

For more information on how the ACLU is working in the courts, at the legislature, and in your community visit:
www.aclu.org/lgbt-rights

GET BUSY. GET EQUAL.

The ACLU provides a comprehensive toolkit to help you organize to create lasting change and real equality.
Find it at: gbge.aclu.org



**AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
of ARIZONA**

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Lesbian Gay Bisexual
Transgender Project

GET BUSY. GET EQUAL.

Organizing for
Equality



Since the first marriage lawsuit for same-sex couples in 1972, the ACLU has been at the forefront of both legal and public education efforts to secure marriage for same-sex couples and win legal recognition for LGBT relationships.

Relationships

The ACLU is committed to defending the rights of LGBT parents, not only in custody and visitation arrangements but also by challenging discriminatory laws that restrict the rights of LGBT people to parent.

Parenting

We're working to make public schools safe and bias-free for LGBT students, defending their free speech in school, and working to help students start gay-straight alliance clubs.

Youth & Students

The ACLU works to include gender identity in nondiscrimination laws and brings impact lawsuits to change biased laws against transgender people in employment, schools and public accommodations.

Transgender

School officials at Yuma High School blocked students' efforts to organize a Gay-Straight Alliance for years. When junior Douglas Sanchez and his classmates approached school officials, they were met with continuous delays and extra requirements not imposed on other clubs.



Years of unsuccessful attempts to gain recognition for a gay-straight alliance club (GSA) at Yuma High School culminated in an ACLU demand letter sent to school officials on behalf of dozens of students highlighting the illegal and improper nature of the school's prior position. In January 2009, school officials finally approved the GSA as an official school club.

Mississippi made national news when, rather than let lesbian high school student Constance McMillen attend the prom with her girlfriend and wear a tuxedo to the event, Itawamba Agricultural High School in Fulton, Mississippi canceled prom.



With the help of the ACLU, Constance convinced a Mississippi federal court that school officials violated her First Amendment rights when they canceled prom. The court ruled that attending the prom with her girlfriend and wearing a tuxedo "falls squarely within the purview of the First Amendment."

"All I wanted was the same chance to enjoy my prom night like any other student," said Constance. The ACLU is working to make sure every student gets that chance.

Chris Quintanilla and his mom, Natali, contacted the ACLU in February 2009 when Chris's principal refused to allow Chris to wear a cloth wristband embroidered with the words "rainbows are gay." In a demand letter to Peoria Unified School District, ACLU of Arizona attorneys reminded officials of the 1969 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Tinker v. Des Moines*, which protects the constitutional rights of students in the classroom.

Following the demand letter, Peoria Unified School District assured Chris that he is free to wear his rainbow wristband at school.

"It's a good thing that the school has finally realized that it can't just disregard First Amendment rights of students who are gay," Natali Quintanilla said, "I'm very proud of my son for standing up for his rights and we both hope this means that other gay students won't be silenced at his school in the future."

"The time has come to end 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,'" said Laura W. Murphy, Director of the ACLU Washington Legislative Office. "For nearly two decades, gay and lesbian Americans have lived with the threat of being discharged under this policy simply for being who they are. Congress has the ability and obligation to put an end to this discriminatory policy."

Over the past few months, several former armed forces officers addressed the Senate Armed Services Committee, urging the repeal of the discriminatory "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" statute. The statute, passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton in 1993, states that openly lesbian and gay individuals pose "an unacceptable threat to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion that are the essence of military capability," and prevents gay and lesbian individuals from serving openly in the military.

An act of Congress is needed for a full repeal of the law and the American Civil Liberties Union strongly urges Congress to make ending "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" a priority this year. There are bills pending in both the House and Senate to repeal the policy.



In response to the assault of Ally Kovacs, a transgender woman, at the Central Arizona Shelter Services (CASS), the ACLU of Arizona wrote a demand letter asking that new admissions be placed according to their gender identity.

After months of negotiations with ACLU attorneys, the directors of CASS agreed to change the policy. The new policy protects transgender individuals by providing shelter in the dormitory of their self-reported gender identity and not on the basis of biological gender unless requested by the individual. In addition, transgender clients are provided separate private restroom facilities

while residing in the shelter.

"The ACLU was concerned about the unique problems and safety concerns faced by this segment of the homeless population," said Dan Pochoda, Legal Director of the ACLU of Arizona. "We are very pleased that CASS has taken proactive steps to protect transgender individuals from discrimination or threat when seeking emergency shelter services."