bureau engagements

Capital Group: Steve Krantz

LGBT Center Seniors Class:

Mike/Michelle Dennis, Barry Mason, Jessica Sackman, Cathy Sumner, and Chris Tompkins.

Animo Jackie Robinson Charter

High School: Ana C., Gizella Czene, Polly Kim, and Lori Song.

Cal State University Dominguez

Hills: Mike/Michelle Dennis and Polly Kim. PFLAG Speakers were invited to a second engagement: Barry Mason and Liz Mullen.

Arleta High School: Mikali Bender, Steve Krantz, Barry Mason, Liz Mullen, Cathy Sumner, and Flo Trapani.

New Horizons Principal's Meeting:

Steve Krantz

Eaton Corporation: Glenn Mitchell

Museum of Tolerance: Mike/Michelle Dennis, Sarah Jones, Steve Krantz, Karen Mason, Chris Tompkins, and Sylvia Weisenberg. *PFLAG Speakers were invited to a second engagement at the Museum:* Christie Carney, Mike/Michelle Dennis, Steve Krantz, Barry Mason, and Cara O'Donnell. *And a third engagement:* Mike/Michelle Dennis and Cathy Sumner.

**Santa Monica Unitarian
Universalist Community Church:**

Ana C., Christie Carney, and Steve Krantz.

We Need YOUR Stories!

We all have a PFLAG story to share. Some are about growth while others are painful and heart-breaking. Stories of real peoples' lives can be teaching moments to some and life-savers to others.

We encourage you to share YOUR story. The focus should be on your personal story as it relates to the coming-out of an LGBTQ family member/loved one. If you prefer, we can interview you over the phone and write the story for you! All stories are welcome and submissions are subject to editing. By submitting your story you give PFLAG permission to publish it in our newsletter, on our website or other media to promote PFLAG. If requested, your name will not be published.

Please e-mail your story, request to be interviewed, or any questions to NewsletterEditor@pflagLA.org

as LGBTQ. SB 918 will help provide resources for housing, services and supports for youth experiencing homelessness and tasks the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (Council) with oversight. Under SB 918, the Council will be responsible for setting statewide goals and outcome measures and evaluating the effectiveness of programs in reaching those goals to meet the needs of young people experiencing homelessness.

Increasing Access to Identification for People Experiencing Homelessness (AB 2490)

by AM David Chiu:

Eliminates fees charged to people experiencing homelessness seeking to obtain certified birth certificates directly from the state. LGBTQ young people experiencing homelessness in particular often travel to major California cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles to find acceptance, which could be a long distance from their county of birth. For some of these individuals, communicating with or even locating their county of birth to request a birth certificate is a significant hurdle. LGBTQ young people are particularly likely to be experiencing homelessness as a result of family rejection, which can make it unsafe for them to return to their former homes to gain access to their identifying documents.

Recognizing the Needs of LGBTQ Older Adults (AB 2719)

by AM Jacqui Irwin:

Ensure that LGBTQ older adults are recognized as a population in need of special attention, and that they can access the services and support they need to maintain their health and live their lives with dignity.

Suicide Prevention Training for Teachers and School Staff (AB 2639)

by AM Marc Berman & Patrick O'Donnell:

Requires schools to review and, if necessary, update their student suicide prevention policies at a minimum of every five years. These policies already need to include a focus on

high-risk populations, including LGBTQ youth, under existing law. AB 2639 will ensure that these policies are reviewed regularly and kept up-to-date.

Online Anti-Bullying Training for Teachers and School Staff (AB 2291)

by AM David Chiu:

Requires public schools to provide online training annually on the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying to teachers and school staff. It would also require the California Department of Education to post this online training module along with other available online trainings to its website.

LGBTQ Family Law Modernization Act of 2018

(AB 2684) *by AM Richard Bloom:*

Modernizes and eliminates significant inequalities in California family law to ensure that LGBTQ parents and their children have access to the same protections as any other families.

Property Tax Equity for Same-Sex Partners

(AB 2663) *by AM Laura Friedman:*

Provides retroactive relief to individuals who were registered as domestic partners in municipal jurisdictions and may have had their property taxes increased due to the death of a partner. It seeks to bring equity to locally registered domestic partners who may not have registered with the state during a certain time period and ensure they can continue to afford their homes.

Updating Local Hate Crimes Policies

(AB 1985) *by AM Phil Ting:*

Will help empower local communities to reduce rates of hate crimes. It provides guidance for local law enforcement agencies to update and strengthen their policies on hate crimes, focusing on recognizing hate crimes when they have occurred, engaging in appropriate response given the targeted community and the broader community, and fostering a community environment that prevents future hate crimes and incidents from occurring. *[From EQCA.org]*

TransAction

Victory for State Employees in Wisconsin

Wisconsin Public Radio reported that the exclusion that barred state employees from transgender surgery coverage is removed effective January 1, 2019.

In August 2018, the state's Group Insurance Board reversed itself to vote in favor of hormone and gender surgery coverage for state employees. The board had approved such services in 2016 before reversing its decision in 2017 at the request of Gov. Scott Walker.

Thank You, Congresswoman Wexton...

...for hanging the trans pride flag outside your office! The newly-elected Congresswoman, who is the aunt of a transgender child, is the first member of Congress to hang the trans flag. "The trans community has been under attack. I wanted to show my solidarity because we are talking about my friends and family. I want everyone in the trans community to know that they are welcome and loved even in the face of this administration and its attacks on who they are."

