

COMMUNITY VOICES

A BIASHELP MAGAZINE • FALL 2015

SUPREME COURT'S RULING

On Same Sex Marriage . Page 3-4

BOY SCOUTS LIFTING BAN

of Gay Leaders . Page 2

THE CONFEDERATE FLAG

The Ruling . Page 5-6

THE PENTAGON

Lifting the Ban on Transgender Soldiers . Page 4

Staff

John Haigney, M.Div.
Executive Managing Director
Loida Santos
Associate Director of Agency Programs
Stephanie Monroy
Education/Outreach Manager



A message from the Executive Managing Director

This issue of Community Voices is a review of some of the breakthrough events of the past six months. It is a compilation of the relevant reporting on the issues. Each article lists its sources.

BiasHELP celebrates these important milestones in the struggle for a more inclusive and just society.

John Haigney

CONTACT US AT:

60 Adams Avenue, Suite 102
Hauppauge, NY 11788
Phone: 631-479-6015 • Fax: 631-656-7073
www.BiasHELP.org • E-mail: info@biashelp.org
Toll-Free Hotline: 1-877-END-BIAS (363-2427)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BiasHELP, Inc. is looking for qualified individuals to join their professional team of employees. BiasHELP, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit agency dedicated to prevention of bias crimes, hate-related harassment, bullying, technobullying/cyberbullying and discrimination. Located on Long Island, BiasHELP provides programs and services locally, regionally and nationally. BiasHELP considers an action to be discriminatory when a person or group is targeted, in whole or in part, because of their perceived differences, including race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation. We offer a competitive salary and benefits package. BiasHELP is an equal opportunity employer committed to diversity in the workplace. Please forward your cover letter and resume to:

BiasHELP, Inc.
Attention: Luis Almonte
Human Resources
60 Adams Avenue, Suite 102
Hauppauge, New York 11788
or you can fax them to:
Fax: (631) 656-7235
Email: lalmonte@biashelp.org

BiasHELP, Inc. copyright © 2015
BiasHELP, Inc. is an affiliate of the Long Island Network of Community Services, Inc.(LINCS)

Follow Us On Facebook



OUR PROGRAMS

WORKSHOPS

Specially tailored workshops and trainings are available on a wide variety of topics including bullying, technobullying, cultural sensitivity/stereotyping, NYS Hate Crime law, the continuum of prejudicial behavior, violence prevention, suicide prevention, anger management, Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) compliance and more.

OLWEUS

Through a joint project with the Long Island Network of Community Services, Inc. (LINCS), BiasHELP has certified trainers available to work with schools on the implementation of the foremost bullying prevention program available, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). OBPP is a whole school program that has been proven to prevent or reduce bullying throughout a school setting.

MIRROR IMAGES

This landmark DVD series, highlights the rich history, the challenges and the lives of America's diverse populations. The series is being distributed nationwide and is being used in conjunction with Diversity Done Right's widely acclaimed diversity trainings.

AVOICE

Against Violence & Oppression in Communities Everywhere (AVOICE) is a BiasHELP project that fosters unity and respect among diverse communities by making an impact among vulnerable children and their families at 4 levels: the individual, family, agency and community.

For more detailed information on these programs or to see what else BiasHELP has to offer, please visit us online at BiasHELP.org, follow us on Facebook or call us at 631-479-6015.

The following articles contain excerpts from various articles which were reported by national news sources between June and August of 2015. BiasHELP would like to thank Harrison J. Moses, Public Policy Intern, for researching and compiling the articles in this issue of Community Voices.



BOY SCOUTS Lifting Ban on Gay Leaders

BiasHELP applauds Robert Gates for his willingness to take a bold first step, but it is clear that it is only a first step. Our hope is that Gay leaders will emerge within the Boys Scouts Organization as a result of this initiative and a real dialogue with conservative religious groups will follow.

The Boy Scouts of America, facing litigation, shrinking membership and sweeping acceptance of gay rights, voted Monday to lift its ban on openly gay troop leaders and employees¹.

