



# THE NEWSLETTER

February 2015 // ISSUE 2 // VOLUME 22



## ON THE MOVE

Please join us for our general meeting on **Monday, February 23** at 7:00 pm at Jewish Family Service (JFS), 8804



Balboa Avenue, San Diego. Please note, we are now meeting in room 101. Follow the foot prints when you are buzzed in!

Our guest speaker is a.t. furuya, a trans\* Japanese American graduate student at San Diego State University, as well as a community organizer and activist. a.t. has helped plan the Queer People of Color Conference at SDSU, the

first San Diego Trans\* Pride in 2014 and is currently working on creating a San Diego Transgender Center. They volunteer at the Hillcrest Youth Center and Japanese American Historical Society. Their passion is finding and preserving queer Asian and Pacific Islander history in San Diego. a.t.'s mother will also attend the meeting and give a perspective from a parent's point of view.

Please join us for support groups, then the cookie social, followed by a.t.'s presentation.

## NO ONE WANTS TO BE A LOLLYGAGGER!

Thank you to those members who have renewed their membership for 2015. We are looking forward to receiving more renewals or first time dues. These monies are used to provide support, education, and advocacy on behalf of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community and their families. They enable us to provide monthly meetings, an info line, newsletters, educational brochures, etc.

Please send your dues to PFLAG San

Diego, as \$15 of it is sent to PFLAG National. If you renew with them, there is no benefit for our San Diego chapter.

The membership application is in this newsletter and also on our web site ([www.pflag.com](http://www.pflag.com)). We accept PayPal for your convenience. You can also pay at any of the meetings or mail a check made payable to: PFLAG San Diego, P.O. Box 82762, San Diego, CA 92138. All donations are welcomed.

## CALLING ALL LGBT SCHOLARS

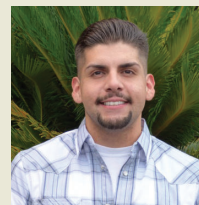
PFLAG San Diego hopes everyone is busy reminding LGBT seniors, full-time undergraduate, and graduate students to apply for PFLAG scholarships. This is our 17th year of offering scholarships

The application and requirements are available on our web site, [www.pflag.com/scholarships](http://www.pflag.com/scholarships). The deadline to apply is **March 16, 2015**, and the awards presentation will be at a luncheon (from noon-2:00) on **May 15, 2015** at UCSD.

Besides applying for our local scholarships, LGBT high school seniors can also apply for National PFLAG scholarships. These scholarships are open to allies, as well. Applications are being accepted from **February 15-April 30, 2015**. For information and requirements, go to [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org) and click on the Education & Programs link. Two of our scholarship recipients from 2014 went on to win National's scholarships.

## FYI

There was lots of information/articles for the January newsletter; however, since it was only four pages, space was limited. Therefore, some of the articles may not seem timely, but were important to include in this issue, even if they weren't published when the event happened. Here is a picture of **Gabriel Figueroa**, the recipient of the **Rob Benzon Memorial Scholarship**. There was only a small picture of Gabriel with the presenters of the scholarship used in the original article.



## PFLAG NORTH COUNTY UPDATE

Congrats are in order to PFLAG members JoyLynn Murray, Maria Al-Shamma and Annette Ottone for receiving Volunteer Recognition Awards from the North County LGBTQ Resource Center.

PFLAGers Donna Miller and Maggie Huntwork chaperoned the Flashback Friday Dance which was opened to all North County Gay-Straight Alliances.

PFLAG members volunteered at the Youth Movie Night at the North County LGBTQ Resource Center.

## FACILITATOR TRAINING

For your convenience, any member in good standing who is interested in becoming a support group facilitator, we are offering a two hour training prior to our general meeting at JFS on **February 23 from 5:00-7:00 pm**. You will gain information on how to direct a support group, as well as group rules, challenges, and opportunities. Diverse and comfortable facilitators are an integral component for a successful PFLAG chapter. We will have printed materials for you to share and take home, discussions, and role playing opportunities. Please RSVP to Terrie Vorono, [tvorono@pflag.com](mailto:tvorono@pflag.com).

