

## NEWSLETTER - VOLUME XVI - No. III – March 2015

### **Bill 35: A law that may or may not help trans\*<sup>1</sup> people (?)...**

*By Mona Greenbaum, executive director, LGBT Family Coalition*

In December 2013 a number of LGBT activists very hesitantly applauded when the government adopted Bill 35. The law, proposed by the Parti Québécois and first introduced by the Liberals as Bill 70 in 2012, purported to make life easier for trans\* people by striking down several requirements of the Quebec Civil Code for those who wish to legally change their gender marker on official documents.

Prior to Bill 35, legislation required a person who wanted to change the name and gender markers on their official documents to publish their old name, new name, and civic address in a local newspaper and the official Gazette of Quebec, and to undergo surgical gender reassignment. While Bill 35 legally eliminated these requirements, they are still effectively in place pending the implementation of new regulations – and these newly proposed regulations (published on December 17<sup>th</sup> 2014) still pose many challenges.

The new regulations require that an applicant for a gender marker change must declare that they have “lived under the appearance” of the gender they want reflected on their documents for at least two years, and have this corroborated by an affidavit from a person who has known them for at least two years. Further, the application must also include a letter from a physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, or sexologist that “confirms that the change of designation is appropriate.”

In response to these proposed regulations the LGBT family Coalition has written to the Quebec’s Justice Ministry. The regulations are discriminatory and dangerous for trans\* people because they:

- Require that a person live in their subjectively experienced gender identity for two years without having the official documents to reflect this identity. This requirement is cruel and dangerous. This issue was discussed with the ministerial and community representatives of the ‘mixed working group’ at Quebec’s Human Rights Commission (the work of this committee eventually lead to Quebec’s National Policy against homophobia). It was understood by all, even back in 2006, that to live openly in an identity that does not correspond to one’s legal papers puts trans\* people at great risk.
- Require that a person live “under the appearance of the sex for which the legal change is being requested”. As a feminist organisation we have serious questions about what it means to live under the appearance of being a man or a woman. Are women now obliged to wear dresses, high heels, make-up and ear rings? If this is the case the director of the civil registry should change my papers as well, because I do not conform.
- Require a letter from a health care professional confirming the legitimacy of the trans\* person’s request. There are 4 problems with this requirement: 1. It pathologises trans\* people who are not

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<sup>1</sup> trans\* : An umbrella term that encompasses a diversity of identities asserted by people whose gender identity does not correspond to the identity designated at their birth. This can include for example people who identify as transsexual, transgendered, genderqueer, as well as men and women who have a history of transition, etc.

or do not necessarily want to be followed by a health care professional. 2. There is an insufficient number of health care professionals, especially outside of urban centres, who are trained to evaluate trans people and of the professionals currently on the terrain, many have enormous prejudice against trans\* people 3. There would most likely be fees associated with this evaluation, which would create economic barriers for certain individuals. 4. This requirement precludes the autonomy of trans\* people to make their own decisions regarding their gender identity.

- Require a declaration under oath by a person who knows the trans\* individual since two years and confirms that trans\* individual has lived full time, since two years, in the appearance of the felt gender. For reasons mentioned above (the danger of living in the appearance of an identity without having the legal papers AND the subjectivity of what constitutes this appearance) this requirement would oblige the declarant to commit perjury.

In writing to the Justice Ministry the LGBT Family Coalition also took the opportunity to mention something that wasn't addressed at all in Bill 35, but that touches our families, because trans\* people are sometimes parents too.

The parental roles appearing on birth certificates are gendered: the mother is a woman, the father is a man. These parental roles can rarely be modified. The result of this is that certain children in Quebec will have birth certificates where a parental role does not correspond to their lived reality. For example, for a trans\* mother or father that conceived their child before transition, the birth certificate will not reflect the parent's parental role. For example, Mary Smith could be designated as being the child's father.

The current situation causes a number of problems, not only for the trans\* parents, but also for their children. Both parents and children would be exposed not only to discrimination, but also to an intrusion into their private life and an attack on their dignity. Not only is this situation an attack on their rights and freedoms, but it is also goes against the fundamental principle of the child's best interest.

This is why we are advocating for a change in Québec laws such that parental roles on a child's birth certificate can be modified.

We are also asking that a third parental role be created, that of 'parent'. This possibility should be open to all people whether they are trans\* or not. Québec residents would then have the possibility of choosing to be designated as 'mother', 'father' or 'parent'. This change would acknowledge the reality of contemporary parental roles. It would also take into account the situation of parents whose gender identity does not conform to traditional parental roles.

