



Special points of interest:

- PFLAG will meet Sunday, February 12, 3pm
- Missouri and Kansas legislative issues to be presented
- President's message
- Letter from PFLAG National

February 2012

Legislative Issues in Kansas and Missouri

At the next program, this **Sun., Feb. 12th at 3pm** at Village Presbyterian Church, Thomas Witt, from the Kansas Equality Coalition will be presenting current legislative issues facing the LGBT community, and the upcoming legislative elections in Kansas. Those in Missouri will hear about issues from Claire Cook with PROMO.



Kansas Equality Coalition is determined to end discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Coalition seeks to ensure the dignity, safety and legal equality of all Kansans.

The Equality Coalition is a grassroots movement that can't succeed without the support and help of its members. Their meetings are open and they have eleven chapters throughout the state. You are welcome to offer ideas and your help. We also understand that time can be tight. Doing something as easy as becoming a member, can make a huge difference in the life of all LGBT Kansans. Kansas is far ahead of most of their bordering states in securing equal rights for LGBT citizens. The Coalition's website is www.kansasequalitycoalition.org.



PROMO is Missouri's statewide organization advocating for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equality through legislative action, electoral politics, grassroots organizing, and community education. Their website is www.promoonline.org.

Vital VOICE Political columnist and PROMO Exec. Director A.J. Bockelman interviews Missouri Attorney General and likely gubernatorial candidate, Chris Koster. Missouri's highest ranking law enforcement officer touches on LGBT equality in the Show Me State and how he sees LGBT rights advancing in the conservative trending state. Read the article at <http://bit.ly/xs44kT>.

Join PROMO for Equality Day in Jefferson City

On Wednesday, February 29th, you will have a chance to meet with your elected officials, use your voice to share your stories, and talk about issues important in all our lives.

Transportation will be provided.. Contact PROMO at <http://bit.ly/z3znP7>, to reserve your seat or organize a carpool in your area.

A Place to Find Support and Acceptance

PFLAG-KC general meetings are held on the **second Sunday** of each month at **3:00pm** at The Village Presbyterian Church, **6641 Mission Road, Room 307 (enter SE door)**, Prairie Village KS 66208, 913.262.4200.

The meeting rooms are wheelchair accessible. PFLAG-KC board meetings are held at 1:30pm before the general meeting. Everyone is welcome to attend and add their ideas.

Meetings are all inclusive & non-denominational.

For more information call our help line: 816.765.9818.

Write us at:
PFLAG-KC
PO Box 414101
Kansas City MO 64141

www.pflagkc.org

pflagkc@pflagkc.org



“THE STAKES
ARE TOO HIGH
TO SIT BY AND
WATCH”

facebook
Kansas City PFLAG



Heartland Men's Chorus

“When I Knew”

8 pm - Fri., March 24

4 pm - Sat., March 25

Folly Theater

300 W. 12th St., KC MO

Tickets: hmckc.org
or 816-931-3338

Narrated by Dan Savage
of “It Gets Better Project”.

Thank you to [Village Presbyterian Church](#) for allowing us a meeting space. Note to the PFLAG community: we are an all inclusive group and are not affiliated with any religious organization.

President's Message

Dear PFLAG Family,

Please join us this month for information of interest to all of us interested in moving the cause of LGBT equality forward. Our speaker for this month is Tom Witt of Kansas Equality Coalition. KEC is a political action group working for LGBT equality in Kansas. Tom will be speaking about legislative issues important to Kansas members. Claire Cook from PROMO, the corresponding group for Missouri, will be joining us also to speak during our announcement time about Equality Day in Jefferson City, and can also address questions for our Missouri members.

Even if you don't consider yourself to be “political”, it is increasingly important to know the views of those representing us locally as well as on the state and federal level. If you are not registered, you should do so, and it's critical to show up

to vote. Listen to the views of the candidates (many are quite outspoken on issues of marriage equality, and their views on equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people) so that you can make an informed choice.



Here is our disclaimer. PFLAG is a non-profit organization, and is a non partisan organization. As such, we cannot, support or oppose a particular candidate for office. We can however, support or oppose the issues, and legislation proposed, that these candidates will vote on, and we should educate ourselves about those issues.

Join us on Sunday, February 12 for your introduction to the issues. Then pay attention, follow the dialogue, and stay engaged. Tell friends and family about what you learn and why it is important to us and our loved ones. The stakes are too high to sit by and watch.

Carolyn

Equality and Dignity: Watch How Our Journey Continues

Dear Friend:

Forty years ago, the family and ally movement that has become PFLAG started with the simple act of a parent supporting their child. Jeanne Manford marching with her son was historic because it was such a different time. Times have changed and we all know the path to equality has been long, challenging, sometimes disappointing and by no means, over.

