

NEWSLETTER - VOLUME XVII - No. IV – June 2016

Planning a Family around Bill 20

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On November 10, 2015, 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 came into effect. This law, better known as Bill 20, ended the government's coverage of several services around assisted procreation, services that were previously covered with our health insurance cards. In order to reduce the negative effects on families, refundable tax credits were put in place for certain infertility treatments. Other services have remained covered by the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ), while still other services can be eligible for a variety of refundable and non-refundable tax credits (explained below). This article was written in order to untangle some of these changes.

The principle changes brought forward with this law are explained in the following table.

Bill 20 (2015, chapter 25)

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

Part II –Modifications for assisted procreation

Texts modified by Bill 20	An Act respecting clinical and research activities relating to assisted procreation (chapter A-5.01) Regulations concerning clinical and research activities relating to assisted procreation (chapter A-5.01, r. 1)	An Act respecting medical insurance (chapter A-29) Application guidelines concerning An Act respecting medical insurance (chapitre A-29, r. 5)
Principle effects on patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines regarding assisted procreation must be elaborated by the Collège des médecins du Québec (by February 10, 2016). A positive evaluation must be effected by a member of the Quebec Order of Psychologists or the Quebec Order of social workers and couple and family therapists only only in cases where there is a reason to doubt that there might be a risk for the future child's security or development (costs to be assumed by the person). IVF : only one embryo can be transferred and 2 if the woman is 37 years of age or older. Prohibited to direct a person toward a clinic outside of Quebec 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services still covered by RAMQ : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artificial insemination services (including ovarian stimulation outside of IVF). Services required to preserve fertility (for people who are deemed fertile before chemotherapy or radiotherapy, or in the case of ablation of ovaries or testicles for oncological treatments).
Type of impact	On the legal framework of medical practices	On the public coverage of medical fees.

Since November 2015, only the medical services around artificial insemination, as well as the treatments and medication around ovarian stimulation (outside of *in vitro* fertilisation – IVF) remain covered by RAMQ. Even though donor sperm samples are not specifically referenced in Bill 20, (these costs were covered by RAMQ before), according to directives from the Health Ministry, sperm is not currently covered, neither for anonymous or open-ID donors. At this point, we believe that the cost of donor sperm samples can be included in the category of medical expenses, when you file your tax report. A variety of medical tests (gynaecological, screening, fertility evaluations, etc.) carried out as part of the assisted procreation procedure, are still covered in the public system regardless of Bill 20, but their application is now under the guidelines of the *Collège des médecins*. It's very important to ask questions at your clinic: some medical services can be carried out for free (with prescription) in public or private clinics, whereas in private clinics these services *might* be billable to you (the advantage offered by private clinics is that tests can be carried out more quickly than in the public system).

As for *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF), all services around IVF must now be paid for by the patient, with the exception of IVF treatments required to preserve the fertility of people following chemo- or radiotherapy. For trans people about to undergo a medical transition, the preservation of fertility should also be covered by RAMQ, but because of administrative roadblocks, the regulations are still not in place. We've been told that this problem should be solved within the coming weeks.

Transitory measures have also been put in place for patients who began treatments before November 11th 2015. For these people, one cycle of IVF will be covered. One cycle includes ovarian stimulation, egg harvesting, and the transfer of fresh embryo(s) (or frozen embryos from previous cycles). Cryopreservation and the storage of sperm and embryos are covered until November 10th, 2018. If there is no pregnancy, the patient remains covered until all the embryos are transferred or a pregnancy occurs. As soon as the patient becomes pregnant, future IVF services are no longer covered.

Tax credits and other fiscal measures

So how can we cover the expenses of assisted procreation? Most expenses associated with a parental project are eligible for tax credits at both provincial and federal levels. The principle behind tax credits is that they can lighten your financial burden based on your revenue. Tax credits can be divided into two categories: refundable tax credits that are allocated even if you have no income tax to pay and non-refundable tax credits that will decrease or even cancel the amount of tax that you would have had to pay. Medical expenses are applicable toward non-refundable tax credits.

The cost of one cycle of *in vitro* fertilisation (egg harvest and embryo transfers) can be applied toward a *refundable* tax credit (infertility credit), but only if it's for a first child (meaning that neither person in the couple has ever been legally declared to be a parent). However, all other fees (including IVF cycles that are not admissible for refundable tax credits) are eligible for other tax credits.

For the same fees, the federal government assumes part of the load and the provincial government assumes another part. The best way to avoid errors and bad surprises, is of course to consult an accountant. If you are a common law or married couple, either spouse can claim the credits and so you should check the criteria for the particular tax credit to find out which spouse can benefit more. Certain credits are calculated according to individual salary, while others look at the combined family revenue. For example, tax credits for medical expenses are calculated based on family revenue at the provincial level, but are calculated based on individual salary for federal tax returns. So if there is a large difference in salary between spouses, the amount credited may be different depending on

which spouse makes the claim. Also it is possible to transfer certain non-refundable credits between spouses.