We are hoping that the government will adopt the necessary measures so that the filiation of trans\* parents can be modified and so that the three choices, 'mother', 'father' or 'parent' become available from hereon in to all Québec residents.

We hope to push this point forward as well at the judicial level. We are currently applying for intervenor status in a case that the *Centre for Gender Advocacy* along with two trans-parent families from our group are carrying out against the government of Quebec. It's time that trans\* individuals, their families and their children have the same rights as everyone else in Quebec. The LGBT Family Coalition will be there to fight towards this goal.

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**Interested in writing for our newsletter? Send your articles at any time to [info@famillesLGBT.org](mailto:info@famillesLGBT.org) or by post to CF-LGBT, 110, rue Sainte-Thérèse, bureau 405, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1E6**

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## News Briefs

### Quebec News

**November 28, 2014** - Doctors and medical specialists are calling the Quebec government's proposed new bill, which would create major changes to the province's health care system, "catastrophic." Bill 20 — or, *An Act to enact the Act to promote access to family medicine and specialized medicine services and to amend various legislative provisions relating to assisted procreation* — would impose minimum caseloads for family physicians and would end universal funding for in vitro fertilization.

For future parents it is the part of the proposed legislation that touches upon assisted procreation that has created much dismay. Bill 20 includes a plan to suspend public health insurance coverage for in vitro fertilization. Instead the government is offering tax credits for these often-expensive treatments on a sliding scale according to family revenue. Family's with an annual overall income of \$50,000 or less will be eligible for an 80% refund of their medical fees, down to only 20% for families earning \$120,000 per year or more. Under the proposed bill, the only assisted reproductive measure that would be covered by RAMQ is artificial insemination. Because of this, many families will once again find assisted procreation unaffordable.

In addition, only women aged 18 to 42 would have access to IVF treatments. For women over 42 it becomes impossible to access these treatments even if they are willing to pay for them. Doctors who would treat older women or refer them elsewhere will be subject to fines.

And all people using donor gametes will have to pass a psychosocial evaluation.

Although the government proposes to cover gamete conservation for those who would be rendered infertile because of chemotherapy, it omits to mention that trans people undergoing gender reassignment surgery will also need gamete conservation. Ironically, laws currently in force require trans people to undergo these surgeries if they want their legal documents changed.

If passed, Bill 20 would also limit the number of embryos with which a woman can be implanted to one at a time, except for women aged 37 or older. They would be able to be implanted with two embryos.

Dr. Francois Bissonette called the decision "catastrophic," adding that Quebec's inclusion of IVF treatment under medicare has been a model for the rest of the country.

The new bill is Barrette's response to an IVF program that has been so successful that it overran its budget. In his previous job as head of the Quebec's Federation of Medical Specialists, Barrette criticized the program. He called it an "open bar" and said it was not an essential service.

In 2010 Quebec became the first province in Canada to fully fund IVF treatments.

The LGBT Family Coalition will be submitting a brief during the consultation process of this bill.

## Canada News

**December 2** - The Canadian Olympic Committee has entered into a partnership with leading LGBTQ organizations as it aims to protect and support LGBTQ athletes, youth and coaches in sport and schools.

The initiatives, announced at PrideHouse Toronto, also include updating anti-discrimination language within the COC Articles and introducing LGBTQ-specific educational resources for its national in-school program, which will be promoted by Canadian athletes.

A memorandum of understanding was also signed between the COC, the You Can Play project and Canadian charity Egale, organizations that promote LGBTQ equality in sport. It's part of a COC plan to foster a broader conversation around LGBTQ issues with athletes, coaches, corporate and media partners, and the broader sport community around the country.

"It's time to do something now," said Canadian women's hockey goalie Charline Labonte. "I think that's why it's good timing — we're ready, society is ready. It's just about raising awareness with the next generation so we don't have to hide who we are and you can feel safe in an environment, even in sports or at school."

**December 4** - The Alberta bill that would have somewhat backed students trying to form gay-straight alliances (GSAs) in schools reluctant to support them has been shelved temporarily. Alberta Premier Jim Prentice postponed third reading of Bill 10: *An Act to Amend the Alberta Bill of Rights to Protect our Children*. In addition to supporting GSAs, the bill would have added sexual orientation to the Alberta Bill of Rights and repealed Section 11.1 of the Alberta Human Rights Act, which currently allows parents to remove their children from classes that deal with sexuality, sexual orientation and religion.

