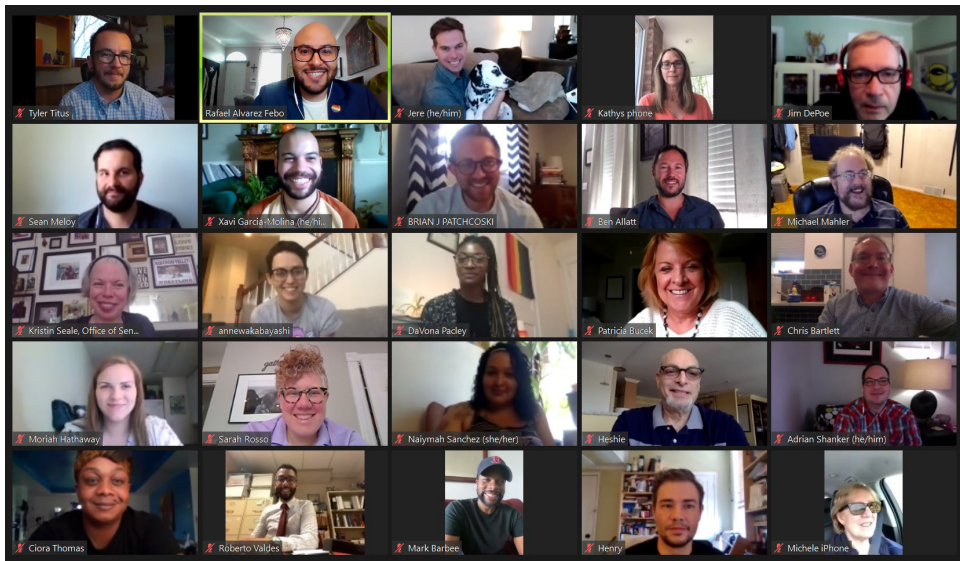




EGN

Erie Gay News



PA Commission on LGBTQ Affairs spring meeting on May 15, 2020 Screen cap by Rafael Alvarez Febo.

2020 Virtual Pridefest on June 27

from NW PA Pride Alliance

Due to COVID-19 a large gathering will not be permitted in NWPA this June. We have partnered with the Erie Playhouse to bring you a Virtual PrideFest on Saturday, June 27 from 2-5 PM. Info on how to join and participate to come soon.

If you or your organization are interested in hosting a chat room for the event, please contact us so we can help at tables@nwpaupride.org

This event will be family friendly and free to virtually attend.

Save the date, although since this is virtual we will be uploading the festival after the event is finished!

Jamestown Pride 2020 Canceled

by Sheridan Smith

The Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County and the Jamestown Pride Steering Committee

have announced that Jamestown Pride, scheduled for June 13, 2020, has been canceled. An event for June 2021 will continue to be planned.

Pride Steering Committee Member and MHA Certified Peer Specialist Sheridan Smith said, “While we have been working passionately on planning Jamestown’s first large-scale Pride community event, we also are cognizant of how the current COVID-19 pandemic is affecting communities. With the uncertainties of when areas will be able to re-open, much less allow large groups to congregate, and with public health always being the number one priority, we made the decision to cancel this year’s event.”

Smith said the planning group will use the opportunity of a longer planning period to work on a Pride event for June 2021 while also working on other community building activities for the LGBTQIA+ community to take place this year.

“I want to recognize our sponsors, including Presenting Sponsor Evergreen Health, Chautauqua Center, Chautauqua Institution, Jamestown Up

(Continues on page 3)

In This Issue...

2020 Virtual Pridefest on June 27.....	1
Jamestown Pride 2020 Canceled.....	1
Special Pride Issue for Next Month	3
Gov. Wolf Announces Inclusion of Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation or Expression in COVID-19 Data Collection.....	3
Memorial Service for John Daly King.....	4
Erie Police Dept Seeks Diverse Applicants.....	6
LGBTQ Community Club Weekly Zoom Meeting	6
Prides adapt to COVID-19	6
GEAE Updates	7
Ace erasure is unacceptable	7
LGBTQ Recommendations Submitted to PA Department of Aging	8
Transgender Coalition of Pennsylvania	8
PA Commission on LGBTQ Affairs meeting..	9
Recognizing the Signs of an Unhealthy Relationship	10
Voters Guide	14
Calendar	18
Awareness Days	18



Erie Gay News
Erie Gay News
 1115 West 7th St.
 Erie PA 16502-1105
 (814) 456-9833
 Fax: (440) 551-5985
 info@eriegaynews.com
 www.eriegaynews.com

Editor/Layout: Mike Mahler

Deadline for next issue: Jun 15
Folding and distribution is Tue, June 23 at Lake Erie Counseling, 301 W 10th.