“This resolution will allow chartered organizations to select adult leaders without regard to sexual orientation, continuing Scouting’s long-standing policy of chartered organizations selecting their leaders,” the Boy Scouts said in a statement July 13².

The latest move was widely seen as a way to stop bad publicity and avoid possible lawsuits, while addressing concerns of religious institutions that make up about 70 percent of the 100,000-plus Boy Scout units nationwide. The change was backed by 79 percent of the national executive board members Monday, the Boy Scouts said. The organization’s executive committee had unanimously recommended adoption of the new policy on July 13. The Boy Scouts’ president, former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, called for change in May, saying continuation of the blanket ban on gay Scout leaders was “unsustainable”. The new policy, which takes effect immediately, comes three years after the organization removed its ban on gay youth, but local Boy Scout units chartered by religious organizations will still be permitted to exclude gay adults from volunteering as den leaders, scoutmasters or camp counselors³.

The Boy Scouts of America, whose stated mission is to prepare youth for life and leadership, has 2.5 million members between the ages of 7 and 21 and about 960,000 volunteers in local units, according to the organization’s Web site.

But the tone of Monday’s statement from the Mormons, after the formal announcement of the new Boy Scouts policy, was markedly more negative. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is deeply troubled by today’s vote,” said a statement issued by the church moments after the Scouts announced the new policy. “When the leadership of the church resumes its regular schedule of meetings in August, the century-long association with scouting will need to be examined.” Only two weeks ago, the Mormon Church hinted that it could remain in the fold so long as its units could pick their own leaders. More departures by religious conservatives are likely, said Russell D. Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Mr. Moore expressed skepticism about the Scouts’ promise to let church-sponsored units exclude gay leaders on religious grounds⁴.

Source

1. (The Washington Post, Votes to end controversial ban on openly gay Scout leaders, July, 2015)
2. (CNN: Boy Scouts change policy on gay leaders, July 28, 2015, Todd Leopold)
3. (Yahoo News: Boy Scouts lift blanket ban on gay adult leaders, employees, July, 2015. Marice Richter)
4. (The New York Times: Boy Scouts End Ban on Gay Leaders, Over Protests by Mormon Church, July, 2015. Erik Eckholm)

Supreme Court Declares Same-Sex Marriage Legal in all 50 States

States cannot keep same-sex couples from marrying and must recognize their unions, the Supreme Court said in a ruling that for months has been the focus of speculation. The decision was 5-4.

Entire Article Sourced from: NPR: Supreme Court Declares Same-Sex Marriage Legal In All 50 States, June, 2015. Bill Chappell

Justice Anthony Kennedy, seen as a pivotal swing vote in the case, wrote the majority opinion. All four justices who voted against the ruling wrote their own dissenting opinions: Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito.

“They ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law,” Kennedy wrote of same-sex couples in the case. “The Constitution grants them that right.”

Comparing the ruling to other landmark decisions, NPR’s Nina Totenberg says, “This is probably right up there with *Brown v. Board of Education*, and *Roe v. Wade* — if you like it or hate it — and today, *Obergefell v. Hodges*. This was a historic moment.

Friday’s ruling “affirms what millions across this country already know to be true in their hearts: our love is equal,” says lead plaintiff Jim Obergefell, who challenged Ohio’s ban on same-sex marriage. Obergefell continued, “the four words etched onto the front of the Supreme Court — ‘equal justice under law’ — apply to us, too.” He filed suit because he wasn’t allowed to put his name on his late husband John Arthur’s death certificate after Arthur died from ALS. Holding a photograph of Arthur as he spoke Friday, Obergefell said, “No American should have to suffer that indignity.” Obergefell had been traveling from Cincinnati to Washington on a weekly basis to be sure he would be in the court when a decision was announced in his case.