"At present, there is clearly no consensus in Alberta on either the constitutionality or, indeed, the wisdom of the provincial government mandating gay-straight alliances in schools," Prentice told a press conference. "The issue was polarizing to begin with and has become even more so over the past several days."

"It's the Catholic schools that will not allow GSAs — they just won't," says Alberta Liberal MLA Laurie Blakeman.

In November 2012, at a meeting of the Alberta School Boards Association, a majority of boards rejected a proposal to encourage all districts to create safe and supportive environments for LGBT students. A majority of public and francophone districts voted in favour of the resolution, but every Catholic school district in attendance voted against it.

Kris Wells, director of programs and services at the University of Alberta's Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services, says that GSAs are a proven and effective intervention strategy and that resistance to their implementation fosters a culture of intolerance and segregation.

**January 2** - A new Canadian crisis hotline is helping transgender youth who have come out to their families and been shunned — a particularly vulnerable community with staggering rates of depression and suicide. Launched December 12 in Canada after toll-free lines opened in late November in the United States, Trans Lifeline is exclusively for transgender people and staffed entirely by transgender operators. With nearly 60 volunteers working worldwide across many time zones and 350 more signed up for training, it's the first helpline with this level of specificity.

Advocates suggest it's a crucial service for an at-risk community on the margins. Greta Martela, founder and executive director of Trans Lifeline, said "familial rejection is really common" for transgender people. Ms. Martela estimated that 30 per cent of the calls are coming from youth rejected by their families. Other callers are having trouble accessing transition-related medical care or facing workplace harassment.

**February 3** - Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird has announced that he is stepping away from political life after two decades. Baird, erstwhile member of Parliament for Ottawa West-Nepean, did not provide specific reasons for his departure, except to say that it was time for him to start a new chapter in life.

While Baird has not been publicly forthcoming about his sexual orientation, he was named as an out gay politician on a CBC radio program by a Conservative candidate running in an Ontario by-election in February 2010. Despite refraining from discussing his sexuality publicly, Baird has not been shy about fighting for gay rights, especially in the international arena.

In October 2012, he clashed publicly with Ugandan parliamentary speaker Rebecca Kadaga at a Quebec City conference, calling out her country for its proposed "Kill the Gays" bill and its poor gay rights record.

Baird also spoke out when Nigeria, which already criminalized gay sex, passed additional legislation to ban gay advocacy groups and make same-sex marriage punishable by a 14-year prison sentence. He took other Commonwealth countries to task for continuing to have laws on their books that criminalize homosexuality, saying, “We will not sit in our far-off homes and plead ignorance to crimes against those who seek the same freedoms we enjoy.”

While Baird was against a campaign to boycott the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics following Russia’s passage of a law to prohibit “gay-propaganda,” he called the country’s anti-gay laws “hateful” and “mean-spirited” and indicated that he had met several times with Russian officials and asked them — unsuccessfully — to dismantle the law.

**February 15** – An Edmonton woman, Zoe Ayouka, 20, is not a biological mother, although she was there when her daughter Khloe was born. She cut the umbilical cord and is listed as one of the parents on Khloe’s birth certificate. But now, she is locked in a legal battle that may determine if she will be part of her daughter’s life. Ayouka is preparing to launch a constitutional challenge to what she calls an outdated Alberta law that discriminates against same-sex couples and women.

Ayouka had been in a relationship with Khloe’s mother before the girl was born. A few years ago, the couple briefly broke up and the other woman started a relationship with a man and became pregnant. Shortly afterwards, the couple reconciled and decided to raise Khloe as co-parents. They stayed together until just after Khloe’s first birthday before breaking up once more. Although her relationship with Khloe’s mother ended, Ayouka continued to be a part of her daughter’s life, effectively sharing joint custody. That continued for a few months, until Khloe’s mother told Ayouka that she didn’t want her to see the little girl anymore.

Ayouka applied for guardianship, but had no luck. She is listed on the girl’s birth certificate, helps support her daughter financially and shares a last name with Khloe. Still, under Alberta law, she isn’t considered a parent because they are not biologically related. Khloe’s biological mother has also agreed to enter mediation to discuss the possibility of guardianship. Even if they come to an agreement, Ayouka thinks she will still challenge the law, arguing it violates her constitutional rights.

## **LGBT Marriage News**

**November 19** - A federal judge rules that **Montana's** voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage violates the U.S. Constitution, clearing the way for same-sex couples in the state to begin marrying immediately. Montana becomes the 35th U.S. state (plus the District of Columbia) where same-sex couples can obtain marriage licenses.

