

PTOWNWEST

No Place Like Home



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*The mission of Ptownwest is to reconnect,
promote and create gay community*

Republican files bill against parents of Trans kids

Savannah Maddox, a Republican representative in the Kentucky State Legislature, says she's drafting legislation that would prevent parents from giving their trans children hormone blockers to delay the onset of puberty.

Her bill will endanger the lives of trans people and also be emulated in other conservative state legislatures, says Gillian Branstetter, a spokesperson for the National Center for Transgender Equality.

Gay Youth seeking asylum being held by ICE

Garcia Portillo has been in Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody for nearly seven months -- his request for parole (administrative release for asylum seekers) denied and his life still at risk due to his identity as a part of the LGBTQ community, according to his lawyer.

The 25-year-old and his partner say they decided to escape Honduras along with Garcia

Portillo's younger brother in March. They sought asylum by legally crossing the U.S. border at San Ysidro, in San Diego, an official U.S. port of entry.

While his partner was granted asylum, for close to seven months Garcia Portillo has been in ICE custody under the jurisdiction of the New Orleans ICE Field Office



Garcia Portillo seeking Asylum

Holiday Movie

Written by Kathryn Trammell, directed by Christin Baker, “Season of Love” is a lighthearted rom-com featuring a large ensemble cast of diverse women and their connected love lives during the hectic holiday period just before Christmas through the New Year who discover love truly is the best gift of all. The movie brings together some fan favorites including actresses from classic LGBTQ films and current television shows including Dominique Provost-Chalkley (“Wynonna Earp”, “Avengers: Age of Ultron”), Jessica Clark (“True Blood”, “A Perfect Ending”), Emily Goss (“Snapshots”), Laur Allen (“Young and the Restless”), Janelle Marie and Sandra Mae Frank (“Deaf West’s Spring Awakening”, “Daybreak”). “I’ve always wanted to do a Rom-Com movie, but if you’re going to do a Rom-Com why not do one that’s going to push the boundaries a little bit and gives this beautiful community what they so deserve, a happy ending,” says Dominique Provost-Chalkley.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=OTeaMv5S8WY

The film will be available online for pre-sale on October 15 and will be available for rent and/or purchase in early December 2019
at: <https://www.seasonoflovemovie.com/>



Lesbienne is not associated with Porn Anymore

“The funniest thing is, I was at work when I got the call, and the firewall at my client’s office blocked me from typing ‘lesbienne,’ as if it were a dirty word. I had to leave my workplace to see if it was true. I couldn’t believe my eyes,” Mayaudon-Nehlig said in an interview with HuffPost Brazil.

For the first time, she could type the word “lesbienne” without any pornography popping up in the search results. On Aug. 9, Google announced that it had fixed the algorithm to provide better, more representative results.

The shift is in its early stages, so searches for related terms or for the word in other languages may still bring up pornographic content. Nonetheless, Mayaudon-Nehlig believes that this first step will lead to more change.

“SEO Lesbienne encourages lesbians everywhere to show their real lives online and to create more online content associated with the word ‘lesbienne’ in their own language,” she said.

HuffPost Brazil spoke with Mayaudon-Nehlig about the initiative, the reasons why the word “lesbienne” has been associated with sexual content for so many years, and the importance of this change.

SEO Lesbienne is a French lesbian activist group. We are not paid and we don’t depend on any other organization. I created the hashtag #SEOlesbienne on Twitter in April after my wife, Louise, made me aware that she wasn’t comfortable using the word “lesbienne” in public. In France, at that point, some mainstream media were starting to talk about lesbians, and we lesbians were trying to raise awareness about how sexualized we are, especially on the internet.

Lesbian Couple Attacked in London

Less than two weeks after a woman and her girlfriend were beaten and robbed on a London bus when they refused to kiss, Halsey appeared on stage wearing a shirt emblazoned with the couple's image and wrapped herself in a rainbow flag. The incident made international headlines after a photo of the women appeared online, showing their faces battered from the assault.

