

FAIRNESS

C A M P A I G N

December
2007

Campaign for School Equality: Round 1

A huge THANK YOU to everyone, teachers, parents, students, and community members who has been working on the issue of School Equality! Thank you to our allies who spoke up with us in our time of need! Thank you to everyone who spoke at a meeting, called their Board Member, wrote letters to the editor, and helped out in all the different ways that build a victory! A special thank you to the folks in the 'overflow room' at Monday's meeting—they were exposed to hateful comments from some of the opposition, but stood their ground as strong LGBT people and allies. In some ways, that's what this is all about: being true to ourselves in the face of fear, ignorance, bigotry and hate. THANK YOU!!!

Somewhere after midnight on Nov. 26, the Jefferson County Board of Education voted by a 4-3 margin to add sexual orientation, but not gender identity, to their non-discrimination and harassment policies. This was a definite victory over homophobia, as anti-Fairness forces had mobilized in full force against this measure. It was not, however, a victory for full equality, as JCPS employees are still at risk for harassment and discrimination based on gender identity...for now.

We still have a lot of work to do towards school equality, both with the community and our elected representatives. It is sad that anti-fairness bigots were able to change what should have been a 7-0 vote into a 4-3 vote. Steve Imhoff, Larry Hujo, Debbie Wesslund, and Joe Hardesty all voted to expand protection and should be applauded for their courage and commitment to justice. Sadly, Ann Elmore, Carol Ann Haddad, and Linda Duncan all failed to understand just how important this issue is and voted against protecting our community's educators.

The Campaign for School Equality continues! We still have to win protection for all JCPS workers from discrimination and harassment based on gender identity, and to amend the Student Code of Conduct to guarantee the same protections for all students in the JCPS school system. At the state-wide level, a comprehensive anti-bullying law is still a priority. To get involved, call 893-0788 or email volunteer@fairness.org or attend our next Legislative Committee meeting on December 17 at 7 p.m. at the Fairness Office.

We can claim a victory in Round One. Let Round Two begin!

Your Story Could Impact 2008 General Assembly

With a new Fairness-friendly Governor in Frankfort, the Kentucky General Assembly will convene on January 8, 2008. The Fairness Campaign will be there with our long-time partner the Kentucky Fairness Alliance to connect voters across the Commonwealth with their elected representatives to advocate for justice and full equality. Our primary goal remains the passage of a statewide Fairness law and together we're making strides by telling our stories, bringing a personal connection to the issues, and helping to empower citizens to lobby for their rights.

In addition, there are many other important issues that affect our community. One example is a Hospital Visitation Rights bill that has been pre-filed by Rep. Mary Lou Marzian. This bill would allow any patient to "designate, orally or in writing, an individual, not legally related by marriage or blood, who the patient wishes to be considered as an immediate family member." There are too many horror stories of partners being shut out in times of crisis for this bill not to be a priority for the LGBT community. Have you been separated from a sick loved one because someone didn't consider you a family member? If so, please e-mail us. Our personal stories are crucial to advancing the Hospital Visitation Rights bill through the legislature.

continued next column

PLAN TO ATTEND

- ☐ **Voices of Kentuckiana's Holidays Around the World** – Dec. 7 & 8, Clifton Center, 8 p.m., tickets \$20, call 583-1013 for info.
- ☐ **Poverty Summit** – Dec. 8, hosted by Women in Transition, Egan Center, Spaulding University, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., call 636-0160 for info.
- ☐ **2008 Creating Change Interest Meeting** – Dec. 9, Fairness office, 3 p.m., call 893-0788 for info.
- ☐ **Tuesday Volunteer Nights** – Dec. 11 & 18, Fairness office, 6-9 p.m.
- ☐ **Community Building & Education Committee** – Dec. 15, Fairness office, 1 p.m.
- ☐ **Legislative Committee** – Dec. 17, Fairness office, 7 p.m.
- ☐ **Henry Wallace Brigade Concert** – Dec. 22, featuring Carol Kraemer & Kathy Weisbach, Afrykah and Asrar Al Badr dance troupe, The Alternative, 7-9 p.m., \$5-\$25 sliding scale, call 558-3568 for info.
- ☐ **Louisville Youth Group** – support and social group for LGBTQ youth 14 – 21, weekly meetings. Call 499-4427.
- ☐ **PFLAG** – Louisville - Monthly meeting, 3rd Sunday, 3 p.m., 1st Lutheran Church, 417 E. Broadway. Call 329-0229 for information.