ISSN 2159-1792

The *Erie Gay News* is published monthly as a source of news, events, information, and support for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people (GLBTs), their families, friends, and supporters in the Erie PA area.

We welcome and encourage all readers to submit timely news, comments, and opinions of interest to local GLBTs for publication in these pages. Please include your contact information with any piece you submit.



QUARTER PAGE	FULL PAGE	HALF PAGE VERTICAL
HALF PAGE HORIZONTAL	EIGHTH PAGE	

AD SIZE	PRICE/ISSUE	DIMENSIONS
EIGHTH	\$40 - \$36 Prepaid	1 5/8" high X 2 7/8" wide
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Camera ready art or manuscript and/or photos, illustrations and logos must be received by the 15th of the month.

Photos and Illustrations should be PDF or TIFF and HIRES.

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To Lake Erie Counseling Associates for hosting! Andrea Shaffer, Audrey, Bobbie Fenno, Gwen, Johauna, Kim Conti, Lyxi Adamaszek, Michelle Rivero, Molly Rose, Paxton Dillon, and Rex Apps for folding; Audrey, Gwen, Johauna, Kim Conti, Lyxi Adamaszek, Melina Harden, Michelle Rivero, and Rex Apps for distribution; Mike Lipiec for ad layout & etc. If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com.

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Close, Media One Group, and Silvertree Seniors of Jamestown for committing to staying on board for the 2021 event. Their continued support even when during these uncertain financial times for non-profits is amazing and we extend our gratitude to them,” Smith added.

The Jamestown Pride Planning group will continue to hold planning meetings and those interested in being part of the group may email JamestownPride@mhachautauqua.org to be placed on the email communications list, or contact Sheridan Smith at sheridan.smith@mhachautauqua.org or (716) 490-4438.

Special Pride Issue for Next Month

from Erie Gay News

The upcoming issue of *Erie Gay News* will have coverage about Pride for the month of June. EGN is seeking ads for this special issue—a great way for businesses and organizations to reach out to the LGBTQIA+ community.

The next issue has a deadline of June 15 and comes out the night of June 21.

Contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com

Gov. Wolf Announces Inclusion of Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation or Expression in COVID-19 Data Collection

Harrisburg, PA - May 13, 2020 – Governor Tom Wolf today took another step in his commitment to fair treatment and inclusion of LGBTQ Pennsylvanians by announcing ways the community will be counted in COVID-19 data.

As counties in the commonwealth move from the red stay-at-home order to the aggressive mitigation efforts of the yellow phase, the Department of Health will be conducting extensive case histories investigations as part of contact tracing on those who test positive for the virus.

The department has chosen to work with Sara Alert, a new data collection platform and has requested a system modification to the platform to collect sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data.



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The department is an early adopter of the technology and this system modification will provide for the platform to collect this data in all states and entities that use it moving forward.

The department has also requested from the eHealth Authority Board that the state's six health information organizations work to capture sexual orientation and gender identity or expression data from electronic health records that can then be used by health care providers to report their COVID-19 data to the department.

It is a top priority to ensure that all people in Pennsylvania who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 have access to diagnostic testing. To ensure a healthy Pennsylvania for all, especially during these unprecedented times, the Wolf Administration will only partner with organizations and entities

throughout our response to COVID-19 that have an established commitment to non-discriminatory practices.

This is a practice echoed in the governor's statement of nondiscriminatory standards of care, announced on March 30.

"Pennsylvania's standards of care – in times of crisis and not – are based on an ethical allocation framework, meaning care is provided equitably across all populations without regard to patient age, race, gender, creed, color, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, ethnicity, religion, or socioeconomic status."

Since taking office, Governor Tom Wolf has fought for comprehensive nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ Pennsylvanians.

In April, he announced a Health Disparity Task Force, chaired by Lt. Gov. John Fetterman, to address the unique needs of Pennsylvania's vulnerable populations, including our LGBTQ community. The desire to collect SOGI data on COVID-19 cases was recommended on behalf of the advocacy from community leaders to the task force.

Any Pennsylvanian who feels they or a loved one have been discriminated against in any way can contact the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission at <https://www.phrc.pa.gov/>.