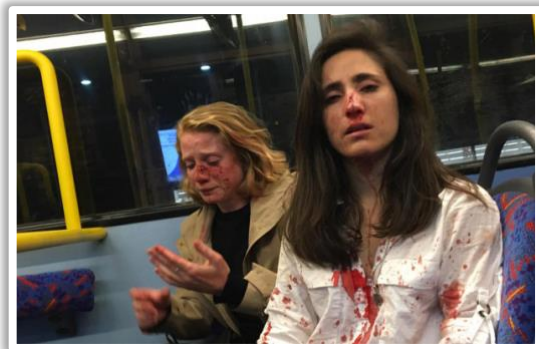
"The sad reality is after the Pride parades are over and after the bars close their Pride nights, when the glitter is being swept out of the streets, a lot of people get on those trains, and they get on those buses, and they try to wash the rainbows off their bodies and they peel the stickers off their clothes because when Pride is over, it's not safe to be gay anymore, because they're worried that someone is going to viciously assault them or viciously attack them," she told her fans Monday during a concert in the city. The speech she gave elicited cheers from the crowd. Police are investigating a May 30 incident in which 28-year-old Melania Geymonat, a flight attendant from Uruguay, was on a date with a woman named Chris. According to a Facebook post from Geymonat, at least four males began harassing them while they were on a bus to Camden Town. "They started behaving like hooligans, demanding that we kissed so they could enjoy watching, calling us 'lesbians' and describing sexual positions," she wrote. Though Geymonat recalled attempting to "calm things down" by making jokes – Chris even pretending to be sick – the harassment didn't stop.

"The next thing I know is Chris is in the middle of the bus fighting with them," she said. "On an impulse, I went over there only to find her face bleeding and three of them beating her up. The next thing I know is I'm being punched."

A photo of the two shows their faces and clothing covered in blood as they sat on the bus. The assault occurred just two days before the start of Pride Month. On Sunday, the Metropolitan Police Service announced it had arrested five teenagers in connection with the attack. All five have been released on bail and are set to appear in court in early July.

The singer also took aim at calls for straight pride parades, which she said don't exist "because if there was one, you wouldn't have to get on the bus and be terrified of getting fucking beaten or killed afterwards."

Last week, a heterosexual advocacy group called Super Happy Fun America announced plans to launch a Boston "straight pride parade," drawing widespread scrutiny on social media and being rebuked by celebrities and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.). According to The Independent, Brad Pitt, whom the group named as the event's mascot, demanded it stop using his name.



HHS Moves To Lift LGBT-Bias Funding Strings

By *Walter Olson*

On Friday, the Department of Health and Human Services [proposed to rescind](#) some regulations issued in the final days of the Obama administration that required recipients of HHS program funds to observe nondiscrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The move, which now enters a public comment period, is being [covered](#) in the [press](#) as an issue of religious accommodation: should church-affiliated agencies be allowed to participate in federally funded adoption and foster care placements even if they decline to serve same-sex couples as clients? And that is indeed one of the hotly contested issues.

But it is worth a moment to examine how the latest HHS initiative might also be grounded in two other values, the rule of law and pluralism, including that characteristically American contribution to pluralism known as federalism.

From the start, the Obama regulations had a problem, which was that they proposed to enforce as regulation a body of federal law that... doesn't exist. Congress has had many chances to attach funding strings of this sort requiring LGBT nondiscrimination of federal aid recipients. It hasn't done so.

Likewise, the Supreme Court could have taken some of the principles involved in *Obergefell* and run with them to develop follow-on doctrines about government expenditures. It hasn't. So on what basis does a federal department begin enforcing such rules anyway? Because appointees decide it would be a nice idea? (The rules apply to a range of HHS programs including elder care, refugee resettlement, youth services, and others.)

As I emphasized in my remarks at [Cato's conference on these topics](#) last year, adoption has flourished in the United States in part because there is no centralized national legal regime governing it. Instead, the tone has been "relatively decentralized and pluralist," with a "wide variety of both private and public actors helping to match children with families."

That leaves room for, at present, a wide range of local approaches; some states and localities, like Massachusetts and Philadelphia, enforce strict anti-discrimination rules even if that means that some long-established religious agencies that are proficient at their jobs drop out. Other states and localities are highly accommodating to religious objectors. The Obama rules do not quite manage to impose uniformity since some corners of the child welfare world still escape the federal dollar, but they are a big step in that direction.