Other than tax credits, there are other ways to obtain financial assistance. Here are some tricks that you might want to use when you are planning a budget related to your family project: 1) Check with your doctor to see if tests and medications can be prescribed: even if certain tests and medications are not covered by RAMQ, they are tax-free if prescribed (folic acid, vitamins and ovulation predictor kits are some examples); 2) Certain healthcare establishments (CISSS) in the regions offer financial aid programs to cover some travel expenses, if the services are not locally available (regional financial aid program for user displacement). These programs have the advantage of lightening, on the short term, the financial burden of the parental project.

The following table presents a variety of fiscal measures with respect to assisted procreation (you might have to enlarge your screen to see better).

Provincial declaration	non refundable	<p>Credits for travel fees for medical care not available in your region</p> <p>① Line 378 (TP-752.0.13.1) : travel expenses and lodging for services not dispensed within 250 km from the residence. ② Rates calculated for kms and meal costs, based on federal rates.</p> <p>Credits for medical expenses</p> <p>③ Line 381 (annex B) : 12 month consecutive period ending in December of the tax year, for medical expenses greater than 3% of the net family revenu (line 275 for you and your spouse).</p>	<p>① http://www.revenuquebec.ca/en/citoyen/declaration/produire/comment/aideligne/ligne378.aspx ② http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/tpcs/ncm-tx/rtrn/cmpltng/ddctns/lns248-260/255/rts-eng.html ③ http://www.revenuquebec.ca/en/citoyen/declaration/produire/comment/aideligne/ligne381.aspx</p>
	refundable	<p>Refundable tax credits for medical expenses</p> <p>④ Line 462 point 1 (annex B) : Family revenu less than 45 375\$. Represents a % of medical fees (line 381) modulated in fonction of family revenu.</p> <p>Tax credits for infertility treatments</p> <p>⑤ Line 462 point 11 (TP-1029.8.66.2) : Fees paid for treatments, evaluation, medication, travel, lodging. Before November 11, 2015 : 50% of fees for a maximum of 10 000\$. After November 10, 2015 : % calculated according to the net family revenu (line 275 you and your spouse). Eligibility conditions for fees incurred after November 10, 2015. ⑥ Doctors certificate asserting treatment (form TP-1029.8.66.2M) ⑦ Advanced payment (Form TP-1029.8.66.2A). Fees can be claimed during the current year if bills are presented.</p>	<p>④ http://www.revenuquebec.ca/en/citoyen/declaration/produire/comment/aideligne/remb-solde/ligne462/point01.aspx ⑤ http://www.revenuquebec.ca/en/citoyen/declaration/produire/comment/aideligne/remb-solde/ligne462/point11.aspx ⑥ http://www.revenuquebec.ca/en/sepf/formulaires/tp/tp-1029_8_66_2M.aspx ⑦ http://www.revenuquebec.ca/en/sepf/formulaires/tp/tp-1029_8_66_2A.aspx</p>
Federal declaration	non refundable	<p>Amount for common-law or married spouse</p> <p>⑧ Line 303 (annex 5) : If your spouse's revenue is less than 11 327\$. The calculation corresponds to the difference between the base fee and the revenu of your spouse.</p> <p>Credits for medical expenses</p> <p>⑨ Line 330 to 332 Includes fees for IVF, and travel expenses (starting from 40 km)</p>	<p>⑧ http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/tpcs/ncm-tx/rtrn/cmpltng/ddctns/lns300-350/303/menueng.html http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pbg/tf/5000-s5/ ⑨ http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/tpcs/ncm-tx/rtrn/cmpltng/ddctns/lns300-350/330-331/menu-eng.html</p>

To conclude, this article is an attempt to respond to the questions that some of our members have posed over the past few months on Bill 20, in terms of its application and how it can effect the financial planning of a parental project. There are still some unknowns around the application of this law and some of the information in this article may be subject to change. So use this article as a reference and please let us know if you discover other elements that might be useful to the community.

Interested in writing for our newsletter? Send your articles at any time to info@famillesLGBT.org or by post to CF-LGBT, 3155, rue Hochelaga, bureau 201, Montreal, Quebec, H1W 1G4

News Briefs

Quebec News

March 7 - Montreal will be home of the first ever Canada Pride, presented in collaboration with the city's 375th anniversary in 2017. The event will be held between Aug. 11th and 20th, 2017 and hopes to attract up to 800,000 visitors to the city.

Montreal Pride director of communications Steven Ross said the local organization pitched the idea of a national Pride festival during a meeting with approximately 80 other Canadian Pride organizations last year. "There's already a World Pride organization, a Euro Pride," said Ross. "With Canada being a leader in LGBT rights, why not also have a Canada Pride?"

The 10-day LGBTQ+ festival will include sporting events, a three-day conference on the advancement of Canadian and International LGBT rights, outdoor concerts and, of course, the annual Pride Parade. The festival is expected to take place in a different city every four years.

April 15 – Montreal-based troupe Cirque du Soleil has cancelled performances in three North Carolina cities in protest over a new law banning anti-discrimination protections for gay and transgender people. The entertainers join Bruce Springsteen, Ringo Starr and others who have cancelled shows in the state after Gov. Pat McCrory signed HB2 into law. Transgender people are prohibited from using bathrooms designated for genders that don't match the genders on their birth certificates, under the new law. The measure also prevents local governments from passing anti-discrimination protections for LGBT individuals.

The growing backlash against the law also includes companies such as PayPal, which announced it was nixing plans to open a facility in Charlotte.