**November 20** - The U.S. Supreme Court denies the state of **South Carolina's** request for a stay on a ruling that struck down the state's ban on marriage equality, meaning same-sex couples should now be free to marry in the state.

**November 24** - The first gay wedding that was set to take place in the **Mexican** state of Baja California is stopped by a bomb threat.

Same-sex marriage is currently only permitted in the states of Mexico City and Quintana Roo – with Coahuila also having voted a bill into law in September legalizing same-sex marriage and gay adoption. However, the country has seen a harsh backlash against equal marriage, with 30,000 people taking to the streets to protest in Saltillo.

**November 25** - A federal judge overturns **Mississippi's** ban on same-sex marriage, but circuit clerks cannot immediately start to issue marriage licenses to gay or lesbian couples because the order is on hold for two weeks so the state can appeal.

**November 28** - The **Finnish** Parliament votes in support of changing the country's marriage laws to be more gender-neutral, to allow same-sex couples to marry. It is expected that the first same-sex weddings will take place in March 2017.

**December 1** - **Australian** Prime Minister Tony Abbott refuses to back a free vote for MPs on an upcoming same-sex marriage bill.

**December 7** - The Shunkoin Temple in Kyoto, **Japan** becomes the first Zen Buddhist temple offering to officiate symbolic same-sex weddings within the country. Japan's views on homosexuality and gender nonconforming individuals are complex. Despite artistic cultural exports that sometimes Japan as being a socially progressive society in regards to gender and sexual expression, the country still does not have broad legislation ensuring LGBT equality.

**December 16** - A referendum on legalising gay marriage in **Ireland** will be held in May, the Republic's deputy prime minister announces. Tánaiste and Irish Labour leader Joan Burton confirm that the cabinet in Dublin had agreed to hold the vote then. The latest opinion poll in the Irish Times found that 71% of the Republic's electorate would vote yes and allow for legal gay marriages in the state.

**December 22** - For the first time, the **Taiwanese** Parliament considers legislation to legalize same-sex marriage. The proposed amendment to the Civil Code is debated, in what is the first legislation of its kind to be debated in East Asia.

Cheng Li-chiun, a politician with the Opposition Democratic Progressive Party, drafted the bill, and describes current laws as discriminatory and unfair. The bill proposes changes to the Code, to replace the terms "man and woman" and "husband and wife" with the gender neutral "two parties" and "spouses". It proposes that terms such as "father and mother" would be replaced with "parents".

**December 31** - Same-sex couples in **Scotland** are able to start tying the knot, as the law passed in March establishing legal marriage equality goes into effect. Couples have been able to enter civil partnerships since 2005, but now they can marry thanks to the update to the laws.

Marriage equality is currently legal in England and Wales, however the Northern Ireland administration has no plans to make it law.

**December 31** - A **Saskatoon** couple is married in Osler, Sask., in the presence of family, friends and the church community. The men's wedding marks a point in history for the **Mennonite** denomination in Canada.

**January 1** - The first federal judge to find that **Florida's** ban on same-sex marriage, approved by voters in 2008 as Amendment 2, violates the U.S. Constitution, has to issue a new order clarifying the ruling that many equality activists thought didn't need clarification. U.S. District Judge Robert L. Hinkle confirms that *all* counties in Florida must issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples after his stay expires at the end of day January 5th.

**January 6** - Politicians in the **Macedonian** Assembly vote to ban same-sex marriage. The proposal comes from the conservative government and is supported by two-thirds of members of the national assembly.

**January 9** - The British embassy in the **Dominican Republic**, in its headquarters, and for the first time in the Caribbean, celebrate a marriage between same sex persons.

**January 12** - A federal judge strikes down **South Dakota's** ban on same-sex marriage, but puts her ruling on hold for an indefinite period to allow the state time to appeal.

**January 16** - Pope Francis, much lauded for shifting the **Catholic church's** tone on LGBT issues, strikes a less conciliatory note in a speech in **Manila, the Philippines**, where he says that the "family is threatened by growing efforts on the part of some to redefine the very institution of marriage, by relativism, by the culture of the ephemeral, by a lack of openness to life." These forces, he said, are attempting the "ideological colonization of the family."

**January 20** - The **U.S. Supreme Court** announces it will hear a series of marriage equality cases this term, meaning the high court could decide the fate of marriage equality nationwide. The order asks attorneys on both sides to limit their arguments to address two fundamental questions at issue in all the cases:

- 1) Does the Fourteenth Amendment require a state to license a marriage between two people of the same sex?
- 2) Does the Fourteenth Amendment require a state to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out-of-state?