Our Board still needs a **Recording Secretary**. If you are interested in filling the position, please contact Board President, Terrie Vorono, [tvorono@pflag.com](mailto:tvorono@pflag.com).

## OFFICERS, COMMITTEES & VOLUNTEERS

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**PFLAG San Diego**  
PO Box 82762  
San Diego, CA 92138

**Tax ID #33-0512868**

National PFLAG, Washington, DC  
(202) 647-8180, www.pflag.org

## Membership Application

- New  Renewal  Change of Address  
 Please contact me for volunteer opportunities

Confidentiality is respected. Your donation is tax deductible (Tax ID 33-0512868)

Make checks payable to:

**PFLAG San Diego**  
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### Type of Membership

- Individual ..... \$30  Household ..... \$40  
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 Contributing ..... \$125  Lifetime ..... \$1000  
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or go online [www.pflag.com](http://www.pflag.com) (forms available)

## PFLAG THANKS YOU FOR YOUR EXTRA HELP

**PFLAG National**  
Grant from the Care  
with Pride Campaign

**Donations to the General Fund**  
JoyLynn & Eric Murray  
Ryan Stewart

**Contributing Memberships**  
Linda Gohlke & Jan Hardin  
Mary Lou Strong

**Book Donation**  
(A Face in the Crowd)  
Judy Becker

**Supporting Memberships**  
Al Folkman  
Susen Herold  
Annette & Remo Ottone

**Providing Refreshments  
for Our Meetings**  
Bobbi Harwood  
Annette Ottone  
Judy Wilkinson  
Sherry Cohen-Richards

# Current Events

**February 23 | Monday**  
San Diego General Meeting  
and Support Groups

**February 26-March 29**  
Baby with the Bathwater  
Diversionary Theatre  
(see article)

**March 2 | Monday**  
PFLAG Support Group  
North County Coastal

**March 2 | Monday**  
Mi Familia Support Group

**March 8 | Sunday**  
PFLAG South Bay Support  
Group

**March 9 | Monday**  
PFLAG Support Group  
East County

**March 16 | Monday**  
Mi Familia Support Group

## VISION STATEMENT

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.

## MISSION STATEMENT

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.

# SUCH A DEAL

PFLAG member, Betsy Sheets, has a proposition for you! If you are interested in obtaining her services for career transition/job search strategies, resume development, or interview skills, she will give PFLAG members a 20% discount. For more information, visit Betsy's web site at [www.betsysheets.com](http://www.betsysheets.com).

For FREE and interesting events  
throughout San Diego, visit:  
[www.HILLQUEST.com](http://www.HILLQUEST.com)

# SUPPORT GROUPS

## SD COUNTY GENERAL MEETING & SUPPORT GROUP

Meets every fourth Monday at 7:00 pm, at Jewish Family Service, 8804 Balboa Avenue, San Diego in Kearny Mesa.

For further information, contact the Info Line:  
**888-398-0006 or [www.pflag.com](http://www.pflag.com)**

## NORTH COUNTY COASTAL

Meets the first Monday, at 7:00 pm, North County LGBTQ Resource Center, 510 North Coast Highway, Suite C, Oceanside.

Contact [northcountycoastal@pflag.com](mailto:northcountycoastal@pflag.com) or  
**Annette Ottone, 760-518-3345.**

## NORTH COUNTY INLAND

Support Groups have been temporarily discontinued

## EAST COUNTY

Meets every second Monday, at 7:00 pm, Summit Unitarian Universalist Church, 8778 Cottonwood Avenue, Santee.

Contact **Bob Dryden: 619-334-8214**  
or [bdryden@pflag.com](mailto:bdryden@pflag.com)

## SOUTH BAY

Meets every second Sunday from 4:00-5:00 pm, First United Methodist Church of Chula Vista, 1200 East H Street, Chula Vista.