2008 General Assembly

Visit www.fairness.org to keep up to date on lobby trainings, lobby days, and the 2008 return of the astounding Kentuckians Value Fairness Rally! For more information, or if you are interested in going to Frankfort to lobby, please call Mike Slaton at 893-0788 or email volunteer@fairness.org.

Fairness-Friendly Governor Elected

CFAIR (Committee for Fairness and Individual Rights) helped put Steve Beshear in the Kentucky governor's mansion as he claimed a decisive victory in the November 6 general election, fighting off attacks from pseudo-famous and anonymous right-wing bigots in the last days of the campaign.

Mr. Beshear, who sought and received the CFAIR endorsement in the general election, defeated incumbent Ernie Fletcher, whose administration actively worked to deny civil liberties to LGBT people. Mr. Beshear captured 59% to Mr. Fletcher's 41%.

CFAIR made history with its endorsement of Beshear, who was the first statewide candidate in a general election to seek the PAC's recommendation. CFAIR hosted a fundraiser in October, which Beshear attended and delivered heartfelt remarks about the value of equality for all citizens.

Beshear took a powerful step in seeking the endorsement and was attacked in the final days of the campaign for his support of equality and fairness. During the weekend before the election, many people received automated phone calls—so-called “robocalls”—from two sources urging voters to reject Mr. Beshear because of his support for equality for LGBT citizens. One call originated from an anonymous source and its misleading language made it appear to come from the Fairness Campaign. Neither the Fairness Campaign nor CFAIR paid for any robocalls. The anonymous call, which appeared to violate a number of state and federal campaign laws, used outmoded scare tactics to encourage voters to oppose Mr. Beshear.

Two other robocalls, featuring the voice of entertainer Pat Boone, were paid for by the Republican Party of Kentucky and made reference to CFAIR's endorsement and to Kentucky turning into “another San Francisco.”

None of the outdated, hate-mongering tactics worked as Beshear prevailed by more than 17 percentage points, a landslide in modern politics. Still the Fairness Campaign and CFAIR are contemplating whether to file complaints about and ask for an investigation of the anonymous robocall.

In the first year of the Beshear administration, Kentuckians can look forward to the governor reinstating an executive order that prohibits discrimination in state employment based on sexual orientation. With Gov. Beshear's leadership, Kentucky should begin to take significant steps towards being a truly inclusive place to live and work.

More Inclusive Kentucky Strengthens Everyone

Governor Elect Steve Beshear's commitment to representing the full diversity of the Commonwealth is reflected in his selection of a diverse group of Kentuckians from across the state for his transition team. Among those recruited is Fairness Leadership Council member and longtime civil-rights activist Carla Wallace who will serve on the Finance Cabinet Transition Team.

The transition team will meet with current cabinet heads to gather information essential to running state government and make recommendations about what works and what could work better for our state.

Governor Beshear will be sworn into office just after midnight on Dec. 11 in a private ceremony. Then a day of festivities are planned that include a parade from 10 a.m. to noon, a public swearing-in service at 2 p.m. at the Capitol in Frankfort, a reception from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., a grand march at 8 p.m. in the Capitol and three balls in tents on the Capitol grounds. All of these events will be open to the public. Fairness supporters are encouraged to attend in celebration of a new day in Kentucky.

An injustice anywhere...

It's confusing and it hurts when it feels like a friend has turned his back on you. Many of us are experiencing that hurt and confusion from recent remarks by long-time Fairness supporter Rev. Louis Coleman about the school's anti-bias policy changes. As you do with any valued relationship, Fairness folks are reaching out to our friend in search of answers and understanding.

In this moment of hurting we also recognize that nothing would please our right-wing opponents more than if these few words would drive a permanent wedge between long-time allies. Certainly we need to understand what's behind this individual fissure, yet we know that our vision to dismantle oppression and build an inclusive community where all individuals are valued and empowered to reach their full potential remains steadfast. Our beliefs that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people have the right to respect, dignity and full equality, that dismantling racism is central to our work, and that all issues of oppression are linked and can only be addressed by working in coalition will never change.

Fairness asked several long-time activists to reflect on this moment and share some perspective.