Same-sex marriage is currently legal in 36 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, with litigation challenging marriage bans in all 14 states where they remain. The ruling, due by the end of June, will determine whether 14 remaining state bans will be struck down.

**January 21** - The **Chilean** House of Representatives approves a bill that would allow same-sex couples to enter into civil unions. The measure passes by an 86-23 vote margin with two abstentions.

"It is good news for the equality of rights in Chile, but it is not the best," says Parada, a gay councilman in the wealthy Santiago enclave of Providencia. "Chile today should be discussing marriage equality with good legislative work, and above all with political will. The votes are there, or at the very least they are missing very few. My worry is that this (civil unions) bill, positive in its essence, will further delay full legal equality."

**January 23** - A federal judge in **Alabama**, appointed by George W. Bush, becomes the latest to issue a strongly worded decision in favor of marriage. U.S. District Court Judge Callie V.S. Granade's ruling was not accompanied by a stay, meaning same-sex couples will be able to apply for marriage licenses in Alabama as soon as county clerks' offices open, unless the state files and is granted an emergency request for a stay.

**January 23** - Now known as the first gay spouses to be blessed by the Catholic Church in Brazil, Otávio Oliveira and Allan Rocha are united, in the Barro Duro district of Maceió, Brazil. The bishop, who is the rector of the church and a dissident within Roman Catholicism, says that he decided to give his blessing to the couple even if the Institution denied him permission. In his view, the members responsible for that decision are unprepared to confront diversity.

**January 27** - **Nigerian** authorities arrest a dozen people who were reportedly attending a same-sex wedding. *Pulse*, a Nigerian news website, reports that religious forces known as the Hisbah who enforce Sharia law in the northern part of the country that is predominantly Muslim, detain what they described as "suspected homosexuals" who were attending a same-sex wedding at a resort outside the city of Kano.

The arrests take place a year after Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan [signed a law](#) — known as the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act — that punishes those who enter into a same-sex marriage with up to 14 years in prison. The statute also prohibits anyone from officiating a gay union, bans same-sex "amorous relationships" and membership in an LGBT advocacy group.

**February 4** - Since their authorization in 2004, same sex marriages in **Quebec** have remained at the same level, between 2 % and 3 %, but marrying couples with two women have become more numerous than male couples, according to the Institut de la statistique du Québec.

**February 7** - Slovak conservatives do not turn out anywhere near the 50 percent of voters needed to approve a referendum that would have strengthened the country's ban on marriages and child adoptions by same-sex couples, voting numbers show.

Votes counted from 99.9 percent of the central European country's voting districts show turnout of just 21.4 percent, well below expectations.

The EU member does not allow gay marriages or civil unions, nor adoptions by same-sex couples. The conservative movement that backed the referendum sought to make it more difficult to change those bans through legislation. Around 90 percent of those who took part in the referendum voted "yes" to three questions: whether marriage can only be a union of a man and a woman; whether same-sex couples should be banned from adoptions; and whether children can skip classes involving education on sex and euthanasia.

Liberals, gay rights activists and some media outlets had advised voters to defeat the referendum by not taking part, a strategy that worked. The very low turnout pleased the country's gay community which sees a better chance to push for change.

**February 9** - Same-sex couples begin marrying in parts of **Alabama**, acting on the strongest signal yet from the U.S. Supreme Court in favor of gay marriage ahead of an expected ruling, but numerous state judges avoided granting marriage licenses to gay couples in apparent defiance of the high court.

The Supreme Court earlier in the day cleared the way for Alabama to become the 37th state where gay marriage is legal by refusing a request by the state's Republican attorney general to keep them on hold until it decides later this year whether laws banning gay matrimony violate the U.S. Constitution.

## International News

**December 3 (RT.com)** The **European Court of Justice** in Luxembourg has ruled that people claiming asylum in countries of the European Union should not undergo any kind of tests proving their homosexuality or detailed questioning about their private life. The authorities must refrain from "*carrying out detailed questioning as to the sexual practices of an applicant for asylum,*" the Court ruling said.

It stressed that the inability of the applicant for asylum to answer such questions is not a sufficient reason for concluding that the applicant lacks credibility.

**December 8 (straight.com)** In the wake of the Sochi Olympics, the **International Olympic Committee** has voted to include sexual orientation in its non-discrimination principle. At the 127th session of the IOC in Monaco, the IOC unveiled their *Olympic Agenda 2020*.

Recommendation 14, "Strengthen the 6th Fundamental Principle of Olympism", states that the IOC will "include non-discrimination on sexual orientation in the 6th Fundamental Principle of Olympism".