Contact: **Patti Boman, 619-227-6092**  
or [pboman@pflag.com](mailto:pboman@pflag.com)

## MI FAMILIA (Spanish)

Meetings are the first and third Mondays of the month from 6:30pm - 8:00 pm at The Center, 3909 Centre Street, Hillcrest

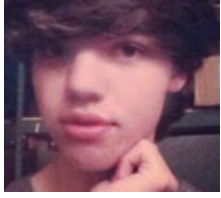
Contact **Patti Boman, 619-227-6092**

## TRANSGENDER SUPPORT

For more information on the Transgender Support Group

Contact **Kathe Dunn, [ftm\\_mom@yahoo.com](mailto:ftm_mom@yahoo.com).**

## REST IN PEACE, DEAR LEELAH



The LGBT community mourns the death of 17 year-old Leelah Alcorn. Leelah committed suicide by walking in front of a tractor-trailer on December 28. Born Josh, "he" had voiced his desire to his parents to live as a girl.

Her parents said they wouldn't stand for that.

When Mrs. Alcorn was interviewed by CNN, she said, "We don't support that, religiously, but we told him that we loved him unconditionally. We loved him no matter what. I loved my son. People need to know that I loved him. He was a good kid, a good boy." She claims that Leelah only talked about being transgender once; however, she said that "Josh" was depressed and that counselors and a psychiatrist gave her medication and then "he" stopped talking about being transgender. Later in the interview, she contradicted herself saying that, when Leelah was 16, she did come to her asking for transition surgery, but told her, "we didn't have the money for anything like that." Much of what Mrs. Alcorn said is in direct opposition to what Leelah stated in her suicide note – Leelah said she struggled for a long time to gain her parents' acceptance as a transgender teen.

Leelah programmed the suicide note to Tumblr to publish after her death. Parts of the note: "Please don't be sad, it's for the better. The life I would've lived isn't worth living in ... because I'm transgender. I could go into detail explaining why I feel that way, but this note is probably going to be lengthy enough as it is. To put it simply, I feel like a girl trapped in a boy's body, and I've felt that way ever since I was 4. I never knew there was a word for that feeling, nor was it possible for a boy to become a girl, so I never told anyone and I just continued to do traditionally 'boyish' things to try to fit in."

She also explained in the note that when she was 14, she first understood what transgender meant and "cried of happiness." "After 10 years of confusion I finally understood who I was. I immediately told my mom, and she reacted extremely negatively, telling me that it was a phase, that I would never truly be a girl, that God doesn't make mistakes, that I am wrong. If you are reading this, parents, please don't tell this to your kids. Even if you are Christian or are against transgender people don't ever say that to someone, especially your kid. That won't do anything but make them hate them self. That's exactly what it did to me."

Leelah's continued in the note, "My mom started taking me to a therapist, but would only take me to christian therapists, (who were all very biased) so I never actually got the therapy I needed to cure me of my depression. I only got more christians telling me that I was selfish and wrong and that I should look to God for help." She wrote that she

realized her "parents would never come around" and that she would have to wait until she was 18 to start any kind of medical treatment to transition to being a female. She said that "absolutely broke my heart. ... I felt hopeless, that I was just going to look like a man in drag for the rest of my life." In the note, Leelah said she cried herself to sleep that night. Her parents wanted "me to be their perfect little straight christian boy, and that's obviously not what I wanted."

Mrs. Alcorn's solution to Leelah's hopelessness was to take away her access to social media because she was looking at "inappropriate" things on the Internet, but would not say what those things were. To this, Leelah describes what it was like to not have social media to connect with friends: "This was probably the part of my life when I was the most depressed, and I'm surprised I didn't kill myself. I was completely alone for 5 months. No friends, no support, no love. Just my parents' disappointment and the cruelty of loneliness."

It all began to feel like too much weight for her, Leelah wrote. Convinced she had few friends, and feeling the pressure of saving enough money to move out of her home, keep her grades up and face people at church who she felt had only judgment for her, she decided to end her life.

She instructed to give all of her things and money to the transgender civil rights movement and to transgender support groups.

"The only way I will rest in peace is if one day transgender people aren't treated the way I was, they're treated like humans, with valid feelings and human rights. Gender needs to be taught about in schools, the earlier the better. My death needs to mean something. My death needs to be counted in the number of transgender people who commit suicide this year. ... Fix society. Please."

## THERE'S A LONG WAY TO GO

Giselle de la Rosa, a transgender woman, was denied access to use the women's restroom across from The Prado restaurant in Balboa Park. The bathroom is maintained by the nonprofit Balboa Park Conservancy, not the restaurant. She said a maintenance worker outside the bathroom stopped her and told her she couldn't use the women's restroom "because you're a man, not a woman." Even after Ms De la Rosa explained that she lives as a woman and legally is a woman, the worker insisted she was a man and didn't care what she had to say. Giselle left without using the bathroom.

