

# GLAD LAW BRIEFS

SUMMER 2026

Families and advocates who helped pass the Massachusetts Parentage Act in 2024

## Protecting Every Path to Family

**Love, care, and commitment are what makes a family, but the law protects it.** Even as organizations that have long opposed equality recycle old, debunked arguments to restrict marriage rights, parentage protections, and access to fertility care for LGBTQ+ people and others based on one narrow definition of family, we're making tremendous progress toward ensuring that everyone is free to start a family on their own terms and have secure legal parent-child relationships regardless of biological connection.

In recent months, GLAD Law helped secure passage of laws in Connecticut and Delaware to ensure more equitable treatment for all families in those states. Connecticut removed a big barrier to family building for many people with HB 5374, which requires private insurers to cover fertility health care for LGBTQ+ couples and single individuals and aligns Connecticut's private insurance with the current standard-of-care definition of infertility for coverage. Delaware's recently passed SB 250 updates the state's family protection law so that it is clear, equitable, and protects all children, including those born to LGBTQ+ families and families formed through fertility care or surrogacy.

These victories highlight GLAD Law's ongoing work to protect children, to secure comprehensive paths to family

recognition and security for the diverse array of American families, and to establish equitable access to fertility care for LGBTQ+ people and others.

They're also a rebuke to the so-called "Greater Than" campaign. This initiative seeks to prohibit legal recognition for any family that does not include a married mother and father and their biological children, including overturning the Supreme Court's decision affirming the freedom to marry in *Obergefell v. Hodges*. The campaign was spearheaded by the organization "Them Before Us," which is funded partly by the Heritage Foundation, the organization responsible for Project 2025, the Trump administration's adopted blueprint to dismantle democracy and turn back the clock on gender equality.

The Greater Than campaign has yet to initiate legal action to overturn *Obergefell*, and any such action would have a very high bar to succeed. In fact, in November, the Supreme Court denied a request to revisit marriage equality in response to a petition submitted by a former Kentucky county clerk who was sued for refusing to grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples. GLAD Law has a designated marriage defense team monitoring for any legitimate effort to challenge marriage equality and preparing every possible legal argument to defend it, should a real threat ever emerge.

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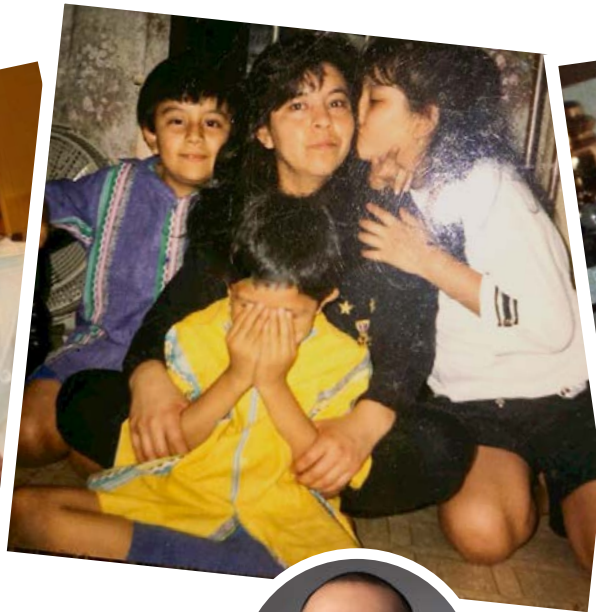
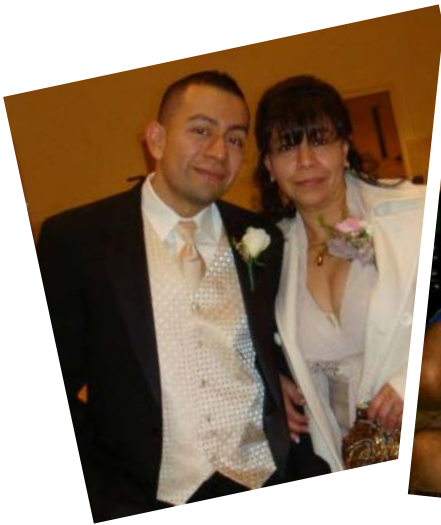
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Justice with Pride

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## From the Executive Director

**During one of our daily chats, I asked my mother a question I had been carrying for a long time: Was it worth it?** Was leaving everything and everyone she had ever known – her country, her language, her community, the full texture of her life – worth it for the chance that her children might have something more? She didn't hesitate. Yes, she said. Without question. Yes.

I think about her answer a lot. There were no guarantees my siblings and I would amount to anything – she knew that. And she said yes and bet on us anyway. Not because she wasn't scared, but because the vision of what could be was bigger than the fear of what might not work out. That's a kind of courage I think about all the time.

This moment we're in is not, at its core, a story about any one administration. It is a story about the enduring human will to be free and about the forces, in every era, that resist that freedom. The coordinated campaign targeting LGBTQ+ people today is sophisticated and deliberate. Our opponents no longer rely on overt discrimination alone. They advance their agenda through neutral-sounding language – “fairness,” “safety,” “parental rights.” They seek to expand First Amendment and religious liberty arguments to carve out exemptions from the very laws that protect us all. They

are moving through legislatures, courts, and administrative agencies all at once, creating enough noise and confusion that by the time one attack is blocked, three more have taken root.

We see their strategy. And we are building to win.

GLAD Law envisions a world where being LGBTQ+ is treated with dignity, not danger. Where every person across every background, race, age, gender, ability, and experience has the freedom to be themselves, pursue their dreams, build economic security for themselves and their families, and have a fair shot at a good life. Reaching that world requires sustained legal work and thoughtful policy. It requires protections that hold across changing political environments. It requires the capacity to respond in real time to new threats while simultaneously laying out the groundwork for the fights of tomorrow.

We are amid significant evolution. GLAD Law is expanding our capacity to sustain more high-impact cases each year and to move quickly as new threats emerge. We are working across more states on pro-LGBTQ+ legislation and providing technical assistance to our partners. We are building the infrastructure that makes this legal work effective and deepens our ability to connect more of our community

to the resources and support they need. And we are standing watch over the hard-won victories – including marriage equality – prepared to defend them the moment they are threatened.

My mother made her choice without a guarantee. Every generation of LGBTQ+ advocates has done the same – from those who organized before Stonewall, to the people who built this movement during the AIDS crisis, to the lawyers and plaintiffs who won marriage equality against formidable odds. They did not wait for the conditions to be perfect. They created the conditions.

That is the work we are doing now.

The future we are building is one where the law reflects the full humanity of every person in this country. We are not simply defending what we have. We are building forward. And we are doing it with the same fearless, patient, strategic courage that has always defined this movement at its best.

Thank you for choosing to be part of what we are building together.

**Ricardo Martinez**  
Executive Director  
GLAD Law

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FAMILY PROTECTIONS

“The only thing that has changed since *Obergefell* was decided is that people across the country have seen how marriage equality provides protection for families and children, and that protection strengthens communities, the economy, and our society,” said Mary Bonauto, GLAD Law Senior Director of Civil Rights and Legal Strategies. “All families deserve equal rights under the law.”