"Cirque du Soleil believes in equality for all. It is a principle that guides us with both our employees and our customers. We behave as change agents to reach our ultimate goal of making a better world with our actions and our productions," reads a statement from the company. "We sincerely hope that the customers that have purchased tickets for our performances in North Carolina will understand our motivation and we look forward to performing in North Carolina when this issue is addressed."

May 3 - Police are seeking a male suspect in relation to a suspicious fire that targeted the *Centre métropolitain de chirurgie* in the Ahuntsic-Cartierville borough in Montreal, the only medical clinic in Canada that offers gender reassignment surgery.

Firefighters were alerted to a fire at the clinic at 8:44 p.m. About 20 firefighters rushed to the scene, but the fire was extinguished by an automatic sprinkler system. The fire was in an operating room, according to Montreal Fire Prevention Service spokesperson Mélanie Drouin. There were a few staff members and patients in the building at the time but they got out before firefighters arrived.

Drouin said damages are estimated by fire department officials at about \$700,000. Medical equipment was damaged by water and smoke, she said.

The clinic provides a variety of plastic surgeries and body surgeries, including breast augmentation or reduction, facelifts, liposuction and gender reassignment surgery (GRS).

The news spread quickly among members of the transgender community in Montreal and across Canada. Some are concerned that the fire will exacerbate the already lengthy waiting periods for gender reassignment surgery at the clinic. There is also speculation as to whether the clinic was targeted because it offers GRS.

May 9 - Members of Montreal's gay and lesbian community turned out to support a couple that was the victim of a brutal attack a few days earlier in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Hundreds took part in a public kiss-in to show the men, who were victims of homophobia, that they are not alone.

A week earlier the couple, who only wanted to be referred to by their first names Simon and Sebastien, was physically attacked on their way to a bar in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. A group also yelled homophobic slurs at the pair.

The public kiss-in event was organized by the *Conseil québécois LGBT* and *Gai Écoute* to denounce homophobia.

"Often people think that we are a progressive society, often people think there's no more homophobia, but that's not the case. It's important to talk about it, it's important to reaffirm the right of everyone to show affection in public without being afraid of being a target of homophobic slurs or violence," said Maryse Bezaire of *Gai Écoute*.

Gai Écoute claims it has received more than 1000 reports of homophobic acts in the past 18 months in Montreal.

May 12 - A bill tabled in the National Assembly could make it possible for minors to legally change their sex. The province currently allows minors to change their name, but if they want to change their sex they have to wait until they're 18 to do so.

Québec Solidaire MNA Manon Massé hopes to change that with a new bill to support transgender youth who make the transition to a new identity. "We already know it's a long process. Children who are transgender – it's not a decision they made yesterday....It's time to rectify the situation."

Quebec wouldn't be the first province to move forward with this kind of legislation. In British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, it is possible for minors to change their sex. The proposed bill aims to tackle discrimination.

Canada News

February 28 - The federal Liberal government has announced that it intends to review the cases of hundreds of gay men who were convicted of sexual offences prior to the legalization of homosexual acts in 1969. Specifically, it plans to examine "cases of individuals who were convicted of 'gross indecency' and 'buggery' in past years, in order to determine if a pardon is warranted."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also "intends to recommend that a pardon under the authority of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy be granted posthumously" to Everett George Klippert, the only Canadian to be declared a dangerous sexual offender simply because he was gay.

Everett George Klippert, who was born in 1926, was convicted of 18 counts of gross indecency by a Calgary court in 1960, and spent four years in prison after pleading guilty to having consensual sex short of intercourse with other men. (Intercourse, or "buggery," was a separate offence.) After a second conviction in 1965 in Hay River, NWT, on four additional counts of gross indecency, and a sentence of a further three years, the Crown attorney in Yellowknife applied to have him designated a dangerous sexual offender.

Two psychiatrists who examined Mr. Klippert said that he was not a pedophile or in any way inclined to violence – they found him "intelligent," "courteous" and "sensitive" – but concluded he was likely to once again seek out sex with men upon his release. For that reason, Justice John Sissons went ahead and designated Mr. Klippert a dangerous sexual offender, subject to life imprisonment.

The Supreme Court of Canada upheld the designation in a 3-to-2 ruling in 1967, causing a furor in Parliament and the press. A month later, then-justice minister Pierre Trudeau introduced legislation that, among other provisions, decriminalized consensual homosexual acts between two adult men. "There's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation," he told reporters.

"Everett Klippert's case was instrumental in the government's decision to decriminalize homosexual acts between consenting adults," Cameron Ahmad, press secretary to the Prime Minister, said in a statement.

March 11 - A Toronto resident's first-hand account of his humiliating experience at a local fertility clinic has shed light on the health-care barriers transgender people face when they're trying to start a family. Alex Abramovich wrote in *The Advocate* about his experience as a transgender man undergoing in-vitro fertilization and having his eggs removed.

The story, [Trans Men Need the Competent Fertility Care I Never Got](#), quickly became one of the international LGBT publication's most-shared stories. It has been shared more than 21,000 times.

"By sharing my story, my hope was that I could help another trans person so no other trans person has to feel as alone going through this as I did."

April 15 - Three Ontario families have launched lawsuits against a U.S.-based sperm bank and its Canadian distributor, alleging they were misled about their sperm donor's medical and social history, which included a criminal record and significant mental illness.

