

PTOWNWEST

No Place Like Home



P TOWNWEST

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

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Boston Welcomes First LGBTQ Housing For The Elderly

The city of Boston is welcoming its first LGBTQ-supported housing development for seniors, according to plans released by Mayor Marty Walsh's administration Wednesday.

Within the next few years, the city hopes to complete a transformation of the William Barton Rogers Middle School in Hyde Park into a \$33 million development with 74 apartments.

"As Boston's residents continue to age, the need for safe, affordable housing that is welcoming to all remains essential," Walsh said in a press release Wednesday. "This new development will be an incredible asset to the neighborhood."

Aileen Montour, the president of LGBTQ Senior Housing Inc., says her nonprofit will co-own the space and work with the developer Pennrose Development to create a safe and inclusive space.

"The primary concern of aging LGBT folks is where we are going to live that will be safe and



*A proposed housing complex for elderly people who identify as LGBTQ is coming to Hyde Park.
Dimella Shaffer/Mikyoung Kim Design*

welcoming, and where we don't have to go back into the closet," Mountour said. "People who have

finally been able to come out of the closet may be forced back into the closet for fear that they'll be treated badly, and that's horrible. That shouldn't happen after all these years."

The new complex will be welcoming to all seniors ages 62 years and older, and specifically welcoming

to seniors who identify as LGBTQ. Of the 74 units, eight will be rented to people experiencing homelessness or who require rental assistance. Another eight will be “deeply affordable units,” according to a press release from Walsh’s office, meaning available to seniors making approximately \$25,000 to \$40,000 per year. The remaining units are tiered based on median income, with varying levels of affordability.

The building will also include a gallery space, an arts studio, community rooms, gardens, walking trails and recreational space, which will be available to the surrounding Hyde Park community.

“LGBT folks from the outside might also want to come in and enjoy programming and services in this facility,” Mountour said. “We’re building community as well as housing. The most important thing to have a happy, healthy, vital older age is to have community and not to be isolated, because being socially isolated has a profound effect on your health.”

Mountour says the ultimate goal is to create a neighborhood without fear, where elderly senior citizens can feel like a part of a community.

“It’s an issue for everybody who’s aging, that your friends and families have passed away, and people can end up isolated,” she said. “For LGBT folks, it’s even worse because many don’t have family, or might have been rejected by their own families, so we become family to each other. We are our chosen family, we take care of each other.”

Pete Buttigieg Takes First Place in Iowa Poll

South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg just shot to the top of the pack in Iowa in the latest poll from the early primary state.

The 2020 Democratic presidential hopeful got first place in a [Monmouth Poll of the Midwestern state](#), with 22% of likely caucusgoers saying he’s their first choice to be the Democratic nominee.

Related: [New polling shows Pete Buttigieg would beat Donald Trump in the general election](#)

Former Vice President Joe Biden and Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) were second, third, and fourth in the poll, with 19%, 18%, and 13% of respondents saying they preferred them, respectively.

Buttigieg also came out on top if people’s first and second choices were combined. 37% of like caucusgoers in Iowa picked Buttigieg as either their first or second choice, edging out Warren who is in the top-two for 35% of respondents.

Monmouth breaks down the results, which show that Buttigieg is doing somewhat worse (15%) among people who say they’re “very liberal” and slightly better (23%) among people who say they’re “somewhat liberal.”

Among respondents over age 65, Buttigieg did somewhat better (26%) but fell behind Biden (29%), and Buttigieg is in first place among people with a college degree (24%).

But this could all change before the caucuses - only 28% of respondents in the poll said that they had “firmly” decided.

“Buttigieg is emerging as a top pick for a wide variety of Iowa Democrats,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “While he has made nominally bigger gains among older caucusgoers, you really can’t pigeonhole his support to one particular group. He is doing well with voters regardless of education or ideology.”

Iowa will be the first state to hold a primary in 2020, giving it out-sized influence on who will represent the Democratic Party in the general election. Candidates want to do well in that state to show voters in later states that they have a real shot at winning.

While Buttigieg is polling well in Iowa, he’s not doing well in other early primary states, notably South Carolina, which will hold the fourth primary of the year.

According to *RealClearPolitics*, Buttigieg is averaging 7.5% in national polls, which puts him in fourth place behind Biden, Warren, and Sanders.

Singer Breanna Sinclair Moves Past Homelessness and Abuse in Pursuit of Operatic Stardom

By Chloe Veltman

Breanna Sinclairé's voice has an enviable four-octave range. The classically trained Bay Area vocalist said she's capable of singing almost any part she likes.