Meanwhile, Them Before Us has actively opposed efforts to strengthen and expand family protections and access to fertility health care, unsuccessfully offering competing legislation in Delaware to undermine the protections of SB 250 and testifying against a similar bill in Michigan, which later became law. In 2017, the organization filed a brief supporting an Arkansas court decision that barred same-sex married couples from having both spouses’ names listed on their children’s birth certificates in the Supreme Court case *Pavan v. Smith*, which was ultimately decided in favor of the families.

“This campaign is an ill-considered attempt to undo marriage equality using outdated arguments about who is best suited to raise children, despite abundant data showing children of LGBTQ+ parents, like all children, thrive in homes with one or more adults who love and care for them. But their

agenda also attacks no-fault divorce. It opposes surrogacy, fertility health care, and protections for children born through fertility health care,” said Polly Crozier, GLAD Law’s Director of Family Advocacy. “Taken together, it’s an extreme vision that would harm countless other Americans, not just LGBTQ+ families. What they’re pushing is a narrow definition of how families and society should function that the majority of Americans don’t support.”

That’s because more Americans personally know LGBTQ+ families and families formed through IVF, surrogacy, adoption, and other paths to parenthood, and believe all children should have the security of family recognition, no matter how their families came to be. As people share their own stories about struggling to access fertility care, encountering outdated parentage laws, or growing up with LGBTQ+ parents, it’s harder for extremist campaigns to rely on misinformation and fearmongering. The reality is that there is no single model for what an American family looks like, and these stories show politicians and policymakers what’s at stake when families aren’t fully protected under the law. **Check out “The Enduring Power of Personal Stories” on the following page.**

We’ll continue to uplift the stories of real people and families to emphasize the need for all children to have secure legal relationships with their parents, regardless of their biological connection or how their family was formed, and to ensure that LGBTQ+ people have equitable access to fertility health care.

That means collaborating with partners to advance pending bills in Massachusetts, Michigan, and Rhode Island to ensure that being LGBTQ+ isn’t a barrier to accessing fertility care, and to pass bills to update family protection laws in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

“The extremists behind the Greater Than campaign can try to narrow the definition of family, but they can’t erase the millions of diverse and loving families – including LGBTQ+ families – already thriving across the country,” said Polly. “We’re going to make sure the law protects them.”

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## The Enduring Power of Personal Stories

In 1978 – the same year GLAD Law was founded – Harvey Milk urged gay and lesbian Californians to come out in order to defeat a referendum banning gay people from working in public schools. Only by living openly, he argued, could LGBTQ+ people “break down the myths, destroy the lies and distortions” about them. The cruel paradox was that those lies endured precisely because it was often unsafe to be out. But Milk was right, and our community’s courage won the day. The ballot initiative went down to defeat.

LGBTQ+ people have been sharing our stories since, being vulnerable with loved ones, co-workers, faith communities, and the media to help shape public understanding of our lives, our families, our challenges, and our triumphs.

Personal stories remain one of the most powerful tools we have for changing hearts, minds, and policy, especially in this time of relentless federal attacks on our community. They are key to GLAD Law’s legislative advocacy.

“When lawmakers hear directly from the people they represent, policy stops being abstract and becomes personal,” said Polly Crozier, Director of Family Advocacy. “Two minutes of a constituent’s personal testimony can really move policy.”

That’s how Geoff Worrell, a father of three and grandfather to seven, wound up testifying a few years back in favor of the Massachusetts Parentage Act, which is now law. He shared the story of how his eldest daughter Lyndsay and her wife had to adopt their own children, twins to whom Lyndsay gave birth, in order to establish their legal parentage.

“I was shocked – initially I thought she was joking!” Geoff testified. “I felt so disappointed – learning that who my daughter married and how they had children would affect her parental rights.” Geoff revealed how, instead of starting a college savings plan for his first grandchildren, his “gift” was helping to pay adoption fees, and noted that his other children and their

spouses didn’t need to adopt their own children.

“It was so illuminating for legislators to hear this grandfather share the different experiences of his gay child and his straight children,” said Polly. “It cut right through to the inequality and its intergenerational impact on families.”

Geoff, who continues to advocate for LGBTQ+ family protections, said he is motivated to speak out by his deeply held values of family and fairness – which were shaped in part by his lived experience as both a Black man and a spouse in an interracial marriage – and honesty and integrity. “I think it’s really important for people to take action for what they believe in,” he said. “I need to do what’s right not only for myself; but what sort of example are you setting for your kids and your grandkids if you don’t stand up for what’s right?”

Indeed, in moments like this, your story matters! It reminds political leaders, policy makers, and the public what’s at stake: real children, real families, real lives. If you are part of an LGBTQ+ family, love someone who is, or want to share your family story to reflect the richness and diversity of American families, we want to connect with you. In raising our voices together, we can affirm what children need to succeed, counter fear and misinformation, and strengthen the fight for equality for all. Contact us at [GLADLaw.org/ShareYourStory](https://GLADLaw.org/ShareYourStory).

**FAMILIES TAKE MANY FORMS –  
AND EVERY STORY MATTERS.**



Scan the QR code or visit  
[GLADLaw.org/ShareYourStory](https://GLADLaw.org/ShareYourStory).  
As a thank you, you’ll receive  
**25% off** our new merch store.



## GLAD Law at Pride

**GLAD Law is protecting our rights and freedoms every day, and honoring Pride, both a celebration and a protest. Come visit us at a Pride near you.**

June 6  
Boston Pride for  
the People

June 7  
Philly Pride

June 20  
Rhode Island  
PrideFest

June 20  
Portsmouth Pride

June 20  
Pride Portland

July 1  
Boston Black Pride

September 12  
Pride Worcester

November 6-8  
Greater Palm  
Springs Pride

## Pro Bono Partners Are Critical to the Fight

GLAD Law has filed 12 cases challenging Trump Administration actions against the LGBTQ+ community since January 2025 and consulted on even more. It takes a skilled, determined, and well-resourced team to respond quickly to block immediate harm and stay the course – in a constantly evolving legal landscape – to see dangerous, unconstitutional policies overturned for good. We could not do this work without our pro bono law firm partners.

At a time when some businesses and institutions have opted to give in to this Administration’s political demands, we salute the firms that have chosen to defend the rule of law and hold steady in the pursuit of justice and the protection of civil rights.

We’re grateful to all our pro bono partners, and want to highlight a few who have contributed significantly to our federal work over the past year, including:

Brown, Goldstein & Levy LLP, Cooley LLP, Jenner & Block LLP, Kecker, Van Nest & Peters LLP, Lowenstein Sandler LLP, Potomac Law Group, Ropes & Gray LLP, Rosen Bien Galvan & Grunfeld LLP, Salvatore Prescott Porter & Porter, PLLC, Law Office of Jeremy Spiegel, Stapleton Segal Cochran LLC, Wardenski P.C., and Zalkind Duncan & Bernstein.

# Fighting Federal Overreach to Protect Transgender Health Care

**GLAD Law is leading efforts to stop the Trump administration's weaponization of the federal government against transgender Americans**, including attacks on their access to health care. The administration is threatening to limit transgender health care access through federal rules and funding mechanisms, and is trying to force hospitals to turn over private medical records. These actions have created chronic uncertainty and fear for patients, families, and providers alike.

These actions exceed executive authority and violate constitutional and statutory protections. GLAD Law, our legal partners, transgender people and their families, states, medical associations, and others are challenging this overreach by the federal government and fighting to protect transgender people's health and safety and defend medical privacy for everyone.