**Deadline for Next EGN issue
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Memorial Service for John Daly King on May 21

On Thursday, May 21, there will be a memorial service for John Daly King at Burton Funeral Home, 602 W 10th St, Erie PA. The viewing will be from 5



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from the Pa. Department of Health

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to 7 pm, with a memorial service to follow at 7 PM. John Daly King, 82, passed away Saturday, March 14 at Pleasant Ridge Manor and was cremated.

Erie Police Dept Seeks Diverse Applicants

The Erie Police Department is currently accepting applications to “Join The Force” until June 30, 2020. Apply online at <https://epd.erie.pa.us/recruitment/>

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- Must meet all qualifications set by the City of Erie Civil Service Board.
- For all qualification requirements, visit: www.erie.pa.us/police/recruitment

Applying:

- Applications are handled by the Northwest PA Regional Police Testing Consortium.
- Applications will be accepted from April 13, 2020 to June 30, 2020.
- There is a \$75 application fee which is payable online or by signed money order.
- To apply online, visit:

www.erie.pa.us/police/recruitment

- Must pass written AND physical agility tests administered by the Northwest PA Regional Police Testing Consortium.
- Military service time is the only qualifier for additional points to the written test.
- Must be Act 120 certified at date of hire.
- Tests will be held Aug. 1, 2020 at Harbor-creek HS.
- For more information about the tests, dates, and to find out how to get certified, visit: www.erie.pa.us/police/recruitment

LGBTQ Community Club Weekly Zoom Meeting

LGBTQ Community Club, which formed in early 2020, had been meeting at Simak Welcome Center of the Kingsville Ohio Public Library. They are now meeting online via Zoom Wednesdays at 4pm. The meeting ID is 987 4925 5994 and the password is 010643. For more info about the group, contact Bill Daywalt at (440) 749-3900 or bdaywalt1@icloud.com

Prides around the country adapt to COVID-19

In these uncertain times, communities across the country are looking to find ways to connect and celebrate virtually. The shift towards online festivities will help prevent the spread of the coronavirus, while still providing a safe way to celebrate the culture and heritage of the LGBTQ community. This was the focus of a conference call on May 2, hosted by the United States Association of Prides.

During the call organizers from Motor City Pride, Sioux City Pride, Twin Cities Pride and Greater Palm Springs Pride shared the structure of their virtual events. Most of these will be live streamed through the host Pride's websites or their social media showcasing their local entertainment. There will be a wide variety of musicians, comedians, celebrities and performance artists. These will be to highlight the great diversity that we have in our community. Also discussed were ways of making Pride event interac-

Community News

tive, by having virtual meeting spaces to connect with vendors and non-profits.

If you would like to participate virtually in these Prides, be sure to like Erie Gay News on Facebook and subscribe to our email list to get the latest on these virtual Pride Events.

We will all miss the energy that an in-person celebration of Pride would provide, but through these virtual Prides we can all celebrate together safely.

GEAE Updates

from Greater Erie Alliance for Equality

The GSA Zoom meet-up will continue for May. The next meeting is May 28th at 6 pm. Interested teens should contact geaeinfo@gmail.com or margolwolfe@gmail.com for the meeting link.

GEAE is once again offering three \$1,000.00 scholarships for students 17-25 years of age. On-line application is at <http://greaterericealliance.com/2020/04/24/2020-geae-pride-scholarship/>. Deadline for applications is June 30th.

Ace erasure is unacceptable

from Marshall John Blount

It's the 2020s, a new decade of activism, visibility, and pride. With those three things comes the increased education and awareness of the Ace community around the world. Unfortunatently though, what also increases is the harrassment and hatred towards us and our spaces off or on the internet. You may ask why? I'll give you my opinion bluntly: This world is not set up for us to thrive in. We break the norms set up by people who see us as broken and not a valid community and they think we need to be fixed. There are also people out there who just don't know about us and need to be connected with the right information. That is why it's key to be loud about who we are as a community. Awareness and visibility is important to create further progress. I just hope by 2030, we won't be having the same conversation. We deserve to be respected and accepted. We deserve so much more. Our humanity matters too. Ace erasure must go!

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LGBTQ Recommendations Submitted to PA Department of Aging

from PA Commission on LGBTQ Affairs

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) is working on their four-year strategic plan for the Commonwealth. This contains broad strategic goals for the department and includes recommendations for not only the general aging population, but also targeted marginalized populations. For the first time, the LGBTQIA+ community is one of those targeted populations. The Aging Committee for the PA Commission on LGBTQ Affairs has submitted recommendations gathered from an input survey to be included in the strategic plan. There will be virtual listening meetings (most likely via Zoom) conducted by the PDA later in the summer, and one of these meetings is expected to be specifically for LGBTQ seniors. We will hopefully have a date for that meeting very soon, and we need everyone to engage their network

to have as diverse and strong participation as possible in the online meeting. Look for more details soon and be prepared to spread the word.