Speaking at the White House, President Obama praised the Supreme Court’s ruling, saying it arrived “like a thunderbolt” after a series of back-and-forth battles over same-sex marriage. Obama says the ruling “will strengthen all of our communities” by offering dignity and equal status to all same-sex couples and their families. The president calls the ruling “a victory for America.” Welcoming the news on Twitter, President Obama wrote, “Today is a big step in our march toward equality. Gay and lesbian couples now have the right to marry, just like anyone else

Justice Anthony Kennedy said, “The ancient origins of marriage confirm its centrality, but it has not stood in isolation from

developments in law and society,” Kennedy wrote. His opinion illustrates a history of how ideas of marriage have evolved along with the changing roles and legal status of women. Comparing that evolution to society’s views of gays and lesbians, Kennedy noted that for years, “a truthful declaration by same-sex couples of what was in their hearts had to remain unspoken.”

The Supreme Court said that the right to marry is fundamental and Kennedy wrote that under the 14th Amendment’s protections, “couples of the same-sex may not be deprived of that right and that liberty.” In his dissent, Roberts wrote that the court had taken an “extraordinary step” in deciding not to allow states to decide the issue for themselves, saying that the Constitution does not define marriage. He called the ruling “deeply disheartening,” and said that those on the winning side of the issue should celebrate a victory since, in his words, “the Constitution had nothing to do with it.”

Justice Scalia said the Supreme Court’s “highly unrepresentative panel of nine” had violated “a principle even more fundamental than no taxation without representation.”

The justices ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which is linked to three other same-sex marriage cases that rose up through the court system. Together, they involve a dozen couples who challenged same-sex marriage bans in Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky and Tennessee — the only states with bans on marriage between gay and lesbian couples that had been sustained by a federal appeals court.

Friday’s ruling overturned that decision by the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals. As the Supreme Court’s summary states, “The history of marriage is one of both continuity and change.”

The justices had been asked to decide whether the 14th Amendment requires states to a) license same-sex marriages and b) recognize such unions that were made in other states.

Continued Next Page...



The ruling announced Friday adds new definition to an issue that has remained controversial even as an increasing number of Americans say they support equal marriage rights for same-sex couples. A recent Gallup poll found that 60 percent of Americans — an all-time high — support extending the same rights and privileges to same-sex marriages as traditional ones.

“Before Friday’s ruling, gay marriage had already been made legal in 37 states and the District of Columbia — by either legislative or voter action or by federal courts that overturned state’ bans. For supporters of same-sex marriage, Friday’s ruling comes as a long-awaited bookend to the Supreme Court’s 2013 ruling that struck down the federal Defense of Marriage Act and required the U.S. government to provide the same benefits to both gay and heterosexual couples.”

The Pentagon Lifts Ban on Transgender Soldiers

Transgender people have served with distinction, but in silence, in every branch of our armed forces. According to the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, one in five transgender adults is a veteran. But while the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” in 2010 has allowed lesbian, gay, and bisexual troops to serve openly, an estimated 15,000 transgender service members are still forced to lie about who they are in order to serve their country. “The ban on open service for transgender people is not mandated by any law passed by Congress. The military maintains its own rules for who is eligible to serve, which can be changed without congressional action. The transgender ban is the result of archaic rules that treat transgender people as mentally and medically unfit—rules that are based on outdated, unfounded stereotypes”¹.

The Pentagon announced on July 13, 2015, Monday, that it will stop barring transgender people from serving in the military. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter said that the existing regulations against transgender service members were “outdated” and “causing uncertainty” that distracts troop commanders. He added that “real, patriotic Americans are being hurt by an outdated, confusing, inconsistent approach that’s contrary to our value of service and individual merit”².

Secretary Carter said the Pentagon will create a working group over the next six months to study “the policy and readiness implications of welcoming transgender persons to serve openly,” to be led by Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Brad Carson.

Source

1. *(A blueprint for equality: Open Military Service, June 2015. National Center for Transgender Equality)*
2. *(Times: Pentagon to Lift Transgender Ban in the Military, July 2015. Eliza Gray)*
3. *(The Guardian: Pentagon paves way for transgender people to serve openly in US military, July 2015. Pengully & Holpuch)*
4. *(TIME: Pentagon to Lift Transgender Ban in the Military, July 2015. Eliza Gray)*

The “working group”, Carter said, “...will start with the presumption that transgender persons can serve openly without adverse impact on military effectiveness and readiness, unless and except where objective, practical impediments are identified”³.