The families – all of whom used the same donor – have brought three separate suits against Georgia-based Xytex Corporation and Ontario-based Outreach Health Services over the sperm of Donor 9623, who they allege was promoted as a highly educated, healthy and popular donor. Statements of claim filed in a Newmarket, Ont., court allege the donor had in fact been diagnosed with schizophrenia and narcissistic personality disorder, had spent time behind bars for a residential burglary and did not have the degrees he claimed to obtain.

The documents allege Xytex failed to properly investigate the donor's education claims and his medical history and misrepresented him to customers, including suggesting he had the IQ level of a genius.

The donor is believed to have fathered at least 36 children, the lawsuits allege. The families are each seeking millions in damages.

April 27— The British Columbia Supreme Court has stepped in to allow an 11-year-old child diagnosed with gender dysphoria to be represented in a parental dispute over medical treatment. The child, identified only as J.K. in court documents, was born female and is transitioning to become male, a treatment that includes taking a puberty-blocking drug called Lupron.

J.K. and his mother both asked the court to appoint a litigation guardian to represent the child after J.K.'s father launched legal action to try to stop the Lupron treatment. Court documents show J.K.'s mother has been supportive of his transition but the father argues that the treatment was undertaken without his consent and the child has not been adequately assessed by experts.

Justice Ronald Skolrood ruled in a written decision that J.K. should be represented by a litigation guardian who can help him formulate views to present in the next court battle over his treatment. In the meantime, Skolrood denied a request from J.K.'s mother to give her sole authority to make decisions on the child's medical, social, gender, education and legal matters.

April 28 – Two transgender girls who have fought discrimination and bullying say a bill to include gender identity and expression in British Columbia's Human Rights Code will make the province a more inclusive and accepting

place. Grade 7 students Tru Wilson and Harriette Cunningham, both 13 years old, were at the legislature in Victoria, B.C., when the bill was introduced.

“This legislation is important because it would really help educate the public on the issue, and I think it would teach them being trans isn’t an issue and it’s not a deformity,” Cunningham said.

Attorney General Suzanne Anton indicated the government will not be supporting this fourth attempt to have the bill adopted. “Transgender people are absolutely protected under our human rights code,” said Anton. “Everybody is equal before the law in B.C.”

The province’s Humans Rights Code states its purpose is “to foster a society in British Columbia in which there are no impediments to full and free participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of British Columbia.”

Premier Christy Clark acknowledged transgender people experience more discrimination in their lives than most, but also indicated her government was not about to change the human rights code.

May 17 - On the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia & Transphobia, the federal government has announced the tabling of Bill C-16 – A historic bill that would bring sweeping legal protection to Canadians by classifying discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender express as a hate crime. The passing of such a bill would not only legally protect transgender and gender diverse people in Canada from the disproportionate levels of hate and violence that they currently experience, but also empower law enforcement agencies to better track hate crimes explicitly levelled towards transgender individuals.

This will be the seventh version of the bill to be introduced in the House of Commons, exactly 11 years to the day since the introduction of the first bill on May 17, 2005 by Bill Siksay.

LGBT Marriage News

February 25 - Italy's Senate votes to grant legal recognition to civil unions, as the last holdout in Western Europe takes a compromise step to give some rights to gay couples after a bitter, years-long battle.

Premier Matteo Renzi describes the passage of the bill as "historic." But gay and lesbian groups denounce the legislation as a betrayal because Renzi's Democratic Party sacrificed a provision to allow gay adoption in order to ensure passage.

The legislation, which must still pass the lower Chamber of Deputies, is nevertheless significant for an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country where the Vatican holds sway in politics and society, although Pope Francis has remained conspicuously silent as debate raged in recent months.

February 29 - Voters in **Switzerland** reject a referendum initiative that would have changed the constitution and banned same-sex couples from marriage. The country, which regularly puts key legislation before the electorate, votes by 50.8% to 49.2%, to reject the proposal – put forward by the Christian Democratic People’s Party.

Although marriage equality has yet to arrive in the Alpine nation, the change would have meant hopes of it coming in the future would have been greatly diminished. Registered partnerships have been recognized in Switzerland since 2007.

March 8 - A federal judge rules that the U.S. Supreme Court’s marriage equality decision doesn’t apply in **Puerto Rico**, as it’s a territory and not a state.

The judge's ruling will likely be appealed. His decision does lay out ways that he believes Puerto Rico can establish marriage equality: further action by the U.S. Supreme Court or the Puerto Rico Supreme Court; congressional action changing Puerto Rico's status from an unincorporated territory to an incorporated one; or repeal of the marriage ban by Puerto Rico's legislators.

March 10 – Same-sex marriages represent 4.4% of all marriages celebrated in **France** in 2014, slightly increasing the total number of same-sex marriages with respect to the proceeding year. The study was carried out by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies. Over 10,000 same sex marriages were carried out in 2014. 46% of same sex marriages were lesbian couples.

April 7 - Colombia's Constitutional Court votes in favour of legal marriage equality, in a 6-3 decision. The ruling takes effect immediately, meaning same-sex couples can now marry throughout the South American nation.