Transgender Coalition of Pennsylvania Formed

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the urgency of coming together in an unprecedented time, Transgender Coalition of Pennsylvania has been formed and we are looking for trans and nonbinary Pennsylvanians to come together and join a space of healing, convening, and planning. During this COVID-19 pandemic, it has become very clear that we need spaces we can have conversations that center our lives, experiences, and journey's toward equality and demarginalization in Pennsylvania.

We welcome all topics of discussions concerning healing, economic growth, city, county and statewide issues concerning our trans and non-binary communities of Pennsylvania, while also finding innovative ways to be included as Pennsylvanian's with

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particular needs concerning safety, housing, access to competent health care, police relations, city/county, and state legislation/policies, and inclusion within the city and state governmental spaces of Pennsylvania.

This initiative is spearheaded by SisTers PGH, a trans and nonbinary led 501c3 nonprofit organization that provides housing and direct resources for our trans and nonbinary communities of Pittsburgh and more specifically Allegheny County.

SisTers PGH Founder & Executive Director Ciora Thomas is the first black trans woman to be appointed as Commissioner of Pennsylvania's Commission on LGBT Affairs, which is the first statewide LGBT focused commission in the country. She hopes to also use this position as a commissioner to bring our communities together around the state creating a coalition of trans leadership and organizations doing the work that doesn't get seen in Pennsylvania.

Join us as we unify our voices as ONE, in order to affirm our existence within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

For more information, contact Ciora Thomas at info@sisterspggh.org or (412) 259-3091.

PA Commission on LGBTQ Affairs meeting on 5/16

The PA Commission on LGBTQ Affairs held their spring meeting on May 15, 2020. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held virtually on Zoom. New commissioners included DaVona Pacley, Naiymah Sanchez, Celena Morrison, and Xavier Garcia-Molina.

Executive Director Rafael Alvarez Febo gave a report. Commissioners are encouraged to send content for the PA Commission on LGBTQ Affairs Facebook page. This can include free events, and advocacy. We are also looking to bring the Commonwealth's sexual harassment policies to include sexual orientation and gender identity, in line with the City of Philadelphia's policy.

Adrian Shanker of Bradbudy Sullivan LGBT Community Center made a presentation on health disparities during COVID-19. Social conditions leave members of the LGBTQ community more vulnerable. Questions about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) were added to the Commonwealth's

NEDSS software for tracking COVID-19 infections. The questions are voluntary for hospitals and testing centers. The next step is to make sure that health care organizations commit to asking the questions. There is currently no system on place to collect info on mortality for SOGI, as opposed to infection. Erie County Department of Health was recognized for being a leader in health policies in the commonwealth. Allentown has also posted LGBTQ-inclusive info. We are seeking to work with other counties' health departments, as well as hospital and other health care systems.

Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta gave a presentation on collecting SOGI data in other demographic data (beyond COVID-19 data) tracked by the Commonwealth. Although there is a push for SOGI-inclusive data, there is not a bill number yet.

Steve Latanishen of the Department of State presented info on voting by mail. The deadline to apply to vote by mail is May 26, and all mail-in ballots need to be physically received by the respective counties' election office by no later than June 2 at 8 PM, the same time as the polls close for Pennsylvania's primary election. Younger poll workers and those who are not immunocompromised are needed. The current average age of poll workers in PA is 67. We also know that younger and more diverse poll workers help create a more welcoming voting experience. All organizations, including non-profits, are allowed to promote voter registration as long as the promotion is not partisan.

It was also stressed that although the 2020 US Census does not collect SOGI data, it is very important for everyone, especially the LGBTQ community to respond to the census. Since Federal and state funding are very frequently tied to US Census results, non-responders cost their communities valuable resources.

Chris Bartlett of the William Way Community Center in Philadelphia led a discussion on building virtual community. There has been a statewide LGBT community leadership Zoom meeting every weekday at 5 PM that is open to all leaders in the LGBTQ community, whether part of a specific organization or not.

Committees met and reported back.

Aging committee has been working on recommendations for the PA Department of Aging's four

Community News

year strategic plan. The recommendations have been submitted, and the committee is next going to be promoting a virtual listening tour meeting targeting LGBTQ seniors. They also want to include an HIV & STI resource page on the PA Department of Aging's web site.