In California, state non-discrimination laws are clear: transgender people can't be denied bathroom access at businesses and K-12 public schools.

The Balboa Park Conservancy disputes the matter, and it is being investigated.

## LUCK OF THE IRISH??

Father Martin Dolan, a Catholic priest in Dublin, came out as gay recently during a sermon in which he supported equal marriage rights for same-sex couples in the Republic of Ireland, where a vote on the issue is slated for May. "I'm gay myself," he said, to which he received a standing ovation from his parishioners.

As one of the congregants told the *Irish Sun*, "We are all very proud of Father Martin. Because he has admitted that he is gay he doesn't change the person that he was before it."

## JANUARY 16 WAS A LOVELY DAY

That is the day the Supreme Court agreed to decide whether all 50 states must allow gay and lesbian couples to marry before its current term ends in June. This will resolve one of the great civil rights questions in a generation. Hopefully, this is one of the final steps in a decades-long journey toward equal treatment of gay and lesbian couples.

This decision came just months after the justices ducked the issue, refusing in October to hear appeals from rulings allowing same-sex marriage in five states. That decision, which was considered a major surprise, delivered a tacit victory for gay rights, immediately expanding the number of states with same-sex marriage from 19 to 24 plus the District of Columbia.



Largely, as a consequence of the Supreme Court's decision not to act, the number of states allowing same-sex marriage has since grown to 37, and more than 70 percent of Americans live in places where gay couples can marry. Yahoo!

## GOOD NEWS FOR LGBT SENIORS

The San Diego Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend that the City Council approve a 194-unit development in North Park that will be LGBT friendly. The complex will be built on the northwest corner of Texas Street and Howard Avenue and will be close to public transportation.

The developer is partnering with The San Diego LGBT Community Center to assure that LGBT seniors will find the apartment complex is LGBT friendly and would provide a safe, inclusive, and affirming environment for all residents.

## A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY

Students for Economic Justice (SEJ) is offering a summer fellows program for qualified first, second, and third year college students. Applicants must be local and attending college in San Diego County. They want to accept students who are interested in fighting for social and economic justice. They are looking for students who come from or have a passion for advancing issues and policies pertaining to low-income communities of color, low wage workers, and other underserved communities. They particularly want applicants who are interested in career paths with a social and economic justice focus and ones who are dedicated to making a lasting impact in the San Diego area.

SEJ is a project of the Center on Policy Initiatives (CPI), with the purpose of building stronger capacity for community and labor organizing in San Diego. SEJ provides the skills and tools that talented, passionate, young people need to become part of the fight for economic justice in San Diego.

The program is an intensive 6-week, full-time paid summer fellowship. The deadline for submitting applications is **February 28, 2015**. To download the application: [www.onlinecpi.org/sej\\_application](http://www.onlinecpi.org/sej_application).

## A HISTORIC FIRST

In January, the National LGBT Bar Association announced a historic decision by the U. S. Navy, which issued new military documents recognizing a transgender veteran's legal name change and gender identity.

Lieutenant Paula M. Neira, a 1985 Naval Academy graduate who served in Operation Desert Storm, filed her case in March, 2014 and recently received word that her name change had been approved.

Neira was surprised at the speed of the decision. Despite serving with distinction and being awarded more than 20 military decorations, she decided it was more important to be true to herself than continue with the Navy. Her goal, when she enlisted, was to spend her entire life serving. She said leaving was the hardest decision she had ever made.

Neira resigned her commission in 1991, and underwent gender confirmation surgery in 1995.

**IT IS NOT OUR DIFFERENCES THAT DIVIDE US, IT IS OUR INABILITY TO RECOGNIZE, ACCEPT AND CELEBRATE THOSE DIFFERENCES --Audre Lorde**

## NEXT IN LINE



**Miguel Parada** is the recipient of the **Richard Geyser Memorial Ethics Scholarship at the San Diego Human Dignity Foundation (Richard Geyser Memorial Ethics Fund).**

Miguel is studying at the University of California, San Diego, working toward

his BS in Political Science. Miguel is a proud first generation college student who started out quite shy, but as time went on, he became more confident and outgoing. He is a participant in the school's Coming Out Group. In his letter of recommendation, it was noted that Miguel demonstrates a strong sense of commitment for those he works with and a great deal of initiative.