The decision was not wholly unexpected, as the court had long been considering a case filed by four same-sex couples that argued that the state was required to provide equal marriage rights for same-sex couples.

In 2011, the Constitutional Court ordered the national congress to create a law establishing marriage equality by June 20, 2013. Lawmakers failed to meet this deadline, which means same-sex couples in Colombia have technically been able to legally recognize their relationships since 2013, though to do so couples were required to seek out a notary or judge to formally solemnize their commitment. Because there was no definitive policy regulating these unions, many same-sex couples were turned away by judges and notaries. The current decision determines that no judge or notary can legally refuse to marry a same-sex couple.

Colombia becomes only the fourth Latin American nation to fully embrace marriage equality. Same-sex couples have been able to wed in Argentina since 2010, and in Brazil and Uruguay since 2013. Several Mexican states have embraced marriage equality — beginning with Mexico City in 2010 — and that country's high court has ruled those marriages must be recognized nationwide.

April 8 - The 15th anniversary of the first legal same-sex marriage in Amsterdam is celebrated and the capital celebrates by painting the I Amsterdam sign in rainbow colors.

On April 1st, 2001 then mayor Job Cohen married three gay couples and a lesbian couple. The first legal same-sex marriages not only in the **Netherlands**, but also in the world. Other countries followed the Netherlands' example and same-sex marriage is now also legal in, among others, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, South Africa, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Iceland, Argentina and the United States.

The unveiling happens outside Amsterdam's city hall. Attendees include former parliamentarian Coos Huijsen, the first openly gay parliamentarian in the world.

April 11 - Norway's biggest church votes to allow same-sex marriage. The Lutheran Church, which has around 74% of Norwegians as members, votes at its annual conference to back and bless same-sex unions. 88 delegates out of 115 voted to change the rules. Norway legalized same-sex marriage in 2009.

April 13 - A court in **China** rejects a landmark case by two men who had sought permission to get legally married, one of the plaintiffs says, a decision that shines the light on gay rights in the world's most populous nation.

While homosexuality is not illegal in China, and large cities have thriving gay scenes, same-sex marriage is not legal, and same-sex couples have no legal protections.

In what activists hailed as a step forward for gay rights, Sun Wenlin, 26, had lodged the suit with a court in the southern Chinese city of Changsha against a civil affairs bureau that denied him the right to marry. But after a short hearing, the court turned down his request to marry.

April 26 - The **Isle of Man** approves same-sex marriage – meaning Northern Ireland is set to be the last place in the Isles without marriage equality. As a crown dependency, the Isle of Man maintains autonomy from the UK on issues including marriage. It was the last part of these islands to legalise homosexuality in 1992 – but the vote confirms it won't be the last to introduce same-sex marriage.

International News

February 29 (*The Advocate*) About 200 demonstrators protested outside government buildings in Jerusalem to denounce the veto of five bills aimed at establishing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights in **Israel**. The proposed laws were introduced last August in memory of a 16-year-old girl who died after being stabbed along with five other people at the Jerusalem Pride parade in July.

They were vetoed, just one day after Israel's first LGBT Rights Day, a move opposition party leaders and community activists at the protest criticized as hypocritical.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a rare appearance in the legislature, declaring he wanted to deliver just "one sentence to the members of the LGBT community: 'Every man was created in the image of God.' That is the idea brought by our nation to mankind thousands of years ago, and it is the principle that must guide our national lives today." But the next day, those five pro-LGBT bills introduced by Netanyahu's political opponents — including government recognition of civil unions, a ban on so-called ex-gay or conversion therapy of minors, and a bill to require medical students to study sexual orientation — were rejected by the prime minister's right-wing coalition.

March 3 (*IPress.com*) Actress **Ellen Page** is heading out on a world tour as the star of a documentary travel series. The show, which debuted in **America** on the Viceland cable network, explores Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) cultures around the globe. **Gaycation** features the Juno star and her best friend, Ian Daniel, travelling to far flung corners of the globe to document LGBT communities and sample the nightlife. The show is billed as a light-hearted travel programme, which also documents "homophobia and hope".

Page said, "I guess I first had the idea because I love travel shows. I think when you're a member of the LGBT community and you're travelling, you have things to be mindful of, particularly if you're going to specific places where it might not be the easiest thing to be a member of the gay community."

March 4 (*The Guardian*) The **Chinese** government has banned all depictions of gay people on television, as part of a cultural crackdown on "vulgar, immoral and unhealthy content". Chinese censors have released new regulations for content that "exaggerates the dark side of society" and now deem homosexuality, extramarital affairs, one-night stands and underage relationships as illegal on screen.

The Chinese government pulled a popular drama, 'Addicted', from being streamed on Chinese websites as it follows two men in gay relationships, causing uproar among the show's millions of viewers. The government said the show contravened the new guidelines, which state that "No television drama shall show abnormal sexual relationships and behaviours, such as incest, same-sex relationships, sexual perversion, sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual violence, and so on."

The new regulations have angered gay activists in China, who have fought for two decades to overcome the substantial stigma in their country against homosexuality. It was only decriminalised in 1997 and was only taken off the official list of mental illnesses in 2001.