The Education committee notes that every system is being disrupted by COVID-19. Key issues are the health of young people - access to food, care, and sexual health info; safety in terms of issues surrounding abuse, cultural safety, and acceptance; economic well-being - high unemployment rate; and access - as so much of education is currently being delivered online/digitally, and there are disparities for many for accessing digital services. A major theme of all of these issues is equity. The committee is also looking compiling a resource list that the commission can share with their networks.

The Health committee talked about SOGI data collection, and NEDSS. The 2020 PA Health Needs Assessment has wrapped up the survey of PA LGBTQ community members and is looking ahead to analyzing and distributing the results. The committee is encouraging county health departments to get out sexual health info. Echoing the Education committee, LGBTQ youth are experience a huge gap in the need for resources and advocacy.

The Legislation and Policy committee noted that there isn't a lot of legislation being advanced in the current environment. They are looking at creating rapid responses to any legislation coming out, and a directory of statewide resources and contacts. They are watching out for legislation antagonistic to the interests of the LGBTQ community.

There was also a discussion of Pride events in Pennsylvania. Although many have been postponed to next year, some are being held virtually this year.

Recognizing the Signs of an Unhealthy Relationship

from SafeNet

Let's face it. Relationships are complicated. Even the best relationships hit bumps in the road. However, if your complicated relationship turns unhealthy and then escalates into abuse, there are three things you need to know: it is not your fault, you are not alone, and there is help.

No one enters a relationship thinking the person they care about will someday hit them, humiliate them, or threaten to kill them in order to maintain power and control. In fact, an abusive relationship can often start out like the perfect love story. Then everything changes, leaving the victim feeling confused, ashamed, and numb. If they aren't experiencing physical violence, the victim might not know they are experiencing abuse at all. They don't realize that the yelling, name-calling, threats, isolation from family and friends, sexual coercion, and financial control are also forms of violence in a relationship.

Intimate partner violence does not discriminate. It affects individuals regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender orientation and identity, economic status, religion, physical and intellectual ability, or education level. It can happen in any relationship—between couples who are married, living together, or just dating. The one constant is the abuser's need for power and control, the driving force behind their behavior. Fortunately, there are signs that can help identify an abusive relationship.

Red flags of an abusive partner:

- Seems charming at first, full of gifts and flattery
- Pushes for early commitment
- Isolates you from family and friends
- Blames others for their problems
- Threatens to "out" you to friends and family
- Rarely apologizes—for anything
- Wants to know where you, what you're doing, and who you're with



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- Calls you names, puts you down, or humiliates you and then calls it a joke
- Is overly jealous and possessive
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- Doesn't respect your needs, concerns, opinions, or boundaries
- Frightens you by yelling, calling you names, making threats, displaying weapons, or silencing you with cold stares
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- Is concerned only about themselves, focused on their own unmet needs and desires
- Frequently stalks you, either physically or by using technology
- Belittles your work, your appearance, your beliefs, your hopes and dreams

If you need to talk to someone because you feel afraid or depressed in your relationship, you can reach out to a trained advocate at SafeNet by calling the 27/7 hotline at 814-454-8161. SafeNet offers free, confidential, welcoming assistance that can help you reclaim your life. On-going counseling, currently done via telephone, can be scheduled by call SafeNet's main office at 814-455-1774. To learn more, go to SafeNet's website at www.safenet-terrie.org.

Seeking help because your partner is hurting you isn't a sign of weakness. It is a sign of strength, proof that you are already moving from being a victim of intimate partner violence to becoming a survivor.