“Several statistics show that LGBT youth in America suffer deeply and intensely through depression and anxiety disorders. As a result, these youth may commit suicide. Many of these youth are part of organizations that do not accept their identity. While there are a number of causes to their suffering, granting organizations the benefit of tax exemption while condoning discrimination based on sexual orientation or sexual identity, violates principles of ethics. Stakeholders include organizations (non-profit 501(c)(3)), religious organizations, citizens, lawmakers, and members of the LGBT community.

Currently, these organizations, while protected under the first amendment to voice their own opinions through their institutional structures, are rewarded with the benefits of tax exemption. Still, it is one's responsibility to ensure the safety and protection of all youth who are involved with these organizations. If these organizations choose to use their free speech to discriminate and hold policies against LGBT youth, then their tax exemption status should be revoked because these benefits are granted by the United States; thus, supporting these organizations with tax exemption benefits would essentially be supporting their acts of discrimination against LGBT youth.

These organizations should not use those opinions to discriminate against a minority that is not only being excluded from certain memberships, but are also 8.4 times more likely to attempt suicide, 5.9 times more likely to report high levels of depression, and 3.4 times more

likely to use illegal drugs (Ryan). Yelling 'fire' in a crowded theater may be freedom of speech, but in no way is it acceptable when it harms innocent and fragile lives. This is exactly what happens when organizations refuse to make concessions at the expense of at-risk youth that cannot defend themselves. Furthermore, when these organizations engage in institutional discrimination towards LGBT youth, it violates the ethical principle of equality by condoning and propagating the idea that LGBT youth are not equal to non-LGBT youth. A fact sheet by Equality California notes that, 'discriminatory policies...teaches young people that it is acceptable to exclude some people simply because of who they are' (Equality California). Thus, discrimination continues to spread as each generation realizes that an LGBT youth is less than their counterparts. For LGBT youth, the effects as shown above can be disastrous.



A solution that should be implemented is the California Senate Bill 323 proposed by Senator Ricardo Lara. This bill seeks to cut off funding and tax exemption to organizations that hold discrimination policies against LGBT youth (Lara). Current law in California already prohibits organizations from discriminating on the 'basis of race, sex, nationality, and religion' (California Revenue and Tax Code). Senator Lara is simply making an important addition to the state law that would add 'gender identity' and 'sexual orientation' (Lara). This policy will place pressure on organizations that currently discriminate against LGBT youth. The policy sends a clear message to all organizations that discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is unacceptable and discrimination should never be rewarded (Equality California). Applying this policy on a national level is certainly a realistic and feasible policy and would be an important step in fixing the ethical violations of our most vulnerable citizens: LGBT youth. If this solution comes to fruition, this will reverse the idea that non-LGBT youth can discriminate against LGBT youth. While this does not solve all issues within the LGBT community, it certainly communicates to LGBT youth that they are protected by law and that harmful speech and institutional discrimination, which violates the principles of fairness and equality, will not be tolerated.”

## JOIN THE DINGLEBERRYS

The Diversionary Theatre presents *Baby with the Bathwater* from **February 26-March 29**. The play shares the story of Helen and John Dingleberry, who are woefully unprepared for parenthood. In a series of wildly hilarious scenes, their offspring struggles to define himself and find his place in the world. *Baby* dives face first into the absurd waters of how, for better or worse, family makes us who we are. For ticket info and show times, go to [www.diversionary.org](http://www.diversionary.org).