Transgender advocates and experts on military policy say that such a review is necessary to work out the details of how best to incorporate transgender service, which will involve decisions about things like uniforms and medical best practices that were not at issue in the repeal of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell. Some transgender soldiers decide to take hormones and get surgeries during transition.

In August, the Palm Center issued a report offering a road map to the kinds of new policies that may need to be written to provide a smooth path to transgender military service. Aaron Belkin, Executive Director of the Palm Center, a think tank that promotes the study of LGBT people in the armed forces said, “...you need to sit down and take a look at all the administrative policies involved in transgender Americans serving in the military”. Allyson Robinson, the Director of Policy at SPARTA, a group of LGBT people who have served in the military, said about the group, “they are not satisfied to have a military that says it stands for inclusion and quality but doesn’t live up to those values when it comes to transgender Americans.” President Obama has previously suggested his support for such a measure, and Secretary Carter said at a Pentagon Pride event last month that the military must get to “a place where no one serves in silence, and where we treat all our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines with the dignity, and the respect, that they deserve”⁴.



The Confederate The Ruling FLAG

The Confederate flag on South Carolina's statehouse grounds came down during a Friday morning ceremony, ending its 54-year presence at the Capitol.

Members from a South Carolina Highway Patrol honor guard approached the Confederate memorial, and as one turned a lever to lower the flag, the assembled large crowd burst into sustained applause and chanted "U.S.A.!" The flag will be placed in a museum.

Friday's ceremony in Columbia bookended the highly emotional debate in South Carolina over the flag's place on the statehouse grounds, a conversation that began anew after last month's mass shooting of nine worshipers at a historic black church in Charleston. The nation reeled with shock and pain, and the state and U.S. flags atop South Carolina's Capitol dome were lowered. But the Confederate battle emblem on the statehouse grounds flew high; only the legislature had the power to lower or bring it down.

Photos then emerged of the alleged Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church shooter, an avowed white supremacist, posing with the Confederate symbol. The flag's place in the state gained instant national scrutiny, with those calling for its removal saying it symbolizes racial hate and violence. In a high-profile gesture, an activist climbed atop the flagpole and removed the flag; she was arrested and the flag was replaced.

Officials also said the flag should come down, including Gov. Nikki Haley (R), who asked the legislature to take up the issue. Lawmakers passed a bill this week to remove the flag.

"In South Carolina, we honor tradition, we honor history, we honor heritage, but there's a place for that flag, and that flag needs to be in a museum, where we will continue to make sure people will honor it appropriately," Haley said Friday morning on NBC's "Today" show. "But the statehouse, that's an area that belongs to everyone. And no one should drive by the statehouse and feel pain. No one should drive by the statehouse and feel like they don't belong."

President Barack Obama tweeted Friday, "South Carolina taking down the confederate flag – a signal of good will and healing, and a meaningful step towards a better future."

The Confederate flag flew on top of the capitol dome starting in 1961; a compromise lawmakers reached in 2000 relocated it to a Confederate war memorial on the statehouse grounds.

South Carolina's Senate swiftly and overwhelmingly approved a bill this week to lower the flag and place it in the nearby Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum. That bill passed the House with bipartisan support early Thursday after 13 hours of increasingly tense and emotional debate, in which defenders of the battle emblem insisted it represents Southern heritage, not racial oppression.

Haley signed the measure into law Thursday, using nine pens in the ceremony; each pen will go to a family of one of those killed in Emanuel AME Church last month.

This is a story about the history of South Carolina," Haley said Thursday. "And how the action of nine individuals laid out this long chain of events that forever showed the state of South Carolina what love and forgiveness looks like."

The flag now resides in storage at the nearby museum; details of how it will be displayed, and how much that will cost, haven't yet been settled.

Controversy over the battle emblem remains far from settled across the nation, and this week's actions by the South Carolina General Assembly have ricocheted well beyond the state. Members of Congress have taken up the issue within the halls of the U.S. Capitol, where House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) called for a review of Confederate symbols.

