

### Congressional Education Week

This week, transgender activists and allies around the country will visit their members of Congress during the first Congressional Education Week sponsored by NCTE. Activists will be using these meetings to educate members of Congress about the importance of adding gender identity and expression to legislation such as the Employment Non-discrimination Act.

For more information go to [http://www.nctequality.org/Congressional\\_Education\\_Week.asp](http://www.nctequality.org/Congressional_Education_Week.asp).

### Transgender City Official Speaks Out in South Dakota

Tom Murphy, an alderman in Rapid City, South Dakota, has recently come out as being transgender. Rapid City Journal quoted Murphy as saying "I'm transgender. I've just accepted that. All my life I've done a good job at hiding it." As far as NCTE is aware, Murphy is currently the only out transgender elected official in the United States. NCTE commends Murphy's decision to speak openly about being a transgender person while still in the public eye.

You can read more about this at <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com/articles/2004/04/05/front/top/news01.txt>

### Transgender Veterans March

May 1, 2004 will mark the first Transgender Veterans March in Washington DC. This historic event, sponsored by the Transgender American Veterans Association, will bring transgender veterans and their allies from around the country to Washington, DC to call attention to the issues trans veterans face. Go to [www.tavausa.org](http://www.tavausa.org) for more information.

### Transgender Public Health Priorities

There are many respects in which transgender people have the same health concerns as non-trans people. From a public health policy perspective, however, there are areas in which trans people have specific needs that must be addressed more actively.

Fortunately, there is a growing number of transgender-identified public health specialists and allies who are addressing these needs. NCTE is able to work with some of these great people as part of the National Coalition for LGBT Health's Disparities Working Group.

During the past year, as part of this working group, a Trans Health Task Force, including NCTE Board Member Diego Sanchez and NCTE Executive Director Mara Keisling, has initiated several projects. These include fact sheets on FTM Trans Health and MTF Trans Health created for LGBT Health Awareness Week, a briefing on LGBT health issues for six presidential campaigns, and a document called "An Overview of the Top U.S. Transgender Health Priorities," which was drafted and used to educate LGBT health providers and others.

This last document was created with input from a variety of knowledgeable trans people as well as allies, and was based on an analysis of existing research. Thirteen primary public health priorities were identified and discussed in the document:

1. Violence and Murder Prevention
2. HIV/AIDS and other STD Prevention and Treatment
3. Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment
4. Depression, Suicidal Ideation and Suicide Prevention
5. Lack of Health Insurance and Underinsurance
6. Lack of Health Insurance Coverage for Trans Health Services
7. Gender Identity Disorder (GID) as the Principal Diagnostic Means Determining Access to Trans Health Services
8. Lack of FDA Approval for Transgender Hormonal Therapy
9. Widespread Injection Silicone Use
10. The Continuing Misclassification of Sex Reassignment Surgery as "Experimental"
11. Lack of Training in U.S. Medical Schools for Trans Health Service Delivery and Working with Transgender Patients
12. Medical, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Provider Insensitivity and Hostility to Transgender People
13. Tobacco Use

NCTE and the authors of this document understand that these are not the only significant health issues facing transgender communities. The issues included were selected because they are significant health issues and they fit into categories from the federal government's outline for better American health (called Healthy People 2010).

NCTE will continue to work in coalition on important public health issues like these and others at the national level.

To see a copy of the health priorities document, go to <http://nctequality.org/Health.asp>.

For copies of FTM Trans Health or MTF Trans Health fact sheets go to <http://nctequality.org/Health.asp>.

## **Connecticut Moves Forward with Transgender Inclusive Hate Crimes Legislation**

On March 22, by a vote of 39 to 3, the Connecticut House Judiciary Committee supported adding disability and gender identity and expression to the state's Hate Crimes Law. The push to expand the current legislation now goes before the House of Representatives for a full House vote.

So far this movement has been aided by the hard work of disability and transgender activists and allies. Those living in Connecticut need to stay involved and demonstrate support for this legislation to keep it moving forward. See the Connecticut Coalition of LGBT Civil Rights at <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Parliament/5687/> for more information.

## **Mixed Results, But Some Victory, In Maryland Legislative Session**

The Maryland House of Delegates has passed a transgender-inclusive Safe Schools Reporting Act (HB 740) by a wide margin (137-1). HB 740 includes gender identity, but not gender expression.

The Delegates also passed a hate crime bill (94-41), but only after stripping gender identity and expression from the legislation, among other language removed.

NCTE has been actively working with Marylanders Advocating Towards Transgender Equal Rights (MATTER) and Equality Maryland (formerly Free State Justice) on educating Maryland legislators since September 2003. This Spring, NCTE provided testimony in the state Senate and House of Delegates on the importance of gender identity and expression in the hate crime legislation.

### **Safe Schools Reporting Act**

If passed by the Senate and signed by the Governor, the Safe Schools Reporting Act would require county boards of education to begin reporting incidents of harassment or intimidation against public school students when it is "motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic such as race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or disability."

The legislation was drafted and introduced without the input of MATTER, Equality Maryland or NCTE, and it was not possible after the fact to add gender expression to the list of characteristics.

The prognosis for passage in the Senate is unclear. Passage of all legislation must be completed by the end of the legislative session in mid-April.

### **Hate Crimes Penalties Act**

Delegate Adrienne Jones and Senator Sharon Grosfeld introduced identical trans-inclusive versions of the Hate Crimes Penalties Act (HB 365/SB 698) in both houses of the General Assembly. And yet, despite a catastrophic increase in recent hate murders in both Baltimore and the Washington, DC area, the Maryland House of Delegates Judiciary Committee stripped "gender identity and expression" from House Bill 365 prior to recommending it for passage to the full house. NCTE, MATTER and Equality Maryland actively, vociferously and unsuccessfully fought stripping transgender people from the hate crime bill.

"With transgender women being murdered with such frequency in Maryland, it is unconscionable that the House of Delegates would send this message that we are too hated to be protected by a state hate crime law," said Mara Keisling, NCTE Executive Director. "They have totally ignored everything they have heard from MATTER, from Equality Maryland, and really from the entire united LGBT community of Maryland."

As with the Safe Schools Reporting Act, prognosis for passage in the Senate is unknown.

NCTE will continue to support education and advocacy efforts in Maryland until the legislature understands that transgender Marylanders need protection at school, at work, at home and on the street.

## **Arizona State University Extends Protections to Trans Students**

On March 18, Arizona State University became the twelfth college in the US to include protections for transgender students in its nondiscrimination policy. President Michael Crow agreed to add a definition of "gender identity", that also extends protections based on gender expression, to ASU's nondiscrimination policy.

Recently we have seen an increase in organizing for trans and genderqueer rights on college campuses around the country. If your university is currently moving to make accommodations for trans and genderqueer students, or if you would like to begin this work of making campus more accessible for trans and genderqueer students, staff, and faculty, please contact NCTE's Field Director, Caeden Dempsey at [cdempsey@nctequality.org](mailto:cdempsey@nctequality.org).