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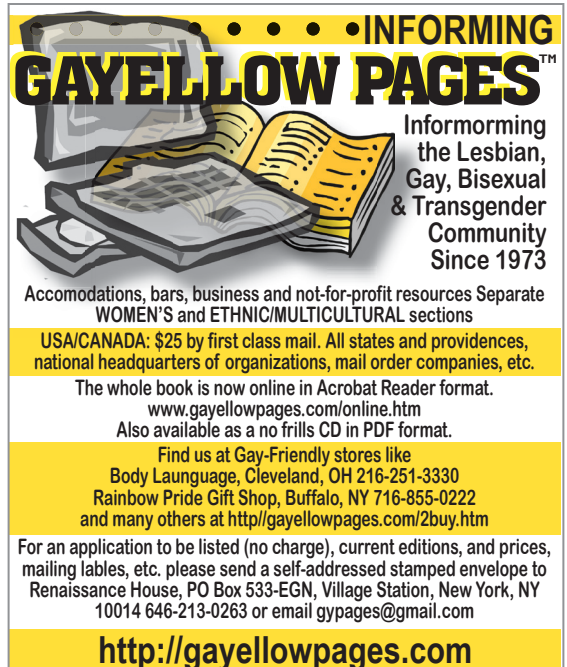
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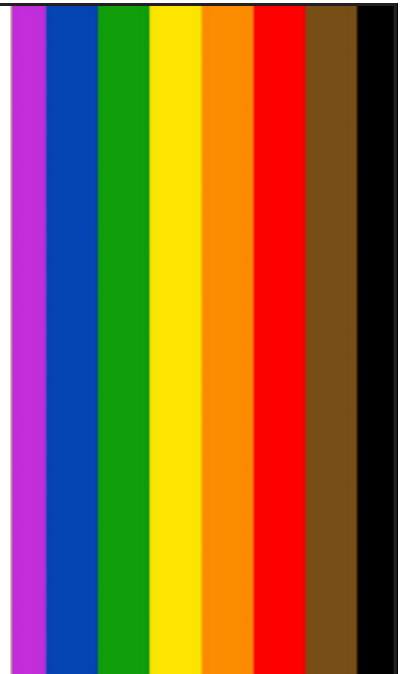
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ALL ARE WELCOME



Voters Guide

Candidates for US Congress PA-16, PA State Senate, and PA State House were asked about their positions on GLBT issues. Their responses appear on the next few pages.

Pennsylvania's Primary Election is scheduled for June 2. For the first time, ALL voters can request a mail-in ballot, which can be applied for online. Applications for absentee ballots are due by May 26, and all completed ballots must be physically received by the County's Board Of Elections by no later than Election Day, June 2 at 8 PM.

Questions for all candidates:

Anti-Discrimination

Do you support the passage of legislation such as the Equality Act, which would protect LGBT individuals from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodation? Please explain.

"Religious Freedom"

Do you support legislation such as the so-called First Amendment Defense Act (introduced in the US Senate in March of 2018) that would allow individuals, government officials or government agencies to deny providing goods and services to LGBT individuals because of religious beliefs. Please explain.

US Congress PA 16

Not Responding: Mike Kelly (R-Incumbent)

Anti-Discrimination

KRISTY GNIBUS (D)

Yes, I support the Equality Act. Our federal law still does not specifically and explicitly prohibit the termination of an individual's employment based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Additionally, LGBT tenants are often evicted from their homes due to an overzealous landlord's dislike of their tenant's choice of a partner and LGBT students are mistreated and bullied in schools across our nation every day. There should be no question as to an LGBT citizen's rights under the law and each passing day without our government instituting these explicit

protections is another day that our nation fails to recognize true equality.

"Religious Freedom"

KRISTY GNIBUS (D)

No, I do not support such legislation because it would rollback critical legal protections for LGBT Americans and their families. The First Amendment Defense Act is destructive legislation that would, in essence, legalize state-sanctioned discrimination and weaken important civil rights protections for our nation's LGBT population.

PA State Senate District 49

Anti-Discrimination

ANDRE HORTON (D)

Yes, I would support the introduction and passage of this legislation at the state and federal level. I have successfully supported the inclusion of sex, sexual orientation and gender identity in the County's Human Relations Ordinance. The categories of sexual orientation and gender orientation are currently not included in the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act.

It is wrong to ask people if they are a part of one of these protected classes before making a job offer or offering services. I have sponsored legislation like this already and am proud to have appointed a trans woman to the human relations advisory board. Additionally, I support legislation amending the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act so that it prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.

JULIE SLOMSKI (D)

For far too long, the LGBTQ+ community has been left unprotected by Pennsylvania law. It is frustrating that in this day and age someone could lose their job or housing because of who they are or who they love. It is unacceptable to me that discrimination is still codified in our commonwealth, and as the next Senator for SD-49, I would be honored to introduce

Voters Guide

and support legislation to end discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community.

DAN LAUGHLIN (R-Incumbent)

I am supportive of the Equality Act.

“Religious Freedom”

ANDRE HORTON (D)

No, I would oppose the introduction or passage of this type of legislation in the PA Assembly, local or Federal government. First Amendment Defense Acts (FADAs) allow people that hold certain religious beliefs about marriage to discriminate against others who don't fit into their religious beliefs about marriage. FADAs distort the meaning of religious freedom as a way to discriminate against others. Such legislation would be disastrous as LGBT individuals could be denied assistance from government employees (causing denial of access to food, shelter, and basic services) and for-profit businesses (affecting access to sick pay and fair housing practices, for example). As an African American man, I know what it's like to be discriminated against and to be locked out of employment. As past president of the NAACP I've handled employee complaints, worked closely with the state human-relations commission and the EEOC. I know all too often that discrimination is alive and well in Pennsylvania. We don't need unnecessary and restrictive policies such as FADAs to empower discrimination.