In January, GLAD Law and co-counsel Eve Hill of Brown, Goldstein & Levy successfully blocked a Department of Justice subpoena seeking confidential medical records from Children's National Hospital's Gender Development Program on behalf of eight families. A federal court rejected the government's attempt to get sweeping personal information about transgender youth and their families, finding the subpoenas lacked any legitimate investigative purpose and instead appeared designed to intimidate patients and chill access to lawful health care.

Our action was one of several challenges to subpoenas the administration issued last year. Federal courts ruled in favor of each challenge, with one judge observing that the government's demand for deeply private patient information carried "more than a whiff of ill intent."

The administration has tried to circumvent these court losses with increasingly aggressive actions. The Department of



GLAD Law staff at the Skrametti rally for transgender youth's health care at the Supreme Court



NCLR Legal Director Shannon Minter, and GLAD Law senior attorneys Bennett Klein and Jennifer Levi

GLAD Law is also fighting for transgender youth whose care has already been disrupted. In Connecticut, GLAD Law and attorney Kevin Barry

Justice (DOJ) filed in the Northern District of Texas to enforce a subpoena against a hospital in Rhode Island, getting a nearly immediate order with no notice to the families whose medical records were at risk. Then the government escalated its abuse of power again by threatening criminal investigation. We are not backing down.

In early May, GLAD Law, joined by the National Center for LGBTQ Rights (NCLR) and Brown Goldstein & Levy LLP, filed a nationwide class action to stop the DOJ from enforcing a wave of nearly identical civil subpoenas issued to hospitals across the country. Later that month, GLAD Law and NCLR, with Rosen Bien Galvan & Grunfeld LLP, filed a third suit on behalf of six California families asking a federal court to stop DOJ from using a grand jury subpoena issued more than 1,500 miles away to seize their children's confidential medical records from Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford.

"The federal government has no business prying into Americans' private medical records to serve a political agenda," said Jennifer Levi, Senior Director of Transgender and Queer Rights. "It's wrong to use the subpoena process as a political tool. It's bad because it will keep transgender people from getting the medical care they need. And it's bad for our public health system because it sends a message that no one's medical information is private."

represent 10 families challenging the abrupt termination of medically necessary care for transgender adolescents and young adults at Yale New Haven Health and Connecticut Children's Medical Center. The hospitals stopped providing care to patients under 19 for no legally compelled reason and despite Connecticut's strong nondiscrimination laws.

"These hospitals ignored their obligations under state law and put families in the awful position of having to rush to find alternative care or risk their children's health," said Staff Attorney Hannah Hussey. "Families have been forced to scramble for a new place to get the care their kids need while facing delayed treatment, increased health risks, financial burdens, and the trauma of losing trusted providers overnight."

This action is currently pending before the state's Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, while allied organizations pursue similar litigation in other states.

We are also in federal court challenging the abrupt reversal of Department of Defense policy after nearly a decade, to now prohibit military clinics and hospitals from providing continuing medical care for servicemembers' transgender dependents, and prohibit TRICARE, the military insurance plan, from covering the costs of care for transgender youth and young adults, no matter where it is received.

## Why We Support GLAD Law's Work



Every day, GLAD Law fights for the rights and freedoms of LGBTQ+ people and those with or at risk for HIV. As those rights face coordinated and relentless assault, our supporters have stepped forward with urgency and conviction.

**“As a physician providing PrEP, HIV, and gender-affirming care, I see every day how GLAD Law’s work protects both my patients and my ability to care for them. GLAD Law has profoundly shaped my own life as well, including my marriage of 12 years.”**

– Joe Metmowlee  
Garland, MD,  
GLAD Law Board  
President

**“GLAD Law’s work has helped make it possible for LGBTQ+ families like ours to live openly and with dignity. Supporting this work is deeply personal to us, and we’re grateful that our family and friends have stood beside us in helping advance equality for everyone.”**

– Katherine and Kimberly  
Weir, GLAD Law  
Supporters

**“When my wife and I were denied insurance coverage for IVF, GLAD Law stepped in and helped us get the coverage we needed to build our family. We continue to support their work because we’ve seen firsthand what it means for a family to have someone genuinely fighting in their corner.”**

– Katelyn Nerbonne,  
GLAD Law Supporter

## Attacks on Trans Youth Are Attacks on Us All. We Can Confront Them Together.

**Ballot campaigns in multiple states are cynically putting transgender young people’s lives and well-being up for public debate.** The political donors backing these measures treat bans on transgender youth participating in school sports or accessing health care as wedge issues to boost turnout in a high-stakes election year. But the consequences for transgender youth, their families, and state nondiscrimination protections are deeply real.

In Maine, Midwest billionaire Richard Uihlein funded a ballot measure to change state nondiscrimination law to bar transgender students of any age from participating in school sports – a central part of school life where young people

build friendship, teamwork, confidence, and belonging – and to limit their access to school bathrooms, putting their health and education at risk. To oppose this harmful initiative, GLAD Law co-founded the Campaign for Free and Fair Schools with Equality Maine, Maine Women’s Lobby, OUT Maine, and other partners. In May, however, a legal challenge uncovered multiple documented violations of signature-gathering rules by the petitioners. The Secretary of State issued a ruling disqualifying enough signatures to keep the measure off the November ballot, though further legal proceedings are pending.

While this is encouraging news so far in Maine, anti-transgender measures are still

pending in a handful of other states. These are not isolated battles – they are part of a coordinated, well-funded national strategy seeking to roll back LGBTQ+ rights by targeting some of the most vulnerable people in our community. These efforts are meant to divide Americans, weaken broader nondiscrimination protections, and build momentum for future attacks. This moment calls for action from the entire LGBTQ+ community and our allies. From campaigns to repeal local nondiscrimination ordinances to Proposition 8 and other state measures banning marriage equality, generations of LGBTQ+ people know the harm these initiatives can cause. We owe it to today’s transgender and queer youth to fight for them with everything we have.



“When I transitioned in 2006 while working for the Office of Naval Intelligence, it was luck, not law, that protected my job and our home. The legal victories that followed transformed luck into rights, and made the life and family I have today possible.

Those same protections are now under deliberate attack, and GLAD Law’s principled, strategic work is exactly what this moment demands. Because no one should have to build a life and a family on luck alone.”

– Alexandra Chandler, GLAD Law Board Member

“GLAD Law has forged ahead, always, regardless of political climate and in the path of all obstacles – GLAD Law is courageous, unflinching, focused on the future. It will take a generation or more to recover from the damage – to restore, rebuild, and continue the fight for equality. We are investing for the generations to follow, for our own kids and theirs.

We are believers in the power of coalition-building and of a broad, inclusive movement for equality. GLAD Law is trusted by so many because of its deep history of collaboration, mutual support, and community leadership.”

– Kate & Nima Eshghi, GLAD Law Board Member and Supporters

“For 15 years, I served on active duty in the United States Air Force with honor – completing overseas tours, leading in demanding environments, fully intending to serve until I could retire with dignity. Instead, I am being forced out because of the current administration’s ban on transgender servicemembers. I was granted early retirement by the Air Force, only to have it retroactively revoked after a policy shift.