Attica Scott, Kentucky Jobs with Justice—*“Why is there a need for anything else?” asks Rev. Coleman about the JCPS inclusion policy. As a parent and fighter for justice, I say that we need to be open to the ever-changing realities of our society. We must not allow ourselves to live in a culture of fear that prevents us from standing in solidarity with one another. This policy is about protecting workers' rights—whatever your orientation—because the value of our work is no less based on our race, religion or culture.*

Shameka Parrish, Kentucky Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression—*“What ever happened to, “an injustice anywhere.....?” I think when we let ourselves become sidetracked by simple divisions in this work for change, we lose sight of the big picture. No one should have to hide who they are and we have teachers and JCPS employees who do that daily. As a mother of four girls who attend Hawthorne, Smyrna and Thomas Jefferson, I'm not worried about the LGBT community “imposing their views” on my children. I worry more about our civil-rights and religious leaders using their own biases and fear to separate our sisters, brothers and others from the struggle for justice for all!*

Carol Kraemer, former Fairness Organizational Manager—*In joining the Fairness Campaign over 15 years ago to work for my rights as a lesbian, I learned how to stand with others in their struggles against racism and economic injustice. At some point those issues became my own - no longer divided by difference, but joined in the promise of a world of justice and peace and an end to racism, poverty, inequality and violence.*

K.A. Owens, leader with Kentucky Alliance, KFTC and Fairness—*This should not be perceived as an issue of race. People need to understand that the leadership of black America is on record in support of equal rights for LGBT people. As Coretta Scott King said, “Freedom from discrimination based on sexual orientation is surely a fundamental human right in any great democracy, as much as freedom from racial, religious, gender, or ethnic discrimination.”*

Carla Wallace, Fairness Leadership Council—*When we stand together for racial justice, for women's equality, for workers' rights, and for an end to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, we ALL win. No matter what, our commitment to justice for all must be unwavering and non-negotiable.*

**Special thanks go to the many donors who contribute to make
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Understanding Transgender Identity

In the public debate about the Jefferson County school board's consideration of a proposal to protect its employees from discrimination, the inclusion of gender identity has become a lightning rod for controversy. Both proposal advocates and opponents have made clear their confusion about transgender identity and experience. That confusion has hampered proposal supporters in their efforts to win its passage, and has been used by opponents to fuel fear and misinformation.

The reality is that "the transgender community" is no more homogeneous or standardized than "the gay community" or "the black community." The single biggest defining feature of transgender identity may be our personal awareness that the broader culture's dominant gender system does not work, fit or apply for us. Beyond that, we are incredibly diverse.

To have a better understanding of transgender identity, it helps to start at the beginning. First, we need to define the terms. Gender is different than sex. **Sex** is a scientific term based on biology and an organism's role in the reproductive process. It is comprised of a person's external genitalia, internal reproductive organs, hormone production, and genetic composition.

When a child is born and the doctor announces, "Congratulations! It's a boy!" that pronouncement is based on the baby having a visible penis and scrotum, and carries with it the assumption that the baby also has testes and will produce more testosterone than progesterone during puberty. Those words also typically announce the beginning of a long indoctrination process in which the child will be taught what being a boy is supposed to mean, and how a boy is supposed to behave... in other words, what his gender is expected to be.

Gender itself is simply a social code that allows us to navigate the world and categorize its human inhabitants on the basis of collectively understood signals rather than inspecting every person's anatomy. In this code, longer hair, higher voices, pronounced breasts and hips, little or no facial hair, finer skin, wearing skirts and high heels, wearing makeup and fingernail polish, being quiet and passive... means feminine... means "woman" or "girl"... and is assumed to mean female. Deeper voices, obvious facial hair, wider shoulders and narrower hips, flat chests, coarser skin, hereditary pattern baldness, wearing suits and ties, being bold and aggressive... means masculine... means "man" or "boy"... and is assumed to mean male.

In reality, a person's gender is **not** absolutely and unchangeably linked to their biology. Gender is a state of mind, a perspective on the world and a way of moving through it. For most people, the gender they were assigned at birth and have internalized as they've grown up is congruent with the physical anatomy with which they were born and in line with what society expects. For some of us, there is discord between what society tells us, what is expected of us because of our anatomy, and what we know to be our own personal truths.

Transgender people experience that discord in many ways. For those of us who are transsexual, the only way to reconcile the internal conflict may be to make changes to our bodies through sex reassignment surgery, hormone therapy, electrolysis, and body sculpting. Only then, through physical transition and living 24/7 as a member of "the opposite sex," can we feel truly whole. For others of us, physical transition may be neither possible nor desirable, for medical, financial, or social reasons, or other factors. Instead, we may prefer to present our gendered sense of self through the clothes and accessories we wear, the way we style our hair, and the physical mannerisms we use. Whether we identify as cross-dressers, gender-benders, genderqueer, or in some other way, we are also part of the transgender spectrum.