## NEW YORK, NEW YORK

In January, New York City lawmakers approved a bill that will allow transgender New Yorkers to change the gender on their birth certificates without sex reassignment surgery. Members of the New York City Council by a 39-5 vote margin approved the measure that gay Council member Corey Johnson (D-Manhattan) introduced. "We are thrilled by the passage of this legislation," said Michael Silverman, executive director of the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund, which filed a 2011 lawsuit on behalf of four trans New Yorkers who challenged the long-standing policy. "Today's action will dramatically improve the lives of transgender people born in New York City." Joanne Prinzivalli, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, also welcomed the bill's passage. "My birth certificate was incorrect when it was filled out, and it is still incorrect to this day," she said. "The old policy was unfair to me and to other transgender people who just want ID that reflects who we are. I am extremely relieved and grateful for the city's action." New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio has indicated he will sign the bill into law.

## WHAT NEXT?

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) wants the people of Potomac, Maryland to know that Gambian President, Yahya Jammeh, who signed a draconian antigay law into effect, owns a \$3.5 million home in their city. Gambia is located in West Africa.

The HRC took out an ad in a local paper, *The Gazette*, that reads "Meet Your Neighbor" and includes information that in November, after signing an anti-gay law, President Jammeh began rounding up people suspected of being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender and throwing them in prison. Three of these people are still being held without access to lawyers, facing torture and fearing for their lives. The law provides for life in prison for people convicted of "aggravated homosexuality," a definition that includes acts committed by "serial offenders" and people living with HIV or AIDS. The law also equates pedophilia with homosexuality.

"The citizens of Potomac should know that an individual with a truly horrific anti-LGBT human rights record lives just a few doors down from them," Ty Cobb, director of HRC Global, said in a statement. "Those who target LGBT people, throw them in prison, and subject them to torture should not be welcome in our towns, our neighborhoods, or our country. We hope that this ad aises awareness about President Jammeh and the state of human rights in The Gambia."

HRC started a petition in December urging the Obama administration to take action against Jammeh. The White House later announced it was suspending trade benefits for the nation.

## HERE WE GO AGAIN

Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, a possible Republican presidential candidate, just reintroduced the State Marriage Defense Act, which would prevent the federal government from recognizing the marriages of same-sex couples who don't live in a marriage equality state. Since the 2013 Supreme Court decision striking down section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, the federal government has recognized all marriages that were legal in the state where they were performed, regardless of where a couple lives.

"Even though the Supreme Court made clear in *United States v. Windsor* that the federal government should defer to state 'choices about who may be married,' the Obama administration has disregarded state marriage laws enacted by democratically elected legislatures to uphold traditional marriage," Cruz said in a statement when he introduced the legislation. "I support traditional marriage and we should reject attempts by the Obama administration to force same-sex marriage on all 50 states."

Eleven other Republican senators joined Cruz in introducing the measure, and Rep. Randy Weber of Texas introduced a companion bill in the House of Representatives. Similar bills were introduced last year but went nowhere.

"In the name of protecting 'states' rights,' the bill would take spousal benefits away from the wife of a soldier serving in Afghanistan if she and their children were stationed in a state without marriage equality," noted a press release from the Human Rights Campaign. "In order to 'defend marriage,' his legislation would force a grieving widower to pay an unfair tax on his husband's estate, simply because the couple had retired nearer to grandchildren in their golden years. This legislation would make our nation's already-unfair patchwork of laws even more burdensome for same-sex couples, and undermine the promise of equal treatment embodied in the historic *Windsor* decision."

## MORE SUPPORT ALWAYS WELCOMED

The American Academy of Pediatrics, which represents thousands of pediatricians, has taken a firm position in support of same-sex marriage in a policy statement drafted by two Boston doctors, according to *The Boston Globe*.

The group also came out in support of full adoption and foster care rights for all parents, regardless of sexual orientation. The pediatricians said states should not limit adoptions nor foster care placements to parents who are heterosexuals. "This has been in the process for four to five years," said Dr. Ellen Perrin of Tufts Medical Center, a co-author of the policy statement. But the release was timed to draw the attention of the Supreme Court justices.

*Luan D. Andrews, M.A.*

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST  
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## SMALL VICTORIES COUNT

A New Jersey Superior Court judge has ruled misrepresenting homosexuality as a disorder in marketing conversion therapy services violates the state's consumer protection laws. This is a devastating ruling for the conversion therapy industry, which claims to "convert" people from gay to straight. The ruling marks the first time a court in the United States has found that homosexuality is not a disease or a disorder and that it is fraudulent for conversion therapists to make such a claim.

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