GLAD Law has been a critical source of support and advocacy throughout this process. They understood that behind every policy decision is a real person whose livelihood, identity, and future are on the line. For the broader transgender military community, organizations like GLAD Law are indispensable. Their work gives transgender troops and veterans something that harmful policies try to take from us: dignity, protection, and the belief that justice is still worth fighting for.

I am proud of my military service. I am proud of who I am. And I am deeply grateful for GLAD Law’s willingness to stand beside transgender servicemembers like me when it matters most.”

– Logan Ireland, MSgt USAF (Ret.), GLAD Law Plaintiff

## GLAD Law Has Joined the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

GLAD Law is proud to join the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 240 national organizations fighting to protect, defend, and expand the rights of every person in the United States.

GLAD Law’s mission is rooted in the belief that dignity and equality are fundamental rights that belong to everyone. Our work for LGBTQ+ equality is intertwined with other

civil rights movements, and justice cannot be secured in isolation. The Leadership Conference creates opportunities to speak out with a collective voice, share strategy and expertise, and shape policies that make our society more free. We look forward to working alongside our fellow Conference members to advance a civil rights agenda that reflects our deepest values.



Former Rhode Island Governor Raimondo signing the 2017 bill that protects youth from conversion therapy

## The Legal Landscape for LGBTQ+ Youth Is Shifting. GLAD Law Is Meeting the Moment.

**A series of court decisions and lawsuits is reshaping the legal landscape for LGBTQ+ youth and their families, putting longstanding protections in education and mental health care under strain.** Amid intensifying attacks, GLAD Law is fighting to ensure LGBTQ+ young people can be healthy, safe, supported in all areas of their lives, and full participants in their education.

The US Supreme Court weakened Colorado's law prohibiting conversion therapy for minors in *Chiles v. Salazar*, raising questions about similar bans in 22 other states, Washington, DC, and other cities throughout the country. The Court ruled that Colorado went too far in regulating talk therapy, in violation of the First Amendment, and sent the case back to the lower courts.

GLAD Law filed a friend-of-the-court brief in *Chiles* on behalf of eight conversion therapy survivors whose stories showed how the long-discredited practice fractures families and isolates young people from their religious communities, highlighting the lasting trauma conversion therapy inflicts on individuals, families, and entire communities.

The Court's ruling was a blow to these survivors and others like them. Our community understands the harm caused by efforts to force us to deny or attempt to change who we are. But it's not the end of the story.

GLAD Law Staff Attorney Sarah Austin explains three important things to remember, despite this decision: "First, conversion therapy remains a dangerous, discredited practice – the Supreme Court cannot change what science consistently shows. Second, the Court made clear that practitioners can still be held liable for medical malpractice and consumer fraud. Third, GLAD Law and our national partners are already developing new legislation that can withstand the *Chiles* decision so states can continue protecting young people from conversion therapy."

Indeed, less than two months after the ruling, Colorado Governor Jared Polis signed a new conversion therapy ban designed to comply with the *Chiles* ruling's reasoning about so-called "viewpoint neutrality" while preserving protections for LGBTQ+ youth.

At the same time, courts are weighing challenges to school policies that support LGBTQ+ students, particularly transgender and gender nonconforming youth. As opponents of LGBTQ+ equality increasingly target schools, educators, and health care providers, courts are issuing mixed decisions about how institutions can support LGBTQ+ young people.

In March, the Supreme Court issued a ruling in *Mirabelli v. Bonta*, a challenge to California's policy barring school personnel from disclosing a student's change of name or pronouns to parents.

The Court allowed a lower court ruling against the policy to remain in effect while the case proceeds, signaling that the Court views blanket policies preventing conversations with parents as implicating parents' constitutional rights.

Issued through the Court's emergency, or "shadow," docket without full briefing or oral argument, the ruling nonetheless carries significant weight nationwide. The Court also suggested that a student's use of a different name or pronouns could implicate parental rights related to a child's mental health and well-being, without clearly defining when schools must involve parents or how broadly that reasoning applies.

On the other hand, in April, the Court declined to review *Foote v. Ludlow* and *Littlejohn v. School Board of Leon County*, leaving in place lower court rulings upholding some discretion for schools supporting transgender students. In *Foote*, the Court preserved a western Massachusetts middle school policy requiring student consent before informing parents about changes to names or pronouns at school. In *Littlejohn*, the Justices let stand a ruling rejecting claims that Florida educators violated parents' rights by excluding them from discussions about their child's gender identity.

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## PrEP Works. The States Must Protect Access.

**Thanks to PrEP, we're closer to stamping out HIV than we've ever been.**

There remains, however, a critical need to ensure this powerfully effective preventive medication is accessible to everyone at risk for HIV, especially now that potential federal regulatory changes could put PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) further out of reach. GLAD Law is redoubling efforts to protect and expand access to PrEP at the state level, most recently in Massachusetts.

It's impossible to overstate the potential for PrEP to eradicate HIV. Last year, the FDA approved a long-acting, twice-yearly injectable form (known commercially as Lenacapavir or Yeztugo) that has proven so effective in preventing HIV infections through sex or injection drug use that the journal *Health Affairs* calls it "a functional vaccine against HIV." Just two shots yearly from a doctor or pharmacist provide full protection; a once-a-year shot is expected soon.

PrEP has been available since 2012, but even in Massachusetts, long a leader in HIV prevention, only about 35% of those eligible to receive PrEP have an active prescription. Deep racial disparities, HIV stigma, cost barriers, health care bureaucracy, and inadequate insurance coverage prevent many of the people most at risk for HIV from accessing PrEP.

GLAD Law has been working for several years to pass state laws to overcome these barriers to access. Now, the need for state leadership is increasingly urgent.

Under current federal law and rules, insurance plans are required to cover PrEP, including injectable PrEP, at no cost and without prior authorization. The Affordable Care Act mandates free coverage for effective preventive services and medications, like PrEP, that are recommended by the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). And federal guidance prohibits prior authorization for PrEP medications.

Those protections are now at risk, because a 2025 Supreme Court decision gave the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) significant new power over the USPSTF. The Secretary can now appoint, remove, and override that panel's decisions at will.

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### LGBTQ+ YOUTH LANDSCAPE

"Collectively, these decisions leave schools navigating an uncertain legal landscape," said GLAD Law Senior Staff Attorney Chris Erchull. "The Court appears skeptical of policies that prohibit disclosure of information to parents. But schools can still maintain practices that give LGBTQ+ students space to understand themselves while at school and to initiate important conversations with their families safely and on their own timeline. Schools will need to make good-faith judgments in crafting policies that both foster partnership with parents and ensure a safe, supportive learning environment for all students – including LGBTQ+ students."

GLAD Law is working with policymakers to craft durable protections for transgender and gender nonconforming students amid this uncertainty. Amidst an environment where school policy feels uncertain, we are also helping families secure individual education accommodations for children with gender dysphoria, a medical condition some transgender people experience, consistent with federal disability laws requiring schools to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Developing new strategies is especially critical as the Supreme Court considers *West Virginia v. BJP* and

*Little v. Hecox*, cases that could impact how courts interpret sex discrimination protections for transgender students under Title IX. While a narrow but still harmful ruling could be limited to permitting states to categorically ban transgender girls from playing on girls' sports teams, a broad ruling could have the potential to also roll back other protections for LGBTQ+ students.

