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The commitment of our sponsors goes beyond simply writing a check — by linking their image with Lambda Legal they are standing with us in the court of public opinion. Each of these companies knows that their sponsorship does not grant them immunity from our work. Their commitment to the organization and our mission must be one they believe in and demonstrate in their own work.

A full listing of Lambda Legal's national sponsors can be found on our website: www.lambdalegal.org. We are truly grateful for their generosity and look forward to a continued relationship with each one of them.

Equal Protection for All

In July New York's Governor Paterson signed the "Fair Access to Family Court" bill into law, 20 years after it was first introduced, which will finally offer LGBT survivors of domestic violence recourse in family courts. New York's Office for Prevention of Domestic Violence reported in a press release that "unmarried victims, such as those living together, dating, or in same-sex relationships, will now be able to obtain potentially life-saving civil orders of protection. The law is now in effect and the unified court system has updated their civil order of protection petition."

ON THE DOCKET

CROSSING THE LINE

In a case opened more than four years ago, Lambda Legal achieved an early-summer victory for a lesbian mother fighting for visitation rights to her daughter. Lisa Miller and Janet Jenkins married in Vermont and later ended their relationship; a Vermont court ordered joint custody of their daughter, Isabella. Miller then moved to Virginia, where she used an antigay marriage law to establish herself as the sole legal parent. Lambda Legal represented Jenkins and appealed this decision. A Virginia appeals court upheld the Vermont court order, maintaining that federal law requires all states to enforce visitation and custody orders from other states. Most recently, the Virginia Supreme Court affirmed this decision, ruling that Jenkins must be allowed to have regular visitation with her daughter.

IMPACT: This decision reunited Jenkins with her daughter after years of legal struggle. It also confirms that federal law mandates equal custody and visitation rights for same-sex and different-sex couples.

ADF DISMISSED (AGAIN)

The persistent attempts of antigay Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) to challenge New York State law failed yet again. The New York Supreme Court has dismissed a lawsuit against Governor Paterson challenging his directive that state agencies respect out-of-state marriages of same-sex couples, making this the fourth court in New York to affirm the law. The court granted Lambda Legal's motion to intervene in the case on behalf of Peri Rainbow and Tamela Sloan, longtime public employees who are raising a special needs child adopted from foster care. The couple, like others in the state, depends on the protections that come from respect for their marriage. In May, Governor Paterson instructed all state agencies to revise policies and regulations to recognize marriages of same-sex couples performed in other countries or states. Attorney General Cuomo responded on the Governor's behalf with a motion to dismiss the case.

IMPACT: The Alliance Defense Fund, a self-described Christian legal firm established in 1993 by more than 30 Christian ministries, including Focus on the Family, has a history of aggressively filing lawsuits seeking to block laws and policies protecting LGBT communities. Lambda Legal has gone face-to-face with ADF before and will continue to deflect extremist attacks that would strip away the progress we and other civil rights groups have worked so hard to achieve.

IN MEMORIAM: Del Martin



Dorothy “Del” Martin, champion of LGBT and women’s rights for over fifty years, died in San Francisco on August 27. She was 87 years old. In June she and her partner of 55 years, Phyllis Lyon, became the first same-sex couple to legally wed in California, marking a lifetime of contributions to the LGBT movement that began in 1955 when they co-founded the nation’s first public lesbian

rights organization, the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB). Martin was active in the campaign to eliminate homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association’s list of mental illnesses, which succeeded in 1973, and was the first out lesbian on the board of directors of the National Organization for Women. Her leadership and dedication have touched our lives and continue to be an inspiration to us all.

TRANS ACTION

On November 13, 2007, the Montgomery County Council unanimously passed a law adding gender identity as a protected characteristic under the county’s civil rights law in order to address discrimination against transgender individuals. This law protects transgender people from discrimination in employment, public accommodations, housing, cable television and taxicab service. However, a group calling itself Citizens for Responsible Government (CRG) sought to collect enough signatures to block the law from going into effect. Lambda Legal, working with Equality Maryland, represents 12 Montgomery County registered voters who assert that the referendum should not be on the ballot because there were not enough supporters to sign the ballot petition. On September 9, the Maryland High Court ruled in favor of our challenge to the illegal referendum.

IMPACT: Referenda have often been used to stop antidiscrimination laws from taking effect. Success in this case upholds critical protections for transgender people and affirm that petition efforts must strictly comply with the letter of the law to ensure that the referendum process is not abused.

SAFETY FIRST

Joey Ramelli and Megan Donovan were forced to drop out of high school and complete their education at home after being harassed by their classmates over the course of their sophomore and junior years. Students taunted them with antigay slurs. Ramelli was assaulted, his car vandalized. Lambda Legal filed initial briefs in 2006 and gave oral arguments in July, urging the California Court of Appeal, the state’s mid-level court, to uphold a jury decision that holds Poway High School responsible for failing to protect them. The jury deemed the harassment endured by Ramelli and Donovan so severe that administrators were held responsible for protecting them under California law and the U.S. Constitution, which require school officials to provide equal education opportunities to all students. The students were awarded \$300,000.

IMPACT: LGBTQ students deserve a safe educational environment with reasonable assurances from administrators on their safety. This victory and others like them support students and allies who are working together to make schools safer places where all students have the chance to pursue an equal education.