Victory in Massachusetts

In this past election, the people of Massachusetts voted overwhelmingly to uphold rights for transgender people, making history as the first state to approve non-discrimination protections for trans people by public vote.

"Last night's historic victory in Massachusetts is a bright point in this incredibly dark and painful time for our communities, demonstrating the power of a campaign led by and centering transgender people," said Kris Hayashi, executive director of Transgender Law Center. "Yesterday showed that in the midst of intense political attack, our neighbors, families, and friends can see through the fear-mongering by people in power and take action to respect the dignity and humanity of transgender people."

Congratulations to Massachusetts and the thousands of dedicated people who worked to bring the Yes on 3 campaign to victory." *[From transgenderlawcenter.org]*

Transgender Military Ban

On January 4, 2019, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled against transgender

service members, lifting the district court's order preventing the Trump administration from enforcing its ban on military service by transgender people in *Doe v. Trump*.

Despite this decision, three nationwide preliminary injunctions halting the ban remain in effect blocking the ban while the cases proceed in the federal district courts.

"Today's ruling is a devastating slap in the face to transgender service members who have proved their fitness to serve and their dedication to this country," said NCLR Legal Director Shannon Minter.

"Today's decision is based on the absurd idea that forcing transgender people to suppress who they are in order to serve is not a ban," said GLAD Transgender Rights Project Director Jennifer Levi. *[From glad.org]*

Trans Man Makes History on Mexican Olympic Committee

Ricardo del Real last November became the first openly transgender man on the Mexican Olympic Committee when he received a document with a male gender marker that recognizes him as a permanent member of this organization that oversees the development, protection and promotion of sports in the Aztec nation.

Del Real joined the committee in 2001, and had been recognized as a woman. Del Real began his transition two years later with a variety of treatments; he legally changed his name and presented as a man physically and socially, and worked in collaboration with the International Olympic Committee and Mexico's National Council to Prevent Discrimination (CONAPRED) throughout his transition.

Del Real declared in reference to his experience with the Mexican Olympic Committee that there had never been anyone in the organization who put a face to the trans community "because there is a lot of fear, because there was not a lot of information and because of that there could be a lot of discrimination. It is a matter of providing the right information, training people to ensure sports is for everyone." *[From washingtonblade.com]*

Quote - Unquote

"I'm a Christian mom with a gay kid living in Oklahoma saying enough is enough. If I don't fight for my son (and his rights) like my hair is on fire, then who will?"

— Sara Cunningham, Executive Director, Free Mom Hugs

PFLAG Los Angeles is an all volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization run by parents, family members, LGBTQ persons and their friends. Each of us came for help, found support, and joined the organization to assist others on their journey to acceptance. Our chapter, together with a group in New York City, founded the national PFLAG organization, which provides assistance to over 350 independent chapters nationwide.

OUR VISION: PFLAG envisions a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed inclusive of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

OUR MISSION: By meeting people where they are and collaborating with others, PFLAG realizes its vision through:

Support for families, allies and people who are LGBTQ;

Education for ourselves and others about the unique issues and challenges facing people who are LGBTQ;

Advocacy in our communities to change attitudes and create policies and laws that achieve full equality for people who are LGBTQ.



P.O. Box 24565, Los Angeles, CA 90024
info@pflagLA.org 888.735.2488

PFLAG LOS ANGELES BOARD

Adele Starr, *Founder*

OFFICERS:

Mariette Sawchuk, *President*

Stuart Huggins, *Vice President*

Steve Krantz, *Secretary*

Karen Mason, *Treasurer*

BOARD: Juan Castillo-Alvarado, Christie Carney, Gizella Czene, Maurie Davidson, Polly Kim, York Knowlton, Blair Lewis, Barry Mason, Liz Mullen, Alexander Sawchuk, Lucy Benji Terrell, Chris Tompkins, Melanie Woloz

Newsletter Editor: Chris Haiss

Graphic Design: York Knowlton, imagine-Y.com

RESOURCES

Support Meetings

sponsored by PFLAG Los Angeles

Westwood*

Westwood United Methodist Church
10497 Wilshire Bl. LA 90024
3rd Wednesday of each month
7:30 - 10:00 pm / Free Parking

*Visit our website for upcoming speakers www.pflagLA.org

Gender Focus

Bienestar in Hollywood
4955 W. Sunset Blvd., LA 90027
2nd Thursday of each month
7:30 - 9:30 pm / Free Parking

South LA

Meetings suspended until further notice

Boyle Heights (Sólo Español)

Mi Centro - Boletín
553 S. Clarence St., Los Angeles, CA 90033
2nd Wednesday of each month
7:00 - 9:00 pm / Free Parking

East LA (Sólo Español)

Bienestar East LA
5326 East Beverly Blvd, Los Angeles 90022
3rd Thursday of each month
7:00 - 9:00 pm / Street Parking

San Fernando Valley (Sólo Español)

Bienestar Centro del Valle de San Fernando
8134 Van Nuys Blvd., #200, Panorama City 91402
4th Friday of each month
7:00 - 9:00 pm / Free Parking

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Contact Melanie Woloz at
SpeakersBureau@pflagla.org

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

PFLAG National
202.467.8180
www.pflag.org

PFLAG Los Angeles - English and Spanish
1.888.PFLAG 88 (1.888.735.2488)

The Trevor Project

24-hour suicide prevention line
866.488.7386
www.thetrevorproject.org

REMEMBER

When you no longer need PFLAG, that's when PFLAG NEEDS YOU!

www.pflagLA.org