The decision could also directly affect GLAD Law's plaintiffs in *Tirrell and Turmelle v. Edelblut*, a challenge to New Hampshire's blanket ban preventing transgender girls in grades 5-12 from playing school sports. When students are excluded from opportunities in sports solely because they are transgender, the message is that transgender people do not belong in our schools. We must use all the tools at our disposal to fight back.

These are deeply personal stakes for LGBTQ+ youth. Courts are determining whether students can safely confide in a trusted teacher or join their friends on the school soccer team – and whether schools can continue supporting LGBTQ+ youth without fear of political retaliation or litigation. GLAD Law is working alongside families, educators, and advocates to defend LGBTQ+ youth in the courts, secure practical protections in schools, and ensure young people and the adults who support them are not left to navigate these attacks alone.

#### **LGBTQ+ STUDENTS, YOU (STILL) HAVE RIGHTS!**

Despite recent legal shifts, LGBTQ+ students still have the right to equal treatment and protection from bullying and harassment at school under federal law and many state laws.

Unless the Supreme Court rules differently, Title IX currently requires schools to provide LGBTQ+ students with equal educational opportunities and still gives students and parents the ability to assert their rights to a discrimination-free school environment under federal law.

Additionally, 19 states across the country and DC have laws protecting the rights of LGBTQ+ students in schools and will

investigate and enforce violations of those protections. GLAD Law Answers can help answer questions about the laws in your state: [GLADLawAnswers.org](https://GLADLawAnswers.org).

If you or a student you know has suffered bullying or harassment at school because of being LGBTQ+, we want to connect with you. Please visit us online at [GLADLaw.org/Briefs-TitleIX](https://GLADLaw.org/Briefs-TitleIX) to learn more or confidentially share your experience.



# Serving a Greater Audience

[GLADLaw.org/Events](https://GLADLaw.org/Events)



**27<sup>TH</sup> SPIRIT OF JUSTICE  
AWARD DINNER**  
Friday, November 6 | Boston, MA



**45<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SUMMER PARTY**  
July 18 | Provincetown, MA



**MAJOR DONOR RECEPTION**  
April 9 | Boston, MA



**SUMMER PARTY PRELUDE**  
July 17 | Provincetown, MA



**BOSTON PRIDE FOR THE PEOPLE**  
June 6 | Boston, MA



**WOMEN'S WEEK EVENT**  
October 10 | Provincetown, MA



**LEGACY SOCIETY BRUNCH**  
June 14 | Boston, MA





**PHILADELPHIA EVENT**  
April 23 | Philadelphia, PA



**RHODE ISLAND EVENT**  
May 27 | Providence, RI



**HOLIGAY DRAG TRIVIA**  
December 16 | Providence, RI



**PALM SPRINGS EVENT**  
March 15 | Palm Springs, CA



**NEW YORK CITY EVENT**  
September | New York City, NY

## WEBINARS

### JANUARY

**8<sup>TH</sup>**  
**LGBTQ+ Rights in New Hampshire**  
With ACLU NH, 603 Equality, and NH Outright

**29<sup>TH</sup>**  
**One Year Later: LGBTQ+ Rights Under Trump 2.0**

### FEBRUARY

**5<sup>TH</sup>**  
**Community Briefing on Transgender Rights at the Supreme Court and Beyond**  
With ACLU Massachusetts

### MAY

**20<sup>TH</sup>**  
**LGBTQ+ and HIV Rights in Connecticut and Beyond**

### JULY

**7<sup>TH</sup>**  
**Post-Term Supreme Court Community Briefing**

### AUGUST

**TBD**  
**Legacy Society Webinar**

### OCTOBER

**TBD**  
**Planning Ahead For the Next Supreme Court Term**

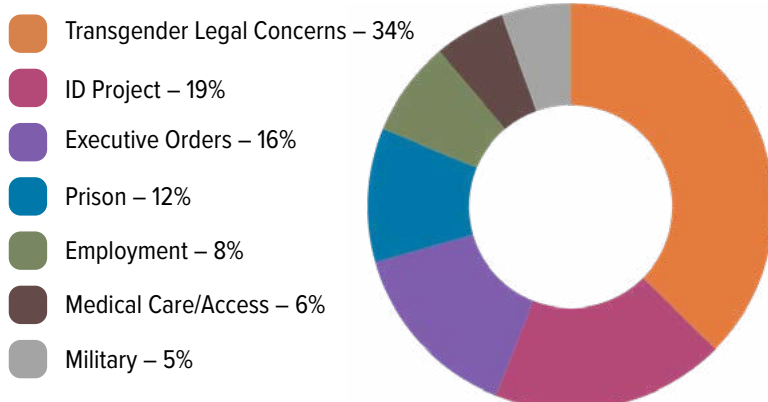
## A Lifeline for the LGBTQ+ Community

GLAD Law Answers is a free and confidential legal information line serving LGBTQ+ people and people with HIV.

## Community Centered, National Impact

**3,331** Intakes since Election Day 2024  
 From 46 states and Puerto Rico

### Top Issues Facing Callers Since Election Day 2024



## The Questions We're Getting Most

Right now, the greatest concern centers on **transgender rights**. Trans people and their family members are reaching out with urgent questions and fears about access to health care, updating identification documents, and the safety and logistics of travel. Many are feeling uncertainty about how shifting laws and policies may affect their daily lives and long-term security.

## GLAD Law Answers is a Bellwether

GLAD Law Answers provides a vital opportunity to learn directly from LGBTQ+ people about the most pressing issues facing our community. Often, we see trends in intakes before we see them in the news or in our casework. What we learn from callers helps inform the issues GLAD Law focuses on, including our impact cases that drive progress towards justice for all. A recent example is our case *Bernier v. Turbocam, Inc.*, where we represent a transgender woman whose employer denied her coverage for medically necessary care and is seeking to use religion to justify defying employment nondiscrimination law.

## ID Project

Having an accurate ID is a matter of dignity, safety, and the ability to do basic daily things like commute, shop, or apply for a job. For transgender people who need to update your name or gender marker, we can help. On our website, you'll find guides to do it yourself, as well as a form to request the support of an attorney.

Visit [GLADLaw.org/ID](https://GLADLaw.org/ID)



Kayden Hall, GLAD Law Answers Manager, and Gabrielle Navarro, Senior Manager of Public Information

**“When someone contacts GLAD Law Answers, they have often already reached out to a handful of organizations. We may be the first to respond. What follows – a sigh of relief, a thank you, a sense that someone is finally listening – is what this service is built for. It’s so meaningful that we are able to connect with people, listen empathetically, and share resources.”**

– Gabrielle Navarro  
 Senior Manager of Public Information



Lisa Rodriguez-Ross, Staff Attorney, speaking on the steps of the Supreme Court

**“The jail calls are the ones that stay with me. I’ve worked with LGBTQ+ incarcerated people seeking access to medically necessary care, private showers, outside specialists, and even the ability to marry or visit their partner. In those moments, what matters most is making clear: you are not alone, and we will do what we can to help you get the care and dignity you are entitled to.”**

– Lisa Rodriguez-Ross  
 Staff Attorney

# LEGAL UPDATES

## Litigation

### ENSURING ALL STUDENTS ARE FULLY INCLUDED AT SCHOOL

#### *Tirrell and Turmelle v. Edelblut*

Our lawsuit, *Tirrell and Turmelle v. Edelblut*, challenges HB 1205, a New Hampshire state law passed in 2024 banning all transgender girls in grades 5-12 from participating in school sports in public schools. In September 2024, the Court ordered that our high school student plaintiffs Parker Tirrell and Iris Turmelle be allowed to play sports during the litigation, ruling that the state law discriminates against transgender students in violation of Title IX and the US Constitution.