"I could choose to sing baritone if I wanted to," Sinclairé said. "But no, that's just not who I am."

Sinclairé is in her early 30s and starting to hit her stride as a soprano. In 2015, she became the first transgender vocalist to sing the national anthem at a professional sports event ‐ an Oakland A's game against the San Diego Padres.

She starred in the whimsical short film "Mezzo," has made solo appearances with important groups like the San Francisco Symphony and the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, and is scheduled to make her professional opera debut in Toronto early next year.

But her path hasn't been easy.

Sinclairé, who now lives in San Francisco, started out singing hymns and gospel songs in her local Southern Baptist church in Baltimore.

"The pastor always called me up to sing a solo, and all the church would be on the floor and crying," she said. "It was dramatic."

Sinclairé's home life was dramatic in a different way.

She said her father didn't like the fact he had an expressive kid who preferred playing with dolls to playing sports.

"He would say, 'I don't want my child to be a faggot,'" she said. "So if I did something that was abnormal or different, he would take me in a back room and just beat me silly until I bled."



Breanna Sinclairé

Sinclairé said the regular beatings eased up after her parents got divorced when she was around 13. She got accepted to the Baltimore School for the Arts and soon found her community among the crowd of misfits.

But she continued to struggle with her identity there, especially when it came to singing in the choir.

Sinclairé was stuck with the guys in the tenor section. And it felt wrong.

"And so I continually fought with who I was in high school," she said.

It was also in high school that she came face to face with a transgender woman for the first time.

"I was just like, 'Oh my God, like, she's so gorgeous!' I didn't know that even existed," Sinclairé said.

Sinclairé went off to the California Institute of the Arts for her undergraduate degree. It was during her junior year there, with the help of friends, that she began her physical transition.

"I had a party when I got my first hormones at Cal Arts," Sinclairé said.

She knew she'd embarked on a difficult journey.

"I'm 6-foot-2, so transitioning for me took a lot of work to get to where I am today," Sinclairé said, laughing.

It wasn't just a question of taking hormones and undergoing surgery to transform her appearance into the statuesque, glamorous woman she is today. Sinclairé's transformation basically turned her entire life upside down.

"My family kind of disowned me," she said. "I didn't have much support."

During her transition, in the summer of 2010, she hit a low. Sinclairé said she'd saved up and flown across the country with a plan to study singing with a coach in New York.

She said the lessons fell through. The coach stopped returning her emails after she told him she was transitioning.

Then a roommate threw all of her stuff out onto the street.

"He said that he felt uncomfortable with me living there because of who I was," Sinclairé said.

She was homeless for more than two months in New York City. She said she sometimes slept in Central Park. Her only belongings were the couple of dresses and a black purse she'd managed to rescue from the trash.

"I put aside the singing," Sinclairé said. "Because when you're homeless, you're not getting employment and you're on the street, your mind is focused on survival."

One day, something unbelievable happened to Sinclairé — the sort of thing that usually only happens in the movies.

A man saw her while she was standing on the street. They struck up a conversation.

"I told him that I was a developing opera singer and I was training at Cal Arts," Sinclairé said. "And so what he did was, he wrote me a check."

She said this knight in shining armor didn't want anything in return for the price of the one-way plane ticket back to Los Angeles.

"There was no sexual exchange," Sinclairé said. "It was just really random. Out of the blue."

She said the man just wanted to see her graduate. So she returned to California to finish her degree.

"If it wasn't for him, maybe I wouldn't be here today," she said.

Sinclairé said she texted him her undergraduate degree certificate, and eventually her master's certificate as well from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

They occasionally still talk.

These days, Sinclairé is focused on taking her career to the next level.

She has been taken under the wing of Sheri Greenawald, one of the top opera coaches in the country. They meet two or three times a month for a lesson, usually at Greenawald's cozy office at the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco, where they work on many things, like testing the limits of Breanna's range.

While testosterone lowers the human voice, estrogen doesn't make it go higher. Taking estrogen has no impact on the voice at all.

So hitting those high notes is all about training. Cisgender males can also train themselves to sing up high. They're known as countertenors. But it's a different sound.

Sinclairé doesn't want that sound. In fact, her greatest fear, she said, is being labeled as a countertenor.

"I've been through so much within my transition and who I am," she said. "I want the world to see me as a woman and as a trained classical singer singing soprano repertoire."

This is How The Trump Administration Has Been Quietly Erasing LGBT Issues

Researchers have revealed that under the Trump administration LGBT+ language, data, resource pages and anti-discrimination information has been disappearing from government websites.

