

### Upcoming Events

**May 15**

#### Greater Philadelphia Renaissance

NCTE Executive Director, Mara Keisling, will speak at the Greater Philadelphia chapter of the Renaissance Transgender Association.

**June 4 to 6**

#### National Youth Summit

The National Youth Advocacy Coalition's 7<sup>th</sup> annual Youth Summit will be taking place at the Washington Court Hotel in DC.

**June 8 to 13**

#### Be-All Convention

NCTE Executive Director, Mara Keisling, will be a keynote at this trans convention, sponsored by Chicago Gender Society and Tri-Ess/Chi Chapter.

### Skilled Volunteers Needed

NCTE is looking for skilled volunteers in the following areas:

**Graphic Design**

**Database Design**

**Website Development**

**Publication Editors and Writers**

Please email [ncte@nctequality.org](mailto:ncte@nctequality.org) or call 202.639.6332 if you are interested in being an NCTE Volunteer.

### First Congressional Education Week a Success

#### *Education on Transgender Discrimination in Home Districts Across the Nation*

From April 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) coordinated a national effort to visit members of Congress in their home districts during a Congressional recess. Transgender and allied constituents educated lawmakers about transgender people and the issues transgender people face, particularly discrimination.

This effort was the first nationwide congressional education campaign coordinated by a transgender organization in which trans activists visited members of Congress in-district, rather than in the nation's capital.

"This is a crucial time for the transgender movement, and our concentrated efforts around the country, from Maine to California, clearly made a difference," said Mara Keisling, Executive Director of NCTE. "Transgender activists and allies met with many legislators to educate them on the discrimination that transgender people face. We are proud of the work that our lobbying teams conducted and are excited about the new relationships established between transgender activists and allies with these members."

NCTE worked with local activists to build small teams to conduct educational meetings with many of the members of Congress whom NCTE has identified as pivotal in extending federal anti-discrimination rights to transgender people. Teams met with members of Congress and Congressional staff to acquaint them with transgender issues, with the long-term aim of creating lasting relationships the transgender movement can benefit from in the years to come.

#### Congressional Education Week



April 5-8, 2004

"Our strategy of holding Congressional Education Week visits in the home districts of Representatives and Senators rather than in D.C. meant that many more people, and a more diverse set of people, were able to participate," according to Mara Keisling. "We eliminated the need to pay for flights, hotel and to take days off work. This meant that transgender people who have low or no income were more able to participate in educating Congress about our lives. We were also happy to see that allies of transgender people, who would typically not travel to DC to work on transgender issues, were able to participate in record numbers as well."

Bolstered by the success of the first Congressional Education Week, NCTE is planning to conduct a second effort during summer Congressional recess. This effort will be called "Congressional Summer School."

Activists interested in participating in future Congressional education efforts should contact NCTE at 202.639.6332.

### Connecticut Senate Unanimously Passes Trans-Inclusive Hate Crime Bill

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, the Connecticut Senate unanimously passed a hate crime bill that will add gender identity or expression and disability to existing hate crime statutes. The vote was 33-0 (with 3 absentees); the bill now moves to the Governor for signature into law. The bill passed 139-4 in the House earlier this year. In a recent alert, the Connecticut TransAdvocacy Coalition (CTAC) said, "Given the overwhelming positive vote for the bill and the fact that Governor Rowland for the first time last year included Transgender and Intersex into his PRIDE day proclamation, we are optimistic he will sign this bill into law."

If signed into law, Connecticut will become the eighth state to include trans people in hate crime laws. The other states are Missouri, Hawai'i, California, New Mexico, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Vermont.

NCTE applauds the hard work of CTAC and trans organizers and allies in Connecticut for this victory.

## Transgender Veterans “March to the Wall”

From April 30<sup>th</sup> to May 2<sup>nd</sup> the Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA) commemorated and celebrated transgender veterans in Washington, DC. Trans veterans and their allies from across the country gathered for this historic occasion.

NCTE helped kick off the weekend on the evening of April 30<sup>th</sup> by honoring the veterans with a welcome reception. The events continued the following day with a march to the Vietnam Wall, a visit to the Iwo Jima Memorial, and a wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery.

Angela Brightfeather, TAVA Special Projects Committee Chair and one of the March organizers, reflected on the ceremony at Arlington Cemetery with the following words, “As people watched us cry at the Tomb of the Unknown when the wreath was dedicated and announced as coming from the Transgender American Veterans Association, everyone present knew and understood that they were at that moment a part of an historic event. Humanity was honored in that short period of time.”

Transgender veterans have been rendered invisible by the transphobia that pervades our society. This weekend gave all of us the opportunity to honor transgender veterans and their service to our country.

Never before has an organization had the vision to organize such an event and NCTE applauds TAVA for the success of this weekend and their service to transgender veterans.



## NTAC Lobby Days Draws Trans Activists and Allies to Washington, DC

The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) sponsored two days of lobbying in Washington, DC on April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. NCTE worked with NTAC to target and schedule over 70 visits with members of Congress. During these visits, trans people discussed the importance of including gender identity and expression in legislation. They talked specifically about trans inclusion in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act. Marisa Richmond, Lobbying Chair for NTAC, said "This event brought together citizen lobbyists from all over the country and gave them the opportunity to address their concerns of safety and discrimination directly with the people that represent them in this government." Richmond stated that not only were these lobby days an empowering event for many transpeople and allies, but they also educated members of Congress about the importance of trans-inclusion and challenged them to take a stand in protecting all their constituents.

## New Movement on Trans-Inclusion in University of Maryland Policies

After months of hard work by trans activists and allies on campus and off, the University Senate at the University of Maryland once again voted in favor of adding gender identity and expression to the Campus Human Relations Code. This comes after a letter from Assistant Attorney General Elena Langrill in which she incorrectly and offensively stated that the university would be “acting beyond the scope of existing federal, state, and local laws” and that the addition of gender identity and expression would “create difficulties for the University involving issues of grossly inappropriate dress, possibly disrupting the campus atmosphere”. Students, staff and alumni of UM, with assistance from national and local organizations, quickly and effectively responded to this letter by highlighting the high number of jurisdictions that include protections for trans people (including Baltimore, MD) and pointing to the number of universities that also extend these protections. Go to [www.nctequality.org/news.asp](http://www.nctequality.org/news.asp) to read more on the Assistant Attorney General's comments.

In response to this pressure, the University Senate took a new vote on the issue which changes the definition of gender identity and expression to reflect Baltimore's language; the initiative passed unanimously. The Board of Regents now must step up and approve this code in order for change to take place.

Equality Maryland's MATTER Committee (Marylanders Advocating Towards Transgender Equal Rights) will be holding a meeting on May 19, 2003 at 7:00pm to discuss this and other issues affecting the Maryland trans community. Go to [www.equalitymaryland.org](http://www.equalitymaryland.org) for more information regarding this meeting.

## Be an NCTE Intern

Interested in learning more about trans organizing? Want to gain experience working at a national nonprofit? Committed fighting for social justice?

If so, contact NCTE about our internship opportunities. We are currently looking for summer interns to work on a variety of projects ranging from media relations to organizing trainings and speaking engagements to providing assistance to local trans organizers.

Interested individuals should, contact Caeden Dempsey at 202.639.6332. We will work with students to help them obtain course credit.