I wanted to remind all of you as you watch this new video from the State Department that, every day, PFLAG

makes history even if sometimes we only measure it one family at a time. We have come so far as a movement, as a society, as America, as the world, and your efforts continue to be a vital part of that journey.



So, watch Secretary Clinton's speech with pride, as we did.
<http://bit.ly/zcY8vn>

Let's continue our work on the right side of history.

As always, thank you!

Jody

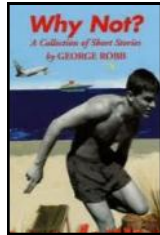
Jody M. Huckaby
Executive Director PFLAG National

Why Not

“I encourage each of you to read this book. It is so fascinating and I found it hard to put down.”

As the back of the book says, this is a timely, controversial, and entertaining book of short stories. George Robb was married and had two sons. Their relationship with their dad was distant after they found out his sexual orientation. George’s wife was the inspiration for this book. He stayed with her until her death in 1981 at the age of 53. His sons turned their backs on him as soon as they learned his sexual orientation.

The day his wife died she said, “Honey do you remember that morning in Madrid... when I was so critical of those two young boys making love? Well I’ve learned a lot since then, Do this for me. Write about gay men and women in this world...what they go through and how they cope. Write



Available in the
PFLAG Library
Check it out.

Synopsis by, Judy Bishop, PFLAG member

about how and why they become homosexual. Write about the different types of gay men and women. Make it in the form of a collection of short stories. Don’t call it *Why*. Call it *Why Not?* And honey, that novel you wrote? *Better than One* so long ago? Include it too. One more thing, your music. You must share your music with the world. That was the beginning!

Personally, I continued to be surprised every chapter as each one built on another part of the book. This is a very difficult book to describe to others, but I really loved it. All the stories are so related to each other, but you don’t find out many times until later or in another story. The main theme winding the book is the pursuit of happiness.

The book comes with a CD of George’s music. It is composed of 15 studio recorded original highly varied songs dated back to the 1940.



‘WRITE ABOUT
GAY MEN AND
WOMEN’

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Treasurer’s Report:

Monthly finance reports are available and are presented at the 1:30pm board meeting. Everyone is welcome to attend the board meeting.

Local Printer Refuses Gay Rights T-Shirt

by Terra Hall with Fox 4 News

January 25, 2011 - BLUE SPRINGS, Mo. Bailee Webb never thought she’d be at the center of controversy.

But that’s exactly where the 17-year-old Blue Springs South senior who dreams of going to Harvard found herself after she tried to get t-shirts printed for her school club – Gay Straight Alliance.

“Every other club at our school has their own t-shirts and so we decided to get our own,” said Bailee.

As the GSA president she was responsible for coming up with the design which read, “why is it that, as a culture, we are more comfortable seeing two men holding guns than holding hands?”

“We wanted something that started people talking and thinking about why it is in our culture we’re more used to seeing violence than love,” said Bailee.

What happened next shocked Bailee; the business she found to print the GSA t-shirts chose not to.

“I was angry at first,” said Bailee. “I had to step back and cool down.”

This is not the first time Rod’s Sports and Apparel has denied the request to print a t-shirt. Rod Lindemann said young people often approach him with racy slogans and it’s he who decides if they make it to the printer.

Lindemann said while he’s a Christian and doesn’t fully support homosexuality, it wasn’t his faith that made him decide not to print the shirts. He said it was the message that compared holding hands to service men and women fighting for freedom.

“We live in a country where we all have freedom to speak out,” said Lindemann. “I fully respect it, I respect what their club does with the Gay Straight Alliance. We all do need to come together.

To view complete article by Terra Hall with Fox 4 News: <http://bit.ly/zpDygW>

Kansas Equality Coalition testifies in Senate, urging repeal of unconstitutional ban on same-sex relationships

Testimony of Thomas Witt, Executive Director
Kansas Equality Coalition
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
In Support of SB308
February 1, 2012

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am here today to speak in support of SB308, and I thank you for the opportunity to do so.

The Kansas Equality Coalition works to eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In the six years since we formed, we have organized eleven chapters around the state and have nearly 2000 members. Today we ask you to amend Kansas Statutes to remove the unconstitutional criminalization of gay and lesbian Kansans.