On February 12, 2025, a federal judge granted our request to expand our case to challenge President Trump's executive orders banning transgender girls from participating in school sports.

The case is currently on hold pending the outcome of *BPJ v. West Virginia State Board of Education* and *Hecox v. Little* before the US Supreme Court. We submitted a friend-of-the-court brief in these cases, arguing that these categorical bans discriminate based on sex in violation of Title IX. Our brief also lays out for the Court that, if a state's actual purpose is to ensure school sports are fair and safe for all students – rather than discriminate against transgender girls – there are alternative approaches involving case-by-case consideration that have worked well in school districts around the country for years.

### ENSURING PROTECTIONS FOR TRANSGENDER SERVICE MEMBERS

#### *Ireland v. USA*

In November 2025, we filed a case in the Federal Court of Claims in DC, challenging the Air Force's decision to revoke the already granted retirements of 17 transgender servicemembers following the implementation of the transgender military ban. These are individuals who have served between 15 and 17 years in the Air Force or Space Force and had received retirement orders that entitled them to a military pension and lifelong health care benefits.

Despite making a commitment to provide these benefits, the Air Force abruptly and baselessly reversed course and is

forcing these members to go through the involuntary separation process under the ban. Many had already made plans for their post-military careers – getting jobs, moving cross-country, enrolling their kids in schools, and more – only to have their benefits ripped away. On top of this immediate upheaval, they face losing up to \$1–2 million in lifetime pension benefits, as well as TRICARE health care coverage for themselves and their families. These are important benefits we promise in recognition of the sacrifices servicemembers make through long-term service that make retirement planning more challenging than it is for civilians. For example, the demands of their military careers often prevent them from buying houses to build equity and cause their spouses to forgo career opportunities.

We are asking the court to reinstate the rescinded retirements so that these servicemembers can retire with the benefits they and their families have earned.

*Ireland* was filed in partnership with the National Center for LGBTQ Rights, Eli Segel and Michael Weingartner of Stapleton Segal & Cochran LLC, and Jeremy Spiegel of The Law Office of Jeremy Spiegel.

#### *Talbott v. USA*

GLAD Law is challenging the Trump administration's executive order banning transgender people from military service – a policy that demeans transgender people as dishonest and unfit and purges them from careers they have built with courage and distinction.

While a May 2025 Supreme Court order – issued without full briefing and oral argument – in a related case allowed the administration to begin enforcing the ban, on June 1, 2026 the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit issued a powerful ruling blocking enforcement of the ban against the Talbott service member plaintiffs.

The decision is a powerful vindication of the plaintiffs' extraordinary courage and unwavering commitment to their country. It confirms that the Trump administration has no legitimate basis to discharge transgender service members who have met every demanding standard and proven, time and again, their fitness and dedication to serve.

On April 15, the plaintiffs in *Talbott* filed a motion asking a US District Court Judge to certify the case as a class action on behalf of all transgender servicemembers so that any ruling in the case will apply to all servicemembers impacted by the ban. A hearing is scheduled for this motion for June 30.

GLAD Law is joined in this lawsuit by the National Center for LGBTQ Rights, Joseph Wardenski of Wardenski P.C., Sara Kropf of Kropf Moseley PLLC, and Inga Bernstein of Zalkind Duncan & Bernstein.

### FILING TO STOP THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FROM UNLAWFULLY OBTAINING PRIVATE MEDICAL RECORDS

#### *In re: 2025 Subpoena to Children's National Hospital*

GLAD Law represents eight families who asked a federal court to deny a US Department of Justice (DOJ) demand for sweeping access to their private and sensitive medical information.

On January 21, the US District Court for the District of Maryland granted our motion to block a federal subpoena aimed at threatening transgender youth and their families and chilling access to lawful health care.

The court made clear that the government's actions lacked any legitimate investigatory purpose and instead served only to intimidate and harass those seeking care. This affirmation matters deeply for our clients at the heart of this case and for countless other medical providers and transgender patients nationwide who have been watching.

#### *In re: Administrative Subpoenas to Children's Hospitals: Seeking Class Relief*

GLAD Law also represents eleven families who have moved for a class action to block DOJ from obtaining sweeping access to private, protected health information about transgender youth from hospitals across the country.

The class action filing is in response to escalating efforts by DOJ to force hospitals and providers to turn over patients' private medical records, including personal identifying information, despite multiple federal court orders prohibiting the government from obtaining that information from multiple hospitals. DOJ

has aggressively accelerated its efforts to get patients' protected information. In early May, DOJ filed a petition in the Northern District of Texas to enforce a subpoena against Rhode Island Hospital. That petition was granted within hours and without any notice to patients.

The families we represent argue that without class-wide protection, DOJ will continue unlawfully obtaining transgender minors' protected information hospital by hospital, faster than any individual can go to court to stop them.

**Z.A., et al. v. Lucile Salter Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford**

GLAD Law represents six California families in asking a federal court to stop DOJ from using a grand jury subpoena issued more than 1,500 miles away to seize their children's confidential medical records from Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford.

**PROTECTING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE**

***Bernier v. Turbocam, Inc.***

We represent Lillian Bernier, a machine tool operator at Turbocam, a large, private manufacturer of aerospace parts. Because her employer denies her insurance coverage for her doctor-recommended medical care related to gender transition, she sued under non-discrimination laws protecting transgender individuals. Turbocam's argument is that the religious beliefs of the company's owner are a legal justification for its discrimination. In October 2025, GLAD Law filed a motion for summary judgment asking the court to rule in favor of Lillian because the company is wrongfully using religion to try to sidestep employment discrimination laws. We anticipate a ruling later in the year.

***Doe v. Department of Defense***

Three military families are suing the Department of Defense after an abrupt and unlawful policy change that blocks their transgender dependents from accessing essential medical care. For nearly a decade, servicemembers and their families relied on the military health system to provide this care.

Last spring, the Trump administration ordered the Department of Defense to prohibit military clinics and hospitals from providing care to transgender adolescent and adult dependents and barred TRICARE, the military's insurance plan, from

covering these services anywhere. The directive was issued without the legally required notice to Congress or affected families, leaving families scrambling to find new providers, forced to pay out-of-pocket, or risk their dependents' health.

This was a sweeping reversal of military health policy and a betrayal of military families who have sacrificed for our country. When a servicemember is deployed, they deserve to know their family is taken care of.

We filed on behalf of the families in the US District Court for the District of Maryland along with our partners NCLR, Brown Goldstein & Levy, LLP, and Kecker, Van Nest & Peters LLP.

**Challenging Denials of Care at Yale New Haven Health and Connecticut Children's Medical Center**

Ten Connecticut individuals and families are challenging the sudden termination of medical care for transgender adolescents and young adults at Yale New Haven Health and Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Both hospital systems abruptly stopped providing medically necessary care for transgender patients under 19 in late July 2025, leaving patients and their parents stunned, and families scrambling to find alternative options for ongoing care for their children to avoid serious health risks. No federal policy compelled the hospitals to take this action.