On Friday, crowds streamed toward the S.C. Capitol, many dressed in shorts and hats and some in their Sunday best. Among them was Yvonne Pygatt, a retired social worker whose cousin Myra Thompson was killed in the church shooting.

"This is a proud moment but this is something that should have happened a long time ago," said Pygatt, 60, standing in the hot sun at the statehouse where she had been involved in many rallies over the years to bring the flag down.

"For those nine people and their families, if they didn't take it down they'd have to see that flag flying here, and it'd bring back all those memories," said her friend Annie McDaniel, a school district official who had also rallied to remove the flag. "Honestly I thought it would never happen."

ENTIRE ARTICLE SOURCED FROM

(Washington Post: Confederate flag comes down on South Carolina's statehouse ground, July 2015. Stephanie McCrummen and Elahe Izadi)

Some members of the crowd continued discussing the symbol's meaning moments before the flag's removal. Dwayne Gross, who owns an IT company, drove from Charlotte, N.C. Seeing the few white haired men waving confederate flags and talking about heritage, Gross, who is black, said: "Their history is not that important to me. If they had their way, I'd still be a slave."

Gross said his own feelings were "mixed." He added: "What's it really going to change in terms of peoples' lives?"

Nearby, James E. Wilson, who is white, agreed, and stood with his camera pointed at the flag pole.

"I grew up around a lot of racism and flag waving, and it's been misused so much over the years," said Wilson, 64, a mental health counselor from Columbia. "I think this changes the mood. It's going to create a dialogue."

As the flag began to descend the pole, and the clapping and cheering rose, Bethune's cousin Lionel Johnson, 65, shouted, "There it comes down! Yeah! All right! Yes! Yes!" Johnson's 19-year-old grandson Rayneth Johnson held up his cellphone, and the flag disappeared from view.

When it was done, Cyrus Thornton, a 31-year-old pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Columbia, asked someone to snap his photo in front of the empty pole.

"I feel good," said Thornton, who is black. "I finally feel like I'm part of this great state of South Carolina."

HELP
MAKE A DIFFERENCE
Visit Us online at
BiasHELP.org
AND MAKE A DONATION.

Your support helps keep our important programs going throughout the year in communities and schools throughout Long Island.

BiasHELP would like to thank the following Supporters for their generous contributions to help promote and continue the many important programs we have to offer the many businesses, families and community organizations throughout Long Island.

Knapp Swezey Foundation

Senator John J. Flannigan

New York Community Bank Foundation

Office of Minority Health

If you are interested in making a contribution to BiasHELP please call 631-479-6015 for more information.
Thank You!

Important Numbers to Know

IF YOU REQUIRE IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY ATTENTION ALWAYS REMEMBER TO DIAL 911 FIRST.

If you need help and the situation does not require immediate emergency attention, you can call the BiasHELP HOTLINE at 1-877-363-2427. If you are unable to contact the BiasHELP HOTLINE, there are agencies which can help you either address your issue or connect you with sources that can be of assistance. Below we have provided a convenient cut out information card that you can place somewhere for easy access.

IMPORTANT PHONE

IF YOU REQUIRE IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY ATTENTION ALWAYS REMEMBER DIAL 911 FIRST

BiasHELP HOTLINE 1-877-363-2427
Monday-Friday 9am-5pm
Spanish Operators Available

NUMBERS TO KEEP

REPORTING A BIAS/HATE CRIME:

Nassau County Police Dept.
1-516-573-7000 (ext 7360)

Nassau County Human Rights Commission
1-516-571-3663

Suffolk County Police Dept.
1-631-852-6323

Suffolk County Human Rights Commission
1-631-853-5480

BiasHELP, Inc.
60 Adams Avenue
Suite 102
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 136
Smithtown, NY 11787



Call the TOLL-FREE

BiasHELP HOTLINE

1-877-363-2427

Monday-Friday • 9am-5pm

Visit us online @ BiasHelp.Org