The research was conducted by the Sunlight Foundation's Web Integrity Project (WIP) [which says](#) its "mission is to monitor [changes to government websites](#), holding our government accountable by revealing shifts in public information and access to Web resources, as well as changes in stated policies and priorities."

Researchers combed 142 government websites that included LGBT-related information, all created before Trump took office, [to create a report looking at how LGBT+ content and language had changed during Trump's presidency.](#)

Compared with previous versions of the pages accessed via Internet Archive's Wayback Machine, the WIP found that 57 percent pages had altered LGBT+ terms.

Data relating to transgender youth has been removed by the Trump administration

On pages under the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), [the same department that Trump has been trying to give the legal right to discriminate against LGBT+ people](#) on religious grounds, the use of the word "transgender" decreased by 40 percent.



Protesters in front of the US Supreme Court last month as arguments were heard on whether Title VII of the Civil Rights Act protects LGBT+ people in the workforce. (Mark Wilson/Getty)

The use of the term "faith-based and community organizations" increased by 875 percent and "religious freedom" by 667 percent.

The HSS Office of Disease Control and Prevention removed the term "LGBTQ" from its page on LGBT+ youth, and replaced it with "LGB". It erased "statistics and references on transgender populations", including trans suicide statistics, from the page.

The office has also seemingly changed goals on its Healthy People 2020 website for collecting data about LGBT+ people, without publicly reporting the change.

The report states: "Without notice or annotation, as was done for past revisions, the 2020 coverage target for the 'number of states, territories and the District of Columbia that include questions on sexual orientation and gender identity in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)' objective was reduced from 'total coverage' to a "10 percent improvement."

Policy analyst says Trump's government is making people "less aware" of their rights

The Department of Labor removed references to a still existing Obama-era executive order barring discrimination by some federal contractors based on gender identity and sexual orientation, known as EO 13672.

The page heading was altered from "Frequently Asked Questions EO 13672 Final Rule" to "Frequently Asked Questions Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity", and the questions now only refer to a EO 11246, an executive order signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965.

Johnson's executive order did not refer to gender identity and sexual orientation, but Obama's EO 13672 built upon it to add them as protected classes.

Another page with links to "community and other resources" to assist federal contractors with compliance with EO 13672 anti-discrimination rules was completely removed.

Frank Bewkes, a policy analyst with the Center for American Progress, [told WIP](#): "These changes are notable because EO 13672 is still in effect, unlike other Obama-era EO's revoked by the Trump administration.

And as public-facing information that sought to educate people on the state of federal anti-

discrimination measures, materials related to EO 13672 were an important resource for people to learn about their rights.

“The rule is what the rule is, until it changes. You can’t change something preemptively.

“Essentially all they’re doing is hiding the ball and making people less aware of what their rights are. And that is a problem.”

Information has been removed on why housing discrimination based on HIV status is illegal

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) removed information on the Fair Housing Act and how it relates to LGBT+ discrimination in housing.

The Trump administration “removed a graphic affirming HUD’s commitment to ending housing discrimination against LGBT people and their families, an explanation about how the Fair Housing Act applies to LGBT populations, text affirming that discrimination based on HIV status is illegal, and links to resources including the final rule on equal access to housing for LGBTQ.”

The report also states: “Since President Trump’s inauguration, his administration has made numerous formal policy changes, as well as informal policy announcements, that affect the rights and lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) Americans.

“Our goals are to ensure the public is aware of the changes that are happening on websites and agencies are held accountable when they unduly alter or remove access to information that the public relies upon and which can seriously affect the rights and opportunities of Americans.”

SNL Producer and Film-Maker are Latest to Accuse YouTube of Anti-LGBT Bias

The 12 complainants in the class action lawsuit say an algorithm that restricts content is an attempt to push them off the platform

Four LGBT YouTubers have joined a class action lawsuit suing [YouTube](#) for discrimination, deceptive business practices and unlawful restraint of speech.

The 12 complainants in total allege that the algorithm YouTube, and its parent company Google, uses to promote, censor and pair advertising with videos is discriminating against LGBT content just because it is made by and for LGBT people.

The new additions in the lawsuit include Saturday Night Live associate producer [Greg Scarnici](#), independent film-maker [Sal Bardo](#) and [Stephanie Frosch](#), a lesbian YouTuber with nearly 400,000 subscribers. The refiled complaint alleges that YouTube is restricting their content and effectively trying to push them off the platform, as well as retaliating against the original plaintiffs after the lawsuit was first filed in August. YouTube and Google have yet to respond to the complaint. The first court hearing is due to take place in December.