March 7 (*CNSNews.com/ Reuters*) – At a time when the United Nations is promoting its "Free & Equal" campaign for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality, the world's biggest Islamic country is pushing back, with politicians speaking out on the issue and a government ministry drafting a law prohibiting online content viewed as promoting homosexuality. **Indonesia's** communications and information ministry has set up a panel to pursue the matter. Earlier, a key parliamentary commission dealing with defense, foreign

affairs and information called on the ministry to create a law to stop “LGBT propaganda.” The commission’s chairman, Mahfudz Siddiq, said that “LGBT issues can damage national security, identity, culture and the faith of Indonesians.”

The controversy erupted when the country’s higher education minister, Muhammad Nasir, called in January for LGBT people to be barred from universities because “there are standards of values and morals to uphold.” Indonesia’s highest Muslim religious body, the Ulama Council, then called for “LGBT activities” to be prohibited by law.

Later in February Nahdlatul Ulama, the biggest Muslim organization in Indonesia – reported to have as many as 40 million members – issued a statement calling non-heterosexual orientation incompatible with human nature. It called on lawmakers to pass a law criminalizing homosexuality, and providing for “rehabilitation for every person who has LGBT characteristics.”

Sexual and gender minorities in Indonesia have historically lived amid a tense calm, with tolerance and pluralism protecting them from violence and a sense that discretion brought safety, said Kyle Knight, LGBT rights researcher for New York-based Human Rights Watch. “What we’re seeing now may be unprecedented in terms of its fever pitch,” Knight wrote in an email from Indonesia, where he is documenting human rights abuses related to the rise in anti-LGBT rhetoric. “This time around, government officials have even stoked the cacophony of hatred.”

Indonesian President Joko Widodo, a reformist whose election in 2014 was warmly welcomed by the U.S. government, has not spoken out publicly in the debate.

With a population of 256 million, Indonesia is the world’s largest Muslim-majority country and the fourth most populous overall (after China, India and the United States).

March 7 (*The Guardian*) In a victory for LGBT rights groups, the eight justices of the Supreme Court unanimously overruled an **Alabama** court that balked at recognizing a same-sex adoption. The decision reverses the lower court’s ruling that the adoption rights granted to a lesbian couple in Georgia had no validity in Alabama. The two women, identified only by their initials of EL and VL, were raising three biological children EL conceived while they were a couple until they separated in 2011. A Georgia court had given parental rights during that time to VL, who has no biological relationship to the children. But when she moved to Alabama and sought visitation rights, her former partner challenged her parental rights and won in front of the state supreme court.

The case had been closely watched by LGBT advocates as a key test of same-sex adoption rights. Across the country, states have uneven protections for same-sex couples raising children. More than half of states allow both partners in a same-sex couple to obtain parental rights.

Nationwide, more than 16,000 same-sex couples are raising some 22,000 adopted children.

March 15 (*Buzzfeed*) President Barack Obama has appointed Raffi Freedman-Gurspan as the **White House’s** primary LGBT liaison, making her the first transgender person in the role.

LGBT leaders applauded the announcement. “Raffi is a great choice,” said Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality. “President Obama has said he wants his administration to look like America, and they have moved to include trans Americans. Raffi’s skills and personality make her the exact right person for this important job.”

In her new role — as the Outreach & Recruitment Director for Presidential Personnel and Associate Director for Public Engagement — Freedman-Gurspan becomes the White House’s lead point of contact for LGBT groups on all issues.

March 15 (HRC.org) Following a vote by the **Kentucky Senate** to advance **SB 180**, the statewide LGBT advocacy organization, called on the Kentucky *House* to pull back from SB 180, the shameful anti-LGBT bill that would put LGBT people at risk for discrimination.

SB 180 would undermine state and local protections against discrimination for a host of minority communities in Kentucky by allowing businesses that provide custom goods and services to discriminate and refuse service for any reason. In addition to putting LGBT people at risk for discrimination, under SB 180, single mothers, interfaith couples, interracial couples are all at risk. A bakery could refuse to provide a birthday cake to an African-American, or a photography studio could refuse photographs for a Muslim family under this bill.

“Freedom of religion is a basic bedrock foundation of our government, which is exactly why it is already protected by the First Amendment. SB 180 wouldn’t protect our freedom, but instead will put all Kentuckians at risk for discrimination,” said HRC Legal Director Sarah Warbelow.

The attacks on fairness and equality in Kentucky are part of an onslaught of anti-LGBT bills being pushed in 2016 by anti-equality activists around the country. HRC is currently tracking nearly 200 anti-LGBT bills in 32 states. For more information, visit: www.hrc.org/2016legislature.

March 17 (Huffington Post) A new survey has found that when it comes to sexuality and gender, teens report occupying a wider spectrum than ever before. The **New York**-based J. Walter Thompson Innovation Group found that 48 percent of “Generation Z,” defined as those between the ages of 13 and 20, identified themselves as “exclusively heterosexual.” This represents a much smaller proportion than the 65 percent of millennials (those between the ages of 21 and 34) who identified as such, the poll revealed.

The results are consistent with another recent study on teen sexuality. Last year, YouGov UK found that 49 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds identified themselves as “something other than 100 percent heterosexual.”

March 19 (Gay Star News) Some 130 doctors in **France** admitted to having helped same-sex couples conceive children in protest of local laws, which ban same-sex couples from doing so.