The recodification bill before you today will, among other matters, repeal the unconstitutional provisions of statute, K.S.A. 2011 Supp. 21-5504 and K.S.A. 2011 Supp. 21-5507, which bans consensual sexual relations between members of the same sex. In the 2011 session, you heard SB56, which was a stand-alone bill that sought to repeal only K.S.A. 2011 Supp. 21-5504. You recommended that bill for passage; it went to the Senate calendar, where it languished until returned to this committee at Sine Die. Also in the 2011 session, the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice heard a recodification bill similar to SB308; that bill contained the same repeal provisions as this. After being persuaded that HB2321 would fail if the sodomy repeal language came to the House floor, the committee removed that language. In a fit of irony, on a vote of 32 to 91, HB2321 refused to pass the full House without the sodomy repeal language, which is presumably why SB308 is before you today.

Beginning in 1961 and continuing through 2003, states began repealing their consensual sodomy laws. While most states enacted blanket repeals, a few states made a distinction between married and unmarried heterosexual couples, leaving in place criminal penalties for unmarried couples. In Kansas, the ban on consensual sodomy was repealed for all heterosexual couples, married or not. Only acts committed by members of the same sex remained against the law in our state, in effect making it illegal to be gay or lesbian in the State of Kansas.

As most of you are aware, in 2003, the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of *Lawrence v Texas* (539 U.S. 558), found that criminalizing same-sex sodomy was a violation of the due process and equal protection provisions of the United States Constitution. In their 6 to 3 ruling, the majority struck down all state laws criminalizing consensual relationships, gay or straight.

Unfortunately, the State of Kansas still has this unconstitutional law on its books. Kansans are still being harassed by government officials, who use this law as justification to engage in legalized discrimination and intimidation.

In one case, a senior law enforcement official made clear, in his presentation to an assembly of adult college students, that

“...even to this day, homosexuality is a crime in Kansas.” That statement was made by Finney County Attorney John Wheeler in 2008, nearly five years after the US Supreme Court rendered such laws unenforceable. Mr. Wheeler is, incidentally, the President of the Kansas County and District Attorneys Association, so one would assume that his views on this matter carry significant weight. We have an audio recording of his remarks, and the PowerPoint slides he used in his presentation. You’ll find attached to this testimony an excerpt of the slides, and a copy of the Garden City Telegram article reporting on the incident. We can provide the full presentation, and the recording, to this committee if needed. At the time this incident occurred, members of our Southwest chapter were able to meet with Mr. Wheeler and secure his agreement that he would stop pushing what he knew was an unconstitutional and unenforceable law. Frankly, though, it should not take a public confrontation with civil rights activists to ensure that prosecutors fairly enforce laws and court orders.

Also attached to this testimony is a March 18, 2011 letter from the Internal Revenue Service, denying “head of household” filing status to a Kansas taxpayer. The taxpayer, who has asked that his name not be made public, is in a domestic partnership with a disabled Marine veteran. They live in a very small town in south-central Kansas, where he cares for his partner. They are retired working-class men, and live frugally. In their letter, the IRS specifically cites the unconstitutional same-sex sodomy law as a reason for his denial.

That this law remains on the books is an offense to every gay and lesbian Kansan, and to every citizen of our state who believes in fair treatment under law. That top law enforcement and other government officials are still citing this law as a means to threaten law-abiding Kansans with arrest and prosecution, and to justify discrimination against us, is an outrage.

In the very first Executive Order issued by his administration, Governor Brownback declared that “the growth of liberty” called for creation of the Office of the Repealer. The Repealer is charged with recommending immediate repeal of laws found to be “unreasonable, unduly burdensome, duplicative, onerous, and conflicting...[and] detrimental to the economic well-being of Kansas.” This unconstitutional statute certainly meets the requirements laid out by our Governor, who less than ten days ago refused to act on our repeated requests for repeal.

Nothing can be more “onerous and burdensome” than an unconstitutional law that is used to threaten Kansans with arrest and imprisonment, and that is used to deny rights and privileges enjoyed by everyone else. I urge this committee to support SB308, and to strike this unconstitutional vestige of a less tolerant society from our statute books.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am available to stand for questions.

Continued from page 4

KANSAS EQUALITY COALITION URGES SENATE ACTION ON UNCONSTITUTIONAL BAN ON GAY, LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS

Topeka, Kansas, February 1, 2012

Today the Senate Committee on the Judiciary heard testimony on SB308, a “catch-all” cleanup bill that includes provisions that would repeal Kansas’ unconstitutional ban on gay and lesbian relationships. The Senate bill replaces a similar one that failed in the House in 2011, after a House committee removed the language repealing the ban on gay and lesbian relationships from HB2321.