Frosch specialises in vlogs aimed at an audience of teenage girls who are exploring their sexuality, with videos on how to come out to your family, and what to do if you have a crush on your best friend. Like fellow plaintiffs [Bria Kam and Chrissy Chambers](#), Frosch claims YouTube’s algorithm demonetizes and age-restricts her videos, even when they feature no swearing, nudity or discussion about sex. Sal Bardo’s video It Gets Better, made as part of a suicide prevention campaign among young LGBT people, was restricted and therefore cannot be viewed by its intended audience.

Bardo wrote last year that “unless you create makeup tutorials or supercuts of cats napping, you’re no longer permitted to earn revenue on YouTube. And if you’re a queer creator who happens to make those kinds of videos, you may not make any money either.” Despite YouTube’s assurances that they would fix the issues in the algorithm, Bardo’s entire channel was demonitized for the month of September

Online platforms depend on algorithms to police and monetize the vast quantity of content uploaded every day. As the case against YouTube gathers momentum, it raises fundamental questions about the biases that are built into supposedly neutral software, and the possibility that these could result in wholesale discrimination against entire communities.

Decisions on monetization and restriction are made within moments of the videos being uploaded - too

soon for any human being to have made a judgment call. The plaintiffs say this has led to a bewildering scenario where they are no longer tagging their videos with anything that mean they could be seen as “gay” by the algorithm, and are self-censoring in the hope of meeting YouTube’s constantly shifting and opaque standards.

Several of the original plaintiffs say they fear YouTube has retaliated against them for being part of the lawsuit. “Our viewership has taken an insane hit,” said Bria Kam, one half of BriaAndChrissy. “Before the suit, we were bringing in around 200,000 views a day. Now we are at around 50,000,” Kam said. Chambers and Kam have been inundated with messages from viewers who claim they can no longer find their content. “I’m not sure what they are doing behind the scenes, but we’re getting tons of viewers saying they were automatically unsubscribed from our channel or that they just don’t get notifications.”

Amp Somers runs a “kink-friendly” sex education YouTube channel. While some of his content is definitely not suitable for under-18s, Somers claims YouTube has placed a blanket age-restriction on even his most harmless content, including a video of him fully clothed, drinking tea. “Since the lawsuit, it’s only getting worse for us,” Somers said. “I’ve spoken to many creators who have the same problems but don’t want to get involved because they fear retaliation from YouTube.”

Chris Knight and his husband Celso Dulay were the first plaintiffs in the case. They decided to take legal action after their request to pay to promote a Christmas special of GNews, their online news show for the LGBTQ community, was immediately rejected by YouTube’s algorithm. When they finally managed to speak to a manager at a YouTube call centre who reviewed the algorithm’s decision, they were told their content was not suitable for promotion “because of the gay thing”. The recording they made of the phone call is a key piece of evidence in the case.

None of the plaintiffs are sure why the algorithm would have a built-in bias against them. Some think it is to appease advertisers [wary of being associated with anything on YouTube that could be viewed as controversial](#). But Kam, Dulay and Somers say they think YouTube is deliberately trying to push original creators out to make way for their mainstream preferred partners.

“I want a working platform where I don’t have to guess if I should stay on it or not. There’s no transparency,” Somers said.

“We filed the lawsuit because we want systemic change,” added Dulay. “If this is your model, be honest with it, so that we all know to leave. But if you’re still operating under the guise of the original mission statement and ethos of YouTube, then fix your algorithm.”

461,000 LGBT People in Ohio are Vulnerable to Discrimination

Ohio’s legal landscape and social climate put the state’s 389,000 LGBT adults and 72,000 LGBT youth at risk of discrimination and harassment. The social, economic, and health effects of stigma and discrimination against LGBT people negatively impact Ohio’s economy by tens of millions of dollars each year, according to a new study by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law.

The study documents the prevalence and impact of several forms of stigma and discrimination against LGBT individuals in the state, including harassment and discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations; harassment and bullying in schools; and family rejection of LGBT youth.

“Ohio has an opportunity to create a more supportive climate for LGBT people,” said lead author Christy Mallory, the Renberg State & Local Policy Director at the Williams Institute. For instance, policymakers could add sexual orientation and gender identity to the state’s non-discrimination and hate crimes laws, and ban the use of conversion therapy on youth.”

Key findings of the report include:

Many LGBT people in the state experience economic instability.

33% of LGBT adults in Ohio reported having an annual household income below \$24,000, compared to 21% of non-LGBT adults, according to Gallup data. Similarly, 33% of LGBT adults in Ohio reported that they do not have enough for food compared to 16% of non-LGBT adults.

11% of LGBT adults in Ohio reported that they were unemployed compared to 5% of non-LGBT adults, according to Gallup data.