In fact, that spectrum is so broad that it does make easy categorization of people as transgender — or not — a challenge. Anyone who defies our society's expectations of what a "real woman" or a "real man" is, is at risk of being targeted for harassment, discrimination, even violence based on gender identity. That includes many lesbian, gay, bisexual, **and** heterosexual people. For that reason, the inclusion of gender identity in any nondiscrimination policy protects everyone, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

It's important to note here that gender identity is also very different from sexual orientation. In fact, from the outset, there has been tension between lesbian, gay, and bisexual communities and transgender communities about joining forces and being part of the same social justice rights community. Gender identity (whether we see ourselves as women, men, or something else) is not the same as sexual orientation (which is based on the people to whom one is attracted sexually, erotically or romantically). There **is** overlap between our experiences, though. Transgender people may identify as heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or some other way, because the people to whom they are attracted may be of the same or a different

What Happened in Louisville?

A recent story from the New York Times noted that Louisville has one of the fastest growing out LGBT communities in the country. Between 2000 and 2006, research shows the number of same-gender couples in Louisville increased by 224% from 789 to 1,769. No other city surveyed had near the percentage jump that we saw. So what happened in Louisville? We don't think that Louisville suddenly experienced a surge in LGBT relocations. And if things were simply getting better everywhere, all cities would have shown similar increases. What we do know is that the Fairness Campaign's long-range, inclusive vision of justice that has built one of the most effective progressive power bases and won some of the most progressive anti-discrimination legislation in the country has helped create lasting change in this community.

Unlike too many LGBT organizations around the country, Fairness Campaign has refused to narrow its agenda to represent only some in our community, and instead has built a winning movement that acts on the intersections of issues of oppression. When the work for freedom affirms and includes everyone, refusing to see some as more valuable or acceptable than others, our entire community is stronger. We believe this approach to the work for equality has built a stronger community where more people feel safe to live out and proud. Now the numbers are bearing out that fact.

Transgender Identity

gender as theirs. And lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, though they may dress, talk, and walk precisely as society would expect, given their anatomies, also break gender rules by being attracted to people of their same gender. The truth is that we are all subjected to harassment, discrimination and ridicule because, in part, we do not play by the socially dictated rules of gender.

Another fundamental reason for including gender identity in nondiscrimination language is that no true gain has ever been achieved by sacrificing the most marginalized or least palatable in any given community. This is true strategically as well as morally. Opponents of fairness policies and practices are busy trying to limit the number of people who they deem socially or morally worthy of protection. When we collude with them by pushing aside some of our number in the name of a so-called greater good, asking for some rights for some of us, we simply help them keep us all marginalized and minimized, instead of demanding full rights for all of us.

*Gender is a state of mind,
a perspective on the world and
a way of moving through it.*



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Why the Fairness Campaign Supports an All-inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)

The question at hand is NOT whether protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation is more important than protection from discrimination based on gender identity; it is – *Are all American citizens entitled to equal protection regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity?* This is a yes or no question, not an either/or.

Our society only recognizes two genders: ‘man’ and ‘woman.’ The common assumption is that these genders are coequal with the biological sexes male and female, respectively. While it is true that the vast majority of people clearly can be assigned one of these two sexes at birth, it is not true that all female babies will conform to our society’s gender norms for ‘women’, nor that all male children will be ‘typical’ men. No person completely conforms to the gender associated with their biological sex, and those whose identity differs more than usual from social norms often face agonizing discrimination, harassment and brutality.

Protecting people from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity means that no one can be fired because who they love, what they wear, or how they present themselves to the world.

Some legislators believe they can pass a bill by excluding transgender people. However we recognize that society must move forward together, that an injury to one is an injury to all, and that none of us are safe unless all of us are safe.

Supporting a ‘non-discrimination’ bill that knowingly excludes anyone from equal protection under the law is not a step in the right direction or a compromise, it is an affirmation of the current unjust system and a slap in the face not only to transgender people, but to justice supporters everywhere.

**Thank you to all who sponsored, supported and
attended the *Out and About* dinner that benefited the
Kentucky Fairness Alliance and Fairness Campaign!**