“After being persuaded by Representatives Jan Pauls and Lance Kinzer that the 2011 cleanup bill would fail if the repeal language came to the House floor, the committee removed that language,” said Thomas Witt, Executive Director of the Kansas Equality Coalition. “It’s ironic that, on a vote of 32 to 91, the full House refused to pass last year’s bill once the repeal was removed,” said Witt.

Upon taking office in 2011, Governor Brownback made repealing unreasonable, out-of-date laws a top priority for his administration. In response, the Kansas Equality Coalition has repeatedly requested, in writing and in meetings with the Office of the Repealer, that the unconstitutional

ban on gay and lesbian relationships be repealed. On January 20, the Governor released a list of 51 laws he would recommend for repeal, but missing from that list was the same-sex ban.

“We are angry that the Governor has broken his promise to repeal unreasonable and burdensome laws,” Witt said. “There is nothing more unreasonable than keeping a law on the books that says every gay and lesbian Kansan belongs in jail. We urge the Senate to do the right thing, act swiftly on this bill, and remove this unjust law,” he said.

Responding to questions about the law’s enforceability, Witt produced documents showing recent statements by a Kansas prosecutor that, contrary to the orders of the Supreme Court, “even to this day, homosexuality is a crime in Kansas.”

“We are tired of public officials using this unconstitutional law to engage in public gay-bashing,” Witt said. “Judging by public reaction to the Governor’s inaction earlier this month, the people of Kansas are tired of official gay-bashing as well.”



Dear Friends,

For Zachary, it started in the 3rd grade.

First they said he looked and talked like a girl. Then they called him a "fag." Finally, when he reached 8th grade, the bullying turned cruelly violent - and school administrators did nothing.

It's unacceptable. And stories like Zach's are far from rare. Similar events are taking place across the country, creating a toxic environment that denies countless LGBT students their right to an equal education.

That's why we're pressuring Congress to take action - and we need you to add your voice right away.

Watch a video of Zach's story, which includes shocking footage of an in-class beating. Then tell Congress to protect LGBT students from harassment and discrimination.
<http://bit.ly/yVILkN>

In a survey of 7,000 LGBT students, 90% were bullied because of their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Fear of this harassment is why too many drop out, suffer physical or mental health trauma, and even try to end their own lives.

It's time for this to stop. Tell Congress to protect our students from harassment and discrimination today.
<http://bit.ly/wOhZ10>

Thanks for standing with us,

James Esseks
Director, ACLU LGBT Project

P.S. Progress is being made all over the country to secure the freedom to marry for the LGBT community. The ACLU and our affiliates are leading the charge in states from Washington to Maryland to Maine, so everyone, regardless of who they love, is treated equally under the law. Stay tuned for more information on these exciting efforts.



Who Are We?

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays of Kansas City ([PFLAG-KC](http://www.pflagkc.org)) is a group of parents, siblings, friends, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who:

- Provide a support system for families and friends of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender people to enable them to understand, accept and support their children with love and pride.
- Provide education for individuals and the community at large on the nature of homosexuality, and
- Support the full human and civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

Passages for Youth 14 to under 21

Passages is Kansas City's only youth program dedicated to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning youth, and straight alliances!

Passages meets every
Wednesday at 5:30pm and Saturday at 6:30pm
at 620 E. Armour Blvd, KC MO

Passages is a drug-free, alcohol-free, and hate-free environment for fun, games, music, movies, dancing, food, and more!

Donations are needed. See website for complete listing at www.kcpassages.org/site/supporters

Most critical needs are:

Fresh Fruit	Crackers/cookies
Canned meats	Canned vegetables/fruit
Soups	Pizza/Pasta sauce
Desktops/Laptops	Monitors
Keyboards	8 port network switch/router

If you would like to donate items please contact Passages online at www.kcpassages.org/site/contact or by calling 816-931-0334.

LIKE ME Lighthouse Grand Opening in March

Grand opening weekend events begin on **March 9th**, with an exclusive benefit screening of *Wish Me Away* with Chely Wright at:

Screenland Crossroads, 1656 Washington St, KC MO

6:00pm - Cocktail Reception

6:30pm - Film Screening

8:00pm - Q&A With Chely and Family

Tickets \$30 - Purchase at <http://bit.ly/wDCqFq>

See www.kclikemelighthouse.org for complete listing.

Chely and her family will be at the screening and will participate in the Q&A following the film.

All money raised with benefit the LIKE ME Lighthouse.

The LIKE ME® Lighthouse is a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center located in Kansas City, MO, providing services to the many different facets of the LGBT community, including men, women, youth, seniors, families and friends.

To view the YouTube documentary teaser about *Wish Me Away* click on this link: <http://bit.ly/zX0FQt>.

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