The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey found that 16% of transgender respondents in Ohio were unemployed, and 26% were living in poverty.

LGBT people in the state experience negative health outcomes associated with stigma and discrimination.

LGBT adults in Ohio are significantly more likely to have been diagnosed with a depressive disorder and to be current smokers than non-LGBT adults: 50% of LGBT adults in Ohio reported having been diagnosed with a depressive disorder compared to 22% of non-LGBT adults, and 33% of LGBT adults in the state are current smokers compared to 21% of non-LGBT adults, according to data from the 2017 Ohio Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey. Depression and smoking are two health outcomes that have been linked to experiences of stigma and discrimination.

36% of LGB students in Cleveland, Ohio reported that they had seriously considered suicide compared to 15% of non-LGB students in the prior year, according to data from the 2017 Cleveland Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

LGB students in Cleveland were also more likely than non-LGB students to report smoking cigarettes, drinking, and using marijuana in the prior year, according to data from the 2017 Cleveland Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Health disparities for LGBT people negatively impact the state's economy.

Reducing the disparity in major depressive disorder between LGBT and non-LGBT people in Ohio by 25% to 33.3% could benefit the state's economy by \$155.9 million to \$207.9 million annually.

Reducing the disparity in current smoking by the same proportion could benefit the state's economy by \$104.4 million to \$139.2 million in increased productivity and reduced health care costs each year.

Discrimination can lead to lower earnings and unemployment, which can result in increased reliance on public benefits. For example, discrimination in the workplace against transgender people annually costs Ohio approximately \$448,000 in state Medicaid expenditures.

Read the report.

The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, a think tank on sexual orientation and gender identity law and public policy, is dedicated to

conducting rigorous, independent research with real-world relevance.

—From a press release

West Virginia Public Library Pulls LGBT Children's Book After Objections From Residents

By [MAIREAD MCARDLE](#)
November 21, 2019

A West Virginia public library has pulled an LGBT children's book from its shelves after local residents objected to it.

The Upshur County Public Library removed the book "Prince and Knight," about a prince who falls in love with a knight after a local pastor complained earlier this month that the book "is a deliberate attempt to indoctrinate young children, especially boys, into the LGBTQA lifestyle."



The library board held a formal review Wednesday on whether to keep the controversial children's book off the shelves, but Library Board President Dennis Xander [walked out](#) of the meeting before a decision could be made after residents demanded answers on the presence of several LGBT children's books. Parents had [noticed](#) two additional LGBT children's books at the library, "In Our Mothers' House," about a lesbian couple and their children, and "Julian is a Mermaid," about a cross-dressing young boy.

"Prince and Knight," published by Little Bee Books in partnership with the LGBT advocacy organization

GLAAD, was described as an “illuminating fairy tale for young readers” by the School Library Journal.

GLAAD condemned the library’s decision to pull the book, calling it an “act of discrimination” against LGBT families.

“Inclusive children’s books do not ‘indoctrinate’ but do allow LGBTQ families and their children the chance to see themselves reflected in the world,” [said](#) GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis.

The book’s author Daniel Haack weighed in as well, saying it is “meant to be a fun little adventure story” and adding that the support he has received reminds him of “the brave prince and knight facing the dragon to protect the vulnerable citizens of their kingdom.”

“If the protesters are worried that reading this book will turn someone gay, I can easily refer them to all the gay adults who grew up only reading about straight romances,” Haack said.

Earlier this week, the nearby Morgantown Public Library System was met with an [outcry](#) from residents over a scheduled “drag queen story time” event and was forced to cancel the event after receiving violent anti-LGBT threats.

Many LGBT People in China Forced Into Illegal ‘Conversion Therapy’ Groups

BEIJING (Reuters) - Many LGBT people in China are being forced to undergo “conversion therapy”, often done by unscrupulous, unlicensed providers in a sector that operates with little oversight by the authorities, rights groups said.

Though widely discredited by doctors, conversion therapy is an attempt to change a person’s sexual orientation through various means such as hypnosis, drugs, acupuncture and even electric shock therapy.

In China, the therapy is often offered by centers not licensed to practise medicine, as well as by public hospitals, in the absence of an outright ban.

“It’s not just a commercial scam, but an action that violates people’s rights,” said Wang Zhenyu, head of the Public Interest Law Center on Equal Rights for LGBTI, one of the groups that compiled the report.

The National Health Commission did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Chinese authorities removed homosexuality from its list of diseases in the Chinese Classification of Mental Disorders, a national clinical guide, in 2001.

But many gay people still face pressure from their families to undergo the treatment.