An open letter by doctors, which was published in the French daily *Le Monde*, which reads, ‘We doctors, biologists, own up to having helped, accompanied gay couples or single women in their efforts to have children, which is not possible for them in France.’

The group, which is headed by gynaecologist René Frydman who is well known for creating France’s first ‘test-tube baby’, said they support a change in the law to allow same-sex couples to receive IVF treatment.

The extension of medically assisted procreation to same-sex couples was originally included in France’s 2013 marriage equality bill but was dropped due to overwhelming strong opposition.

March 23 (The Advocate) In the span of a single day, **North Carolina** lawmakers introduced and passed a bill (**HB 2**) through two houses and got it signed by the governor. That seemingly urgent bill strikes down all existing LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination ordinances across the state. North Carolina lawmakers voted overwhelmingly during a special legislative session that was called in response to Charlotte, N.C. passing a transgender-inclusive non-discrimination ordinance. “I signed the legislation to stop the breach of basic privacy and etiquette, ensure privacy in bathrooms and locker rooms,” Gov. Pat McCrory said on Twitter.

However, as Democratic state Sen. Jeff Jackson noted on Facebook, HB 2 reaches far beyond Charlotte, and would effectively strike down all LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination ordinances enacted by localities throughout the state.

North Carolina’s Democratic attorney general, Roy Cooper said, “Discrimination is wrong, period,” Cooper continued. “That North Carolina is making discrimination part of the law is shameful. It will not only cause real harm to families, but to our economy as well. We have seen how this played out when Indiana tried it —

businesses left the state, or thought twice about bringing in new jobs, and millions of dollars in revenue was lost.”

March 28 (*The Advocate*) Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal announced a veto of an antigay "religious freedom" bill (**HB 757**) that would have allowed non-profits and even some businesses to discriminate against LGBT customers if serving them conflicted with their religious beliefs.

Human Rights Campaign president Chad Griffin recently called on entertainment companies to boycott Georgia if HB 757 became law. Many responded by threatening a boycott and calling on Deal to veto the bill, including Marriot International, IBM, Verizon, Walt Disney Inc., Marvel, AMC, Viacom, 21st Century Fox, Time Warner, Starz, the Weinstein Co., Lionsgate, and numerous celebrities, showrunners, and executives. Sports governing bodies including the NBA, NFL and the NCAA, who were all scheduled to have flagship events in the state, also joined forces in opposing the bill. The National Football League had even said that if it became law, Atlanta's chance of hosting a Super Bowl would be jeopardized.

March 31 (*Huffington Post*) A federal judge ruled that **Mississippi's** ban on same-sex couples adopting children is unconstitutional, making gay adoption legal in all 50 states. U.S. District Judge Daniel Jordan issued a preliminary injunction against the ban, citing the Supreme Court's decision legalizing same-sex marriage nationwide last summer. The injunction blocks Mississippi from enforcing its 16-year-old anti-gay adoption law.

The Human Rights Campaign's Mississippi state director Rob Hill also praised the ruling. "This welcome decision affirms that qualified same-sex couples in Mississippi seeking to become adoptive or foster parents are entitled to equal treatment under the law, and commits to the well-being of children in our state who need loving homes," he said in a statement. "Judge Jordan has repudiated reprehensible efforts by our elected leaders to deny legal rights to our families. They are on the wrong side of history, and today's decision confirms, yet again, that they are also on the wrong side of the law."

April 5 (*Reuters*) - Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant has signed a far-reaching law (**HB1523**) allowing people with religious objections to deny wedding services to same-sex couples. It also clears the way for employers to cite religion in determining workplace policies on dress code, grooming and bathroom and locker access.

Bryant, a Republican, said in a statement that he signed the law "to protect sincerely held religious beliefs and moral convictions of individuals, organizations and private associations from discriminatory action by state government."

April 26 (*The Guardian*) A same-sex couple have won a legal battle in **Thailand** against the surrogate mother who gave birth to their daughter but later refused to sign the paperwork to allow the baby to leave the country when she found out they were gay. The central juvenile and family court ruled in favour of Gordon Lake, an American and the biological father of 15-month-old Carmen, and his Spanish husband, Manuel Santos, both 41.

The egg came from an anonymous donor and the surrogate, Patidta Kusolsang, is not biologically related to the baby. She initially handed Carmen to Lake at the hospital but later claimed she thought she would be helping a "legitimate" couple and demanded the baby back.

Since Carmen's birth in January last year, Lake has lived in a secret location in Thailand, afraid she would be taken away after the surrogate mother opened legal proceedings. Lake's husband and their two-year-old son, Álvaro, a surrogate baby born in India, moved back to Spain.

Although Thailand does not recognize same-sex marriage, the couple chose the Southeast Asian country for its high-quality medical facilities and established surrogacy industry for gay couples. However, a series of high-profile scandals – including one case involving a 24-year-old Japanese businessman who had fathered 16 children, mostly through Thai surrogates – led to a ban on the industry. Further criticism came after a surrogate

baby with Down's syndrome was left with the Thai surrogate mother even as his parents took his twin sister back to Australia.

Carmen was conceived before the commercial surrogacy ban was implemented, so was exempt from the ruling.

April 27 (GLAAD) Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam signed a bill (**HB1840**) allowing medical professionals to refuse mental health services to LGBT patients. This follows weeks of outreach and statements urging him to veto by GLAAD, LGBT organizations, business leaders, and leaders of the country music industry.