In partnership with counsel Kevin Barry, we filed complaints with the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities on December 16, 2025, challenging the termination of care under Connecticut nondiscrimination law.

**PROTECTING TRANSGENDER PEOPLE IN PRISON**

***Doe v. Blanche***

At the beginning of President Trump's second term, GLAD Law brought three challenges to his executive order directing the Bureau of Prisons to transfer transgender women in women's prisons to men's prisons without regard to individual health and safety risks. We obtained preliminary injunctions blocking those transfers.

Following an appeal of those injunctions, GLAD Law filed motions for new preliminary injunctions on May 12 to stop the Trump administration from putting 15 incarcerated transgender women at extremely high risk of rape, violence, and sexual assault by forcing them to live in

men's prisons. The motions were filed in the Federal District Court for the District of Columbia and provide detailed evidence of the severe harms faced by each woman and the government's unconstitutional and deliberate indifference to their safety. A hearing is expected on June 8.

GLAD Law is joined in this litigation by the National Center for LGBTQ Rights (NCLR), Lowenstein Sandler LLP, and Brown Goldstein & Levy LLP.

***Poe v. US Department of Justice***

GLAD Law is representing a transgender woman challenging a December 2025 Department of Justice memo that unilaterally suspended longstanding federal regulations protecting incarcerated transgender people from sexual abuse. The complaint, filed in the US District Court for the District of Columbia, asks the court to set aside the memo as procedurally invalid under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA).

Federal government data show that transgender people in prison are sexually abused or assaulted at nearly 10 times the rate of the general prison population. Multiple peer-reviewed and government studies have found that more than half of transgender women housed in men's facilities have been sexually assaulted while incarcerated – many of them repeatedly. The suspended regulations were designed precisely to address this documented, disproportionate risk.

The plaintiff, Paulina Poe, is a transgender woman who is currently incarcerated. She has been propositioned, groped, sexually harassed, and assaulted in a men's facility, and has been strip-searched by male officers – experiences the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) regulations were designed to prevent. She is not asking for special treatment. She is asking for the protections Congress determined more than a decade ago that every incarcerated person deserves.

Our lawsuit is asking the court to declare DOJ's memo unlawful, stop implementation, and restore the existing PREA regulations.

GLAD Law is joined in this lawsuit by the National Center for LGBTQ Rights, Lowenstein Sandler LLP, and Wardenski P.C.

## Amicus Briefs

### **Chiles v. Salazar**

On March 31, the US Supreme Court issued a ruling that Colorado's conversion therapy law, as applied to talk therapy, regulates speech.

Every major US medical association confirms conversion therapy – the practice of trying to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity – is both harmful and ineffective. Colorado's law, like laws in 22 other states and Washington DC, prohibits licensed mental health professionals from engaging in conversion therapy with minors.

The Court ruling does not change the fact that conversion therapy is a dangerous, unscientific practice that tries to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. Studies show that conversion therapy increases the risk of suicidality, depression, and anxiety.

GLAD Law and our partners are working to ensure that families know how the practice fractures families and isolates young people from their religious communities, and working with states to update laws to protect LGBTQ+ youth and ensure licensed practitioners who harm patients can be held accountable.

### **Foote v. Ludlow**

In April, the US Supreme Court preserved a First Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that upheld a Ludlow, Massachusetts public school's policy supporting transgender students. *Foote v. Ludlow* was filed in reaction to steps taken by teachers and staff to provide a supportive environment for students who requested the school use different names and pronouns. GLAD Law submitted a friend-of-the-court brief in June of 2023 with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, detailing how a positive school climate is crucial to educational success for all students.

The First Circuit ruling in the case, which the Supreme Court declined to add to its docket, affirmed that the school's action to support transgender students were squarely within the purview of educators and other school personnel to ensure a positive learning environment where all students can thrive.

### **Opposing Changes to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program**

On February 24, GLAD Law led a coalition of several nonprofit organizations to submit friend-of-the-court briefs in two cases involving a Department of Education change to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program. The program change creates a broad definition of "substantial illegal purpose" for a range of legal activities the administration does not like and provides the Secretary of Education with a sweeping new discretion to disqualify an employer from participating in the PSLF program based on that definition.

Created in 2007, the program forgives the balance of a borrower's federal student loan once they have made 10 years of payments while working at a qualifying public service entity, such as a government agency or nonprofit organization.

The new rule threatens entities engaged in lawful activities like supporting immigrants and providing or advocating for access to health care for transgender youth. It amounts to the federal government using debt to go after the work of social service, health care, and advocacy organizations, making it more costly and difficult for employers to recruit and retain employees, and steering student borrowers away from public service.

## Legislation and Policy

### **A Step Forward for Fertility Care Access in Connecticut**

Many people need fertility health care to build their families and paying out-of-pocket for care is not accessible for most families who do not have fertility insurance coverage. LGBTQ+ people face often prohibitive costs for care or must prove their infertility with less reliable, self-paid treatments.

As part of Fertility Access Connecticut, a coalition of LGBTQ+, reproductive health, and fertility care advocates, GLAD Law supported the passage of HB 5374, a bipartisan bill which requires private insurers in Connecticut to provide coverage for fertility health care for LGBTQ+ couples and single individuals. The bill brings Connecticut's private insurance market in line with the current standard-of-care definition. This bill is a step toward addressing the barriers to

family building many people currently face in Connecticut.

Longer-term we are supporting similar legislation in Rhode Island, as well as legislation in Rhode Island and Connecticut that would address the lack of access to fertility treatments under their state Medicaid Programs. The legislation would provide coverage for the diagnosis of infertility, fertility preservation services, and some forms of fertility treatment and would align the definition of infertility with the current medical standard of care as articulated by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine.

### **Protecting Access to PrEP in Massachusetts**

Only 35% of eligible people in Massachusetts have an active PrEP prescription – despite it being nearly 100% effective. As federal attacks threaten access, GLAD Law is working to enshrine PrEP protections into state law, so no one faces cost barriers to a medication that can end the HIV epidemic.

GLAD Law and Fenway Health lead a coalition in Massachusetts to expand access to PrEP by supporting legislation that codifies into state statute current federal law and policy requiring insurance coverage for all FDA-approved HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) medications without co-pays, deductibles, or prior authorization.

The measure, included in the House Ways and Means Budget, passed the Massachusetts House on May 6. As we go to press, we are awaiting the vote in the Senate.

### **Updating Family Recognition Laws to Be Child-Centered and Protect All Families**

A secure legal tie between a child and their parents is critical to children's wellbeing. State laws that recognize the relationships of children to their families must include all children and their parents. GLAD Law is leading work to pass state updates that include LGBTQ+ families and families grown through fertility care. We celebrated the passage of the Delaware Uniform Parentage Act in May and are supporting efforts to pass similar bills in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

GLAD LAW

## 2026 SUMMER PARTY

Saturday, July 18 | Provincetown, MA



## 45th Annual Summer Party

[GLADLaw.org/events/2026sp/](https://GLADLaw.org/events/2026sp/)


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Exact location shared upon registration. Venue is mobility accessible.

Questions or seeking accommodations? Please contact **Michelle Peng**, at [events@gladlaw.org](mailto:events@gladlaw.org) or call (617) 426-1350.