IOC members voted unanimously to approve the principle.

The Sochi Olympics became a flashpoint for concerns about Russia's antigay legislation passed by the Russian federal government in 2013.

**December 19 (Pink News)** The high court in **Germany** has ruled in favour of equality for gay couples who had children via a surrogate abroad. Germany lags behind most of Western Europe on LGBT rights, with a ban on same-sex marriage and only limited registered partnerships, no parenthood rights, and no joint adoption. All surrogacy is illegal on German soil.

Activists are celebrating a limited victory, after the court in Karlsruhe ruled in favour of two men who were not permitted to register as their son's parents. The men had a child via a surrogate in California in 2010 – but despite being registered as the child of both men in the US, upon their return to Germany authorities refused to recognize the family.

According to *Deutsche Welle*, the court ruled that Germany must respect the decision of the US in the case, as “part of a child's welfare to be able to rely on the parents to have continuous responsibility for its well-being”.

The ruling means that surrogacy will remain illegal in Germany – but same-sex couples wishing to have a child via a surrogate could do so in another country, and will still be recognized if they return to Germany.

**December 30 (*The Advocate*)** Russia's self-proclaimed LGBT mouse-devouring "homophobe cat" says he has personally caused the firings of 29 teachers for being lesbian, gay, bi or transgender. The most recent victim claimed by St. Petersburg antigay activist Timur Isayev (a.k.a. Bulatov) may have been a lesbian teacher. Isayev wrote a letter to St. Petersburg Primary School No. 565 outing the teacher and demanding she be fired. The teacher who has spent two years working with autistic and learning-disabled children as well as those with cerebral palsy was fired. Before Isayev's online smear campaign and letter-writing effort, her job seemed secure and her superiors were pleased with her work, according to multiple media reports.

Last year President Vladimir Putin signed a new so-called gay propaganda law, making the promotion of "nontraditional sexual relations" to minors illegal. St. Petersburg was the birthplace in Russia for a similar, local law that served as a laboratory for what became the law of the land nationwide. Since then, Russia's once-tolerated LGBT community has suffered violence, bullying, arrests, and now job loss.

However, the antigay activist recently became a victim of his own social media bullying. It turns out he has been wanted on charges of embezzling money from a company where he was a manager. Recently he was held by police for 18 hours in connection with some of those allegations. His arrest was particularly satisfying to the LGBT victims of his homophobic online posts.

**January 5 (*The Advocate*)** India has elected its first trans Mayor. Madhu Kinnar, an Independent candidate, won the Mayoral election of the Raigarh Municipal Corporation by 4,537 votes, besting BJP's Mahaveer Guruji.

"People have shown faith in me," Kinnar said after winning the election. "I consider this win as love and blessings of people for me. I'll put in my best efforts to accomplish their dreams."

Kinnar's election is an historic moment in the battle for global equality and the LGBT population of Raigarh, a city located roughly 300 miles west of the India-Bangladesh border where the population is primarily of Hindu faith.

**January 7 (*Pink News*)** For the first time an **Italian** court has legally recognized a child born to a gay couple. The ruling by the Turin court means the birth of the child, conceived by artificial insemination, and born in Barcelona, should be written into official records in the town where the couple live. It is being held up as a challenge to the lack of same-sex marriage in Italy.

The ruling allows the child, who was born in 2011, to have Italian citizenship, and to live in Italy with its Italian mother, who is now divorced from her Spanish wife.

Joint custody was previously awarded to the couple by a Barcelona court.

The ruling was issued in October, but was made public only recently. It overturned a previous ruling from 2013, that the birth could not be recognized in Italy. According to the court, the ruling respected the “exclusive interests of the child, who has been brought up by two women which the [Spanish] law each recognizes as its mothers.”

**January 14 (*Sputnik News*)** The **Austrian** Constitutional Court has lifted a ban on adoption by homosexual couples. According to Gerhart Holzinger, the court's head, there was "no justification for difference in treatment because of sexual orientation."

Helmut Graupner, a member of Lambda legal committee offering free legal counsel on LGBT law, said he was "overjoyed" about the lifting of the ban. The move was also hailed by lawyers of couples whose cases served as the basis for the move.

Partners in same-sex couples in Austria could adopt each other's biological children since 2013, but joint adoption of nonbiological children was not permitted.

Austria is the only state in Europe where gay marriage is not permitted, despite adoption rights for same-sex couples. However, it is possible to file for a "registered partnership," which does not come with the same marital benefits as for heterosexual couples.