"Denying anyone vital mental health services simply because they're LGBT isn't just outrageous, it's outright dangerous," said GLAAD President & CEO Sarah Kate Ellis. The legislation is expected make it especially difficult for LGBT people in rural areas of Tennessee to obtain mental health services.

The American Counselling Association said that HB 1840 could jeopardize federal health care funding for Tennessee, since it conflicts with a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services mandate that says states lack the authority to deny health care to patients based on religion, race, sexual orientation, and other protected characteristics.

April 28 (AP) -The killing of two gay rights activists in the **Bangladeshi** capital has driven the country's already secretive and small gay community underground, wondering if they can trust a government that considers their status to be criminal, rights groups said.

One of the victims, Xulhaz Mannan, was one of the most prominent gays in Bangladesh as a leading activist and editor of the *Roopbaan*, a LGBT rights magazine he launched in 2014. Bangladesh outlaws homosexual relations, punishable by up to life in prison.

Mannan had openly described how difficult it is to be gay in Bangladesh. In a 2014 blog entry, he called Bangladesh "a country where the predominant religions identify a same sex lover as a sinner, the law of the land as a criminal; social norms as a pervert; culture as imported — how should life be for LGBTs in Bangladesh?"

April 30 (Pink News) In a groundbreaking case a lesbian couple in **Italy** have won the right to adopt each other's children. Efforts to legalise same-sex civil unions recently saw adoption rights stripped out, in an effort to appease Catholic politicians. Rome's juvenile court made the ruling that Marilena Grassadonia could adopt her wife's twin sons and her partner could adopt her son. Grassadonia is the president of the Rainbow Families Association, and has campaigned on a number of LGBT issues.

"On a personal level, it's a huge satisfaction, but I cannot be fully happy when I think that our (Rainbow) families depend on individual decisions" through courts, instead of being protected by law, said Grassadonia.

May 10 (Huffington Post) The predominantly Catholic **Philippines**, which had no openly LGBT national politicians, has reached a milestone with Geraldine Roman becoming the first transgender woman to be elected to public office. The 49-year-old, who's a member of the Liberal Party, won the lower house seat for Bataan province and will be serving a three-year-term in the house of representatives. Roman's mother previously held the seat.

Roman says she will attempt to abolish laws that are anti-LGBT.

May 12 (Globe and Mail) The U.S. Justice Department has sued **North Carolina** to get it to abandon **HB 2**, a law that restricts use of public restrooms, further escalating a fight over the rights of transgender Americans. Hours earlier, North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory and the state's secretary of public safety had sued the agency for declaring the law a civil rights violation, accusing it of "baseless and blatant overreach."

News from the LGBT Family Coalition
UPCOMING MEETINGS

JUNE 2016:

◆ **TUESDAY JUNE 7TH STARTING AT 7 P.M.**
ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY (MONTRÉAL)

Our annual general assembly, followed by a celebratory cocktail. **See attached flier.**

◆ **SUNDAY JUNE 12TH STARTING AT 10 A.M.**
QUEBEC CITY: LABYRINTHE AVENTURE INUKSHUK

<http://www.aventureinukshuk.qc.ca/activites/labyrinthe>

Reservations necessary. Contact Mona Belleau: monabelleau@gmail.com

◆ **THURSDAY JUNE 30TH TO SUNDAY JULY 3RD**
CAMPING AT AUX BERGES DU LAC CASTOR

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

Reservations necessary. There are still 2 camping sites available. Contact us as soon as possible if you're interested: info@famillesLGBT.org

JULY 2016:

◆ **THURSDAY JUNE 30TH TO SUNDAY JULY 3RD**
CAMPING AT AUX BERGES DU LAC CASTOR

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

There are still 2 camping sites available. Contact us as soon as possible if you're interested: info@famillesLGBT.org

AUGUST 2016 – PRIDE CELEBRATIONS

◆ **SATURDAY AUGUST 13TH and SUNDAY AUGUST 14TH**
COMMUNITY DAY AND PRIDE PARADE: MONTREAL

N.B.: The Pride Parade and Community Day have been scheduled for the weekend of August 13th and 14th. Please reserve these dates in your calendar. We will give you an update on this in the weeks to come!

◆ **SATURDAY AUGUST 27TH**
COMMUNITY DAY AND PRIDE PARADE: SHERBROOKE

N.B.: The Pride Parade and Community Day have been scheduled for August 27th. Please reserve this date in your calendars. We will give you an update on this in the weeks to come!

◆ **SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 3RD**
PRIDE COMMUNITY DAY: QUEBEC CITY

N.B.: The Community Day has been scheduled for September 3rd. Please reserve this date in your calendars. We will give you an update on this in the weeks to come!

BULLETIN BOARD:

♦ **Le Centre des femmes du Verdun** offre l'écoute individuelle pour lesbiennes les mercredis de 9 h – 12 h et une série d'ateliers sur les relations lesbiennes saines. Pour plus d'information : 514-767-0384 ou site Web : www.centredesfemmesdeverdun.org

♦ **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**, 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.cdfrdp.qc.ca ainsi que le site de notre regroupement : 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

♦ **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. 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.

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 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.

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