Then there is the question of what is in the best interest of kids needing placement. Both sides express sincere interest in this, but the arguments are often made by simple assertion. Quoted in this CNN account, for example, an officer with the Family Equality Council says rescinding the Obama rule will "allow child-placing agencies to reduce the pool of qualified potential foster and adoptive parents."

Yet opponents can counter by rewording that formula only slightly: leaving the Obama rule in place would reduce the pool of child-placing agencies that recruit and serve qualified potential foster and adoptive parents. (So far as I know, in every state there are agencies that participate in public adoption and foster care placement that are happy to work with gay parents.)

Delta Restores same-sex love scenes to 'Booksmart,' 'Rocketman' after Backlash

By Isaac Feldbeg

November 3, 2019

What's so inappropriate about same-sex love scenes? Olivia Wilde, director of "Booksmart," recently asked Delta that pointed question after learning the airline's in-flight version of her teen comedy had been edited to remove romantic moments involving protagonist Amy (Kaitlyn Dever) and her love interest Hope (Diana Silvers).

Last week, Wilde - [who attended boarding school at Phillips Academy in Andover](#)— used Twitter to call out the double standard inherent in Delta's inclusion of a heterosexual kiss but omission of a kiss between two women. And by Friday, Delta [had changed course](#), announcing that it would restore same-sex love scenes to both "Booksmart" and Elton John biopic "Rocketman," which had similarly been edited to exclude them.

'Booksmart' director Olivia Wilde called attention to the edited version of her film on Twitter.



'Booksmart' director Olivia Wilde

'Rent' cast raises glass in Boston for touring production's 20th anniversary

By Isaac Feldberg

November 3, 2019

When "Rent" first opened on Broadway in 1996, the rock musical was a smash, earning particular praise for its portrayal of HIV-positive individuals, same-sex relationships, and drug addiction. Three years later - and 20 years ago this month - "Rent" came to Boston as the first city in its national tour, playing the Shubert Theatre across a record 29 weeks.

On Wednesday, to mark that anniversary, performers from the play's current touring iteration raised a toast at the Moxy Boston Downtown, a new luxury hotel also celebrating its grand opening. Boston restaurateur Patrick Lyons, Boch Center CEO Josiah Spaulding, fashion designer Tonya Mezrich, and radio personality Kennedy Elsey, of Mix 104.1, were among those who came out for the event and mingled with performers.

Of note: assistant music director Paul O'Keefe, in attendance, is an Everett native who first joined "Rent" a year into its original Broadway run; decades earlier, he was a noted child actor in the '60s, starring as Ross Lane on "The Patty Duke Show."

New Regulation Would Strip Federal Protections for LGBTQ People from All HHS Programs in Favor of 'Religious Freedom'

A proposed new regulation would strip all protections for LGBTQ people from all programs administered by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, and give special rights to entities or programs that are religious or "faith-based." HHS, under the direction of Secretary Alex Azar, has a budget of \$1.2 trillion affecting the health and well-being, directly or indirectly, of nearly every person in the country.

Lambda Legal [says](#) the proposed rule "would invite HHS grantees receiving taxpayer funds to discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion."

While reportedly drafted to focus on adoption and foster care organizations, the [Human Rights Campaign](#) also says the proposed rule would extend far beyond those entities to all programs that receive funding from HHS.

"The Trump-Pence White House has proposed a horrific federal regulation that would permit discrimination across the entire spectrum of HHS programs receiving federal funding," said HRC President Alphonso David. "This would permit discrimination against LGBTQ people, religious minorities, and women in programs related to foster care, adoption, HIV and STI prevention, youth homelessness, refugee resettlement, elder care programs and more. It is unconscionable that the Trump-Pence administration would prioritize advancing discrimination over the wellbeing of vulnerable people and expect taxpayers to foot the bill for their discriminatory policies. The Trump-Pence White House is relying on the same flawed legal reasoning they've used in the past to justify discrimination against LGBTQ people and other communities."