JULIE SLOMSKI (D)

To deny service on the basis of sexual orientation or identity is discrimination. While this has been addressed on a federal level, we need to be proactive in Pennsylvania to end discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, regardless of its form.

DAN LAUGHLIN (R-Incumbent)

I would not support the FADA

PA State House District 1

Anti-Discrimination

PAT HARKINS (D Incumbent)

I do support legislation such as the Equality Act. In past sessions I have not only co sponsored legislation but I have held public hearings in Erie so the public can hear what is contained in the legislation and hear how it might affect them. I believe it is the right of all to be treated fairly and equally in all matters especially housing, employment and public accommodation. Bottom line, treat others the way you would want to be treated.

“Religious Freedom”

PAT HARKINS (D Incumbent)

I would never support anything like the First Amendment Defense Act and I believe our founding fathers would turn over in their graves if they would see what some people would like to do to the constitution they so brilliantly crafted.

Call these proposals what they are, hate speech. Closed minded people who have a fear of the unknown are who come up with these ideas. In 2020 I would hope we could get beyond judging people for who they love and accept the differences in all of us. We have much deeper issues we should be dealing with at this point in society.

PA State House District 2

Not Responding: Bob Merski (D Incumbent)

PA State House District 3

Anti-Discrimination

RYAN BIZZARRO (D Incumbent)

Yes, I absolutely support legislation such as the Equality Act. One of the cardinal pillars of our Constitutional Republic is equal treatment under the law in the public square. To deny anyone employment,

Voters Guide

housing, or public accommodation due to (assumed or actual) sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression is a very clear transgression of one of our most cherished principles of equality. Private institutions and organizations that do not accept tax dollars are free to do as they will under their own roofs (for better or worse), but in our shared society that belongs to all citizens, LGBTQ people should not be denied equal access to employment, housing, or public accommodation.

“Religious Freedom”

RYAN BIZZARRO (D Incumbent)

I am opposed to any legislation that dares to cloak discrimination in the name of religious freedom. The U.S. Constitution very clearly grants everyone freedom of conscience/belief. However, freedom of conscience does not translate into an unqualified freedom of accommodation. One is not free to use their private beliefs to infringe upon the rights of others, nor to cause them harm. To that end, whether as elected officials, or as people hired to serve, government positions are not domains to impose religious beliefs. What is more, tax funded services managed by private organizations do not have the right to impose narrow religious beliefs upon government funded projects. As a person of faith, I am deeply committed to protecting and exercising the freedom of religion in this country. However, I am not confused about what that means—and I am not interested in participating in any legislative effort that would use religion as a tool of discrimination in our shared society or in our rule of law.

PA State House District 4

Not Responding: Curt Sonney (R Incumbent)

PA State House District 6

Not Responding: Brad Roae (R Incumbent)

Anti-Discrimination
MATTHEW FERRENCE (D)

Simply put, that PA currently fails to fully protect the fundamental Civil Rights of the LGBTQ community is an affront to human decency and the values of the Commonwealth. There’s no doubt that strong legislation prohibiting any kind of discrimination due to sexuality or gender identity is long overdue in Pennsylvania. While I certainly hope that members of the US Congress will pass the federal Equality Act, as a candidate for the Pennsylvania House I believe we need protections written into our own state laws. We can’t wait for the feds. Too many people are suffering discrimination here in NWPA and across the state. We must act to ensure equity and justice.

“Religious Freedom”

MATTHEW FERRENCE (D)

Hiding discrimination behind the thin veil of “religious freedom” devalues us all, and this kind of hateful legislation perniciously insults American concepts of freedom and justice to codify bigotry. Freedom of religion does not give license for discriminatory practice against members of the LGBTQ community. While religious freedom guarantees individuals the right to practice their faith, it does not imply that religious belief can be used as a cover to deny the Civil Rights of others. I would vehemently oppose any legislation similar to the deceptively-titled “First Amendment Defense Act” in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

PA State House District 17

Not Responding: Parke Wentling (R Incumbent)

Anti-Discrimination

JEFF O’MELIAN (D)

Of course I do!

“Religious Freedom”

JEFF O’MELIAN (D)

Being a Buddhist myself, I strongly support the 1st Amendment.