**January 30 (*The Advocate*)** A **White House** petition to ban so-called LGBT conversion therapy received more than 100,000 signatures, meaning President Barack Obama's administration must formally respond to the request.

The petition is the result of international attention around the suicide of a trans teen on December 28<sup>th</sup>. By the end of the year most people had heard about the suicide of Leelah Alcorn, who ended her life by walking in front of a truck. In the weeks since her death, an Internet trail of her struggles turned up, ranging from a suicide note on her personal blog to a lengthy post on a "ask transgender" thread on Reddit.

Leelah's experience tells the story of a child who was born physically male, but knew from as early as age 4 that she was meant to be a girl.

As Leelah tells it, she came out as transgender to her devoutly Christian mother at age 14 and was met with ridicule, isolation, and punishment. Leelah's parents sent her to "Christian therapists," who, in her words, "instead of listening to my feelings would try to change me into a straight male who loved God."

While Leelah never called it by name, the treatment her parents sent her for was most certainly conversion therapy, also called reparative therapy. The religion-based treatment has been rejected and deemed dangerous by the mainstream therapeutic community, and the nation's major mental health groups—American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, and National Association of Social Workers—along with World Health Organization (WHO), have denounced this practice.

In fact, conversion therapy on minors is outright banned in California, New Jersey, and the District of Columbia. Similar bans have been considered but stalled in a number of other states, mostly, but not entirely, in the Northeast. In November 2014 the United Nations Committee Against Torture (COT) raised concerns with US officials about the lack of more widespread legislative action on conversion therapy.

Written in the wake of trans teen Leelah Alcorn's highly publicized suicide late last year, the petition proposes a federal statute dubbed "Leelah's Law" that would require all states to end efforts by therapists to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, alternately known as "conversion," "reparative," or "ex-gay" therapy.

## News from the LGBT Family Coalition

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

#### MARCH 2015:

◆ WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18 AT 7:00 P.M.

QUEBEC CITY: COURSE FOR FUTURE PARENTS – PART 3: FERTILITY CLINICS

Location: Université Laval (Québec)

(For more information please see attached flier). **Reservations necessary.**

◆ SATURDAY MARCH 28 FROM NOON

QUEBEC CITY: FAMILY ACTIVITY: SUGAR SHACK

Join us for a sugar shack party at the Érablière du Cap! 1925 Ch Lambert, St-Nicolas, QC G7A 2N4

<http://www.erabliereducap.com/>

**Reservations necessary**

**For more information or to reserve, please contact Mona Belleau [monabelleau@gmail.com](mailto:monabelleau@gmail.com)**

◆ SUNDAY MARCH 29 AT 11:30 A.M.

FAMILY ACTIVITY: L'ÉRABLIÈRE LES FEMMES COLLIN (LANAUDIÈRE).

(For more information please see attached flier). **Reservations necessary.**

#### APRIL 2015:

◆ SUNDAY APRIL 19 AT 9:30 A.M. – 11 A.M.

GET-TOGETHER FOR YOUNG PARENTS

Discussion group for parents with young children (up to about 2 years old)

Songs and stories for kids with a discussion group for parents on the topic chosen by parents who are present

Espresso for the parents and snacks for all.

Location: L'espace café at the boutique La Culotte à l'Envers, 3162 Masson, Montréal, H1Y 1Y1

**Please RSVP with Emilie [ejouvin@hotmail.com](mailto:ejouvin@hotmail.com) or on the Facebook page of the Coalition**

◆ SATURDAY APRIL 25 IN THE AFTERNOON

MONTREAL: FAMILY ACTIVITY: ROLLERDERBY (THE BEAST OF THE EAST)

Details to follow...

◆ MONDAY, APRIL 27 AT 7:00 P.M.

QUEBEC CITY: COURSE FOR FUTURE PARENTS – PART 4: UNDERSTAND AND ANSWER (OR NOT?)  
THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS

Location: Université Laval (Québec)

(For more information please see attached flier). **Reservations necessary.**

#### MAY 2015:

◆ SATURDAY MAY 2 AT 2:00 P.M.

QUEBEC CITY: FAMILY ACTIVITY: SWIMMING AND SNACK

Piscine municipale du Bourg-Royal, 640, avenue du Bourg-Royal Charlesbourg

[http://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/citoyens/loisirs\\_sports/piscines\\_interieures\\_fiche.aspx?entID=177](http://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/citoyens/loisirs_sports/piscines_interieures_fiche.aspx?entID=177)

Details to follow...