Trump Administration to Allow Adoption Agencies to Discriminate Against LGBTQ People

The [Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\) proposed a new rule](#) today that would allow adoption and foster agencies to discriminate against LGBTQ people. Today is also the start of National Adoption Month.

The rule would apply to adoption and foster care agencies, allowing them to refuse to work with LGBTQ families. But it would go much further and allow any organization that gets an HHS grant for a health care or child care program to refuse to serve LGBTQ people, even though they are getting federal taxpayer money.

Currently, HHS rules ban giving grants to organizations that discriminate based on a list of factors. According to a notice posted on HHS's website, a proposed rule would remove sexual orientation, gender identity, and religion from that list and allow grant recipients to treat same-sex marriages differently from different-sex marriages.

The change most notably impacts religious foster and adoption agencies. Earlier this year, HHS waived its anti-discrimination rules for a [South Carolina foster agency](#) that didn't want to place children with families that didn't meet the organization's religious standards.

"It is outrageous that the Trump administration would mark the start of National Adoption Month by announcing a rule to further limit the pool of loving homes available to America's 440,000 foster children," said Julie Kruse of Family Equality. "The American public overwhelmingly opposes allowing taxpayer-funded adoption and foster care agencies to turn away qualified parents simply because they are in a same-sex relationship."

The rule change would go further than that, allowing all HHS grant recipients to discriminate. Many of these are related to public health, like HIV and STI programs, opioid addiction programs, and health research. Other programs that address various issues like youth homelessness, human trafficking, and pre-K education will also be allowed to discriminate and still receive federal money.

"This rule is an abuse of taxpayer dollars in the name of empowering hatred and bigotry towards society's most vulnerable members," said Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality.

“Stigma and prejudice are fueling a public health crisis among transgender people across the country, one that manifests itself as suicide, addiction, intimate partner violence, and HIV. Enabling providers of life-saving services to worsen these crises by rejecting transgender people is a moral crime and a severe abdication of HHS’s mission to preserve public health.”

HHS defended the proposal by pointing to religious freedom, saying that organizations with religious objections to following the rules should still be allowed to get federal money.

The proposed rule change also says that some organizations might just give up their federal grant if forced to follow the rules. While this would free up the money for compliant organizations, HHS argues that this is the worse outcome.

“The Department believes that such an outcome would likely reduce the effectiveness of programs funded by federal grants by reducing the number of entities available to provide services under these programs,” HHS argues.

Christian conservative activists celebrated the proposed rule change.

“Thanks to President Trump, charities will be free to care for needy children and operate according to their religious beliefs and the reality that children do best in a home with a married mom and dad,” said Tony Perkins of the SPLC designated hate group Family Research Council.

LGBT Youth at Higher Risk for Human Trafficking, Study Says

The Atlanta Youth Count, released Wednesday, was a follow up to a 2015 study to specifically address sex and labor trafficking among Atlanta's homeless youth.

Author: Donovan Harris

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ATLANTA – A Georgia State University study found that LGBT youth in Atlanta are at greater risk of human trafficking than their straight counterparts.

Georgia State University released this data Wednesday from their findings as a part of the Atlanta Youth Count which is a study that examines the prevalence of sex and labor trafficking among youth ages 14-25 experiencing homelessness in the Metro-Atlanta area.

The anonymous survey collected basic information about the demographic background and history of homelessness, among other factors.

This survey found that there are more than 3,000 youth experiencing homelessness, and nearly a quarter of those youth surveyed identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual. They have a significantly higher risk of experiencing human trafficking than their straight peers.

The 2018 study found that nearly 44 percent of LGBT youth experience trafficking in comparison to 35 percent of their straight peers while homeless.

Over the course of a lifetime, 61 percent of LGBT youth experience trafficking, as compared to 51 percent of their straight peers.

The Atlanta Youth Count also found more than 70 percent of transgender youth experienced trafficking while homeless.

“Everyone has a gender identity and a sexual orientation,” the CDC says. “A person's gender identity does not determine their sexual orientation. Transgender people may identify as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or none of the above.

“The intersection of homelessness with adverse trauma, experiences of system involvement, LGBT status, and chronic homelessness are major risk factors for youth to experience sex and labor traffic,” according to the study.