GET READY TO VOTE IN 2020



Vote by Mail-in Ballot

If you are a registered voter in Pennsylvania, you have a **new option to vote by mail-in ballot**. This is a great option for voters who prefer the convenience of voting at home. You do not have to provide a reason for requesting a mail-in ballot.

If you decide to vote by mail-in ballot, keep in mind:



You must apply for a ballot by **5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before the election**.



You can apply using an **online application** at votesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot, by mailing in a paper application, or by submitting a paper application in person at the county election office.



When you apply in person, you can ask for your ballot **immediately**. If the ballot is available, you can complete it in the office and return it to the county election staff.



You can return your completed ballot **by mail or in person** at your county election office.



The county must receive your completed ballot by **8:00 pm on election day** in order to count it.

It's important to know **your vote is final** once your county receives your voted mail-in ballot, and you are not allowed to go to the polling place to change your vote on election day. If you do not return your voted ballot to your county election office by 8:00 p.m. on election day, you can vote by provisional ballot at your polling place.



More Time to Register

You now have more time to register to vote. The deadline to register for the primary election is **May 18, 2020**, and the deadline to register for the November general election is **October 19, 2020**. Keep in mind that you must submit a voter registration application to update your address, change your party affiliation, or change your name.

Check your voter registration status at [VotesPA.com/Status](https://votesPA.com/Status). Register or update your information at [VotesPA.com/Register](https://votesPA.com/Register).



New Voting Systems

If you vote in person on election day, you may use **new voting equipment for the first time**. These new systems provide a paper record to ensure accuracy, and you will have the opportunity to **confirm your choices on a paper record** before casting your vote. Plus, the new systems are easy to use and have accessible features to make voting easy and convenient for voters with disabilities.

Go to [VotesPA.com/ReadyToVote](https://votesPA.com/ReadyToVote) to explore your county's voting system. Do your part by being a prepared voter before you head to your polling place. This will help things run smoothly on election day.



Annual Mail-in Request List

When you apply for a mail-in ballot, you can ask to have the **ballots for every election** that year **mailed to you**. Simply check the box for "annual mail-in request."

Learn more about mail-in voting at [VotesPA.com/MailBallot](https://votesPA.com/MailBallot).



No Straight-Party Voting

You no longer have the option to check just one box to vote for all the candidates of one political party. You can **still select all candidates from one party**, but you must select them individually in each contest.

VotesPA.com



Calendar

For latest updates, see www.eriegaynews.com

Jun 2 (Tue) - Pennsylvania Primary Election 7 AM - 8 PM. See our voters guide in this issue. Deadline to apply for a mail in ballot is May 26. Mail-in ballots must be at County Courthouse Election Office by 8 PM on June 2.

Jun 27 (Sat) - 2020 Virtual Pride 2 PM - 5 PM. Due to Covid-19 a large gathering will not be permitted in NWPA this June. We have partnered with the Erie Playhouse to bring you a Virtual PrideFest. Info on how to join and participate to come. If you or your organization are interested in hosting a chat room for the event please contact us so we can help at tables@nwppride.org. This event will be family friendly and free to virtually attend. Save the date although since this is virtual we will be uploading the festival after the event is finished

Awareness Days

May 22 (Fri) - Harvey Milk Day Celebrated to honor Harvey Milk, assassinated politician, on his birthday, it is celebrated officially in California, Milk's home state. Browse to <http://milkfoundation.org/>.

Jun 5 (Fri) - HIV Long-Term Survivors Day This day celebrates and honors long-term survivors of the epidemic and raises awareness of their needs, issues and journeys. Browse to <https://medium.com/hiv-long-term-survivors-awareness-day-hltsad>.

Jun 12 (Fri) - Pulse Night of Remembrance Annual day of US remembrance for the loss of 49 people in the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida on June 12, 2016.

Jun 27 (Sat) - National HIV Testing Day National HIV Testing Day (NHTD) was first observed on June 27, 1995. NHTD is a day to encourage people to get tested for HIV, know their status, and get linked to care and treatment. #HIVTestingDay Browse to <https://locator.hiv.gov/>.

Jun 28 (Sun) - Stonewall Riots Anniversary To remember the Stonewall Riots that are described as the start of the Trans and Gay Liberation Movement in the United States. It's a day for people to remember the biracial lesbian and drag king Stormé DeLarverie whose scuffle with the police started the rebellion, and the trans woman of colour Marsha P. Johnson who would have thrown the first brick.



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