◆ **WEDNESDAY, MAY 27 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**QUEBEC CITY: COURSE FOR FUTURE PARENTS – PART 5: OUT IN THE WORLD: SURVIVING DAY CARE AND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Location: Université Laval (Québec)

(For more information please see attached flier). **Reservations necessary.**

◆ **SUNDAY MAY 31 AT 10:00 A.M.**

**MONTREAL: FAMILY ACTIVITY: CYCLING ON THE LACHINE CANAL**

Meeting place: Pont levis at the corner of la Rue St-Pierre et la Rue de la Berge du Canal near the Lachine Canal Bike path

Details to follow...

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**BULLETIN BOARD:**

◆ **La Marg'Elle** est un groupe pour femmes homosexuelles et bisexuelles affilié à la Maison des Femmes des Bois-Francis. Briser l'isolement, favoriser l'échange, l'identification et l'affirmation de soi.

Info: [margelleboisfrancis@hotmail.com](mailto:margelleboisfrancis@hotmail.com)

[www.lamargelle.spaces.live.com](http://www.lamargelle.spaces.live.com)

819-758-3384

◆ **Dorshei Emet B'nei Mitzvah Program:** Do you have children entering grade 6? We offer a meaningful program in which children discover the relevance of their Jewish heritage. Dorshei Emet is a welcoming Synagogue to individuals and families of all backgrounds, and to interfaith and LGBTQ families. **514-486-9400 (Alys Geiger)**, [www.dorshei-emet](http://www.dorshei-emet.com), or drop in anytime to Saturday morning Shabbat services, 10h00 to 12h15, and stay for a light lunch and meet some of the members!

◆ **Le Centre des femmes de Rivière-des-Prairies! 514-648-1030** - Nous sommes ouvertes aux lesbiennes! Si vous avez besoin de plus d'informations vous pouvez consulter notre site web : [www.cdfdrp.qc.ca](http://www.cdfdrp.qc.ca) ainsi que le site de notre regroupement : [www.rcentres.qc.ca/propos.html](http://www.rcentres.qc.ca/propos.html)

◆ **L'Écho des femmes de la Petite Patrie** est un centre de femmes qui offre des rencontres pour lesbiennes. Ces rencontres ont lieu les lundis soirs aux deux semaines de 19h00 à 21h30, et sont animées par une personne ressource. Ces rencontres, qui se veulent un lieu d'échange, de ressourcement et d'information, s'intéressent aux réalités et aux conditions de vie des lesbiennes. Les rencontres sont en français. Un service de halte-garderie est disponible avec réservation faite une semaine à l'avance. Le centre est situé au **6032 St-Hubert (métro Beaubien)**. **Téléphone (514)277-7445, télécopieur (514)277-1689**

**MISCELLANEOUS**

◆ **Traducteurs, rédacteurs, etc.:** Nous sommes à la recherche de bénévoles pour la traduction française de ce bulletin. Toute contribution (même à raison d'une page ou deux par mois) est la bienvenue. Si vous êtes disponible, veuillez nous contacter : [info@famillesLGBT.org](mailto:info@famillesLGBT.org)

◆ **Batshaw Youth and Family Centres** is encouraging English speaking and bilingual gay and lesbian couples, and singles, to consider becoming **foster parents**. There are babies, pre-schoolers and older children who are waiting for a foster home. For some the plan will be to help them return to their families. For other children, the plan will be to work toward **adoption**. What a remarkable feeling it is to know you have made a difference in the life of a child by providing a stable, safe and loving environment. For more information, please call, **Rena Rubin, Foster Care Recruiter, at 932-7161, local 416, or send an e-mail to rena\_rubin@ssss.gouv.qc.ca**

◆ The **Open Book Library's** collection includes over 5500 books written by LGBT authors or by authors who write about our communities. Some of these books are for children and adolescents. We are very proud that approximately half of our collection is in French. Much more information as well as online consultation of the book collection is available at our Web site [www.ccglm.org/en-b](http://www.ccglm.org/en-b). We are located at **2075 Plessis (CCGLM)** in the Village. Come visit us! Open Wednesdays and Fridays from 1-8 p.m. (514) 528-8424.

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The bulletin board is a free forum for members to communicate amongst each other. If you want to post an announcement in the next issue please send it to us at any time to [info@famillesLGBT.org](mailto:info@famillesLGBT.org) or by post to CF-LGBT, 110, rue Ste-Thérèse, bureau 405, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1E6. If you have something to advertise, sell, rent or buy...anything where money must change hands, you can place an ad in the newsletter. Ads cost 20 cents per word.