*Thank you to our co-chairs and sponsors!*

**Co-Chairs**

Katherine &amp; Kimberly Weir

**Ruby**Miren Etcheverry & Maureen McCarthy  
Matthew McTygue & Todd Rivers**Opal**Liam & Thomas Drury-Wang  
Meryl Epstein & Trish Nuzzola  
Marc Maxwell**Gold**Peter Epstein  
Katherine & Kimberly Weir**Silver**

Nima &amp; Kate Eshgi

We hope you can join us!



from page 5

## TRANS HEALTH CARE

“This is a sweeping reversal of military health policy and a betrayal of military families who have sacrificed for our country,” explained Staff Attorney Lisa Rodriguez-Ross. “When a service member is deployed and focused on the mission, they deserve to know their family is taken care of. These families give so much, and instead of honoring that sacrifice, this administration is stripping away the medical care their children desperately need. This is not support for our troops. It is abandonment. We are in court to hold the government to the promise it made to every family that answered the call to serve.”

Beyond the courtroom, GLAD Law also weighed in on a proposed federal rule from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that would strip all Medicare funding from any hospital providing medically necessary transgender health care to minors. GLAD Law, NCLR, and COLAGE filed formal comments urging withdrawal of the rule, arguing it is legally indefensible, medically unsound, and part of a broader effort to pressure hospitals into abandoning transgender patients by threatening their federal funding.

That proposal is part of a wide-ranging federal strategy that courts are also increasingly recognizing as unlawful overreach. In April, a federal judge blocked a directive from Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. that similarly sought to restrict transgender health care by threatening hospitals’ federal funding. The court blocked the directive and criticized the administration for exceeding its authority and attempting to impose sweeping restrictions on medical care through executive action rather than lawful rulemaking.

As these attacks continue, GLAD Law remains committed to defending the ability of transgender people to access safe, well-established medical care without political interference, fighting federal overreach, and holding states accountable for their obligations to ensure access to health care for all residents.

## New GLAD Law Staff

### **DONOVAN BENDANA** **LIMAN LAW FELLOW**

Donovan Bendana (he/him) returned to GLAD Law as a Liman Law Fellow in August 2025 after having previously served as a legal intern. Donovan is a native New Orleanian and graduate of Duke University and Yale Law School. During his time in law school, Donovan was a member of OutLaws, the Reproductive Rights & Justice Project, and the Veterans Legal Services Clinic. In addition to his time at GLAD Law, Donovan also interned at NCLR, Human Rights Campaign, and the Williams Institute. After his fellowship at GLAD Law, Donovan will serve as a law clerk for Judge Julie Rikelman on the US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.

### **BEN MARCUS, SENIOR** **CONSTITUTIONAL LAW FELLOW**

Benjamin P. Marcus (he/him) is a Senior Constitutional Law Fellow with GLAD Law. He rejoins GLAD Law after clerking for the Honorable Judith W. Rogers of the US Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. He previously served as a GLAD Law Constitutional Law Fellow in 2023-2024, and he was a Legal Intern in summer 2021. As a Senior Fellow, Ben will help GLAD Law strengthen legal strategies to defend the constitutional rights of the LGBTQ+ community from ongoing attacks, including attempts to undermine or overturn marriage equality and other legal rights and protections.

Ben also has deep interest in the relationship between religion and law. His past research projects have examined the intersections of religious literacy, religious liberty, constitutional interpretation, and education in the United States, expressed in multiple book chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles, and national columns. From 2017-2020, he served as the religious literacy specialist for the Religious Freedom Center of the Freedom Forum, where he developed religious literacy programs for public schools, universities, businesses, and government organizations. In 2018, he traveled to Albania as a Fulbright Specialist to advise Ministry of Education officials on developing national policies related to religion and education.

Ben earned a J.D. at Yale Law School, where he served as a Coker Fellow in Constitutional Law, a notes editor on the Yale Law Journal, and the co-

president of OutLaws. He also attended Harvard Divinity School as a Presidential Scholar, where he earned an M.T.S. with a concentration in religion, ethics, and politics. As an undergraduate, he studied religion at the University of Cambridge and Brown University, where he graduated magna cum laude.

### **AMY OJEABURU, PARALEGAL**

Amy Ojeaburu (she/her) joined GLAD Law's legal support staff in July of 2025, shortly after she graduated from Harvard University with a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Throughout her time in college, Amy was involved in several research projects on subjects ranging from self-defense law and intimate partner violence to Indigenous American earthworks and public memory. In her free time, she enjoys trail running, cafe-hopping, and taking long walks along the Charles.

### **ANGELA WU** **CONSTITUTIONAL LAW FELLOW**

Angela Wu (she/her) joined GLAD Law as a Constitutional Law Fellow in September 2025 after serving as a law clerk to Associate Justice Rachel Wainer Apter of the Supreme Court of New Jersey. She is a graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School. During law school, Angela interned with the Boston Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement and the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (now Advocates for Trans Equality). She was also a student attorney with the Harvard Law School LGBTQ+ Advocacy Clinic and the Harvard Prison Legal Assistance Project. Before law school, Angela worked as a paralegal with the Public Policy Litigation & Law Department at Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

### **ANDY MENDEZ** **DATA AND RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

Before joining GLAD Law as the Data and Research Assistant in 2025, Andy (they/ them) was a Legal Content Specialist and Presidential Management Fellow with the US Patent and Trademark Office. Andy got their start in nonprofit legal services through AmeriCorps-funded positions at Legal Aid Chicago and Illinois Legal Aid Online. In 2023, Andy earned their MBA in nonprofit administration from Brandeis University in Greater Boston. On campus, Andy was an active student leader, beginning in their very first semester with roles at the Brandeis Gender & Sexuality

Center and the LGBTQ+ Business Student Association.

In their free time, Andy enjoys going for long walks, watching fantasy shows on Netflix, and listening to Arabic music that was popular in the mid-2010s, back when they were a Gender Development Specialist with the Peace Corps in Morocco.

### **SUSIE HUSTED** **LEGAL TEAM OPERATIONS MANAGER**

Susie Husted (she/her) joined GLAD Law as the Legal Team Operations Manager in September 2025. She brings experience across many professions, including law firms, libraries, museums, and non-profits, most recently serving as a supervisory paralegal in the Civil Division of the US Attorney's Office in Boston.

At the US Attorney's Office, Susie was the lead paralegal for the District's nationally recognized affirmative civil enforcement group, handling complex white collar health care fraud litigation, and she supervised a team of paralegals supporting a wide range of civil cases, including fair housing, ADA, employment discrimination, and medical malpractice claims. Susie's leadership extended to national working groups tasked with developing guidance and training programs for all USAOs. She served as the first non-attorney co-Chair of the e-Litigation Working Group, and she founded and served as the first Chair of a working group advocating for better working conditions for support staff.

Before joining the legal profession, Susie served as program manager for a New York-based environmental group lobbying for conservation and drinking water protection, and as project coordinator for the 2004 Boston Social Forum, a regional conference of civil society organizations held before the 2004 Democratic Convention. Susie's career experience also extends to information management. After obtaining her Master's Degree in Library Science from the City University of New York at Queens College, she worked as a public and academic librarian in New York and New Hampshire, and was active with non-profit and professional associations advocating for information equity for young adults in the LGBTQ+ and Native American communities.

In addition to her Master's, Susie holds a BA from the University of New Hampshire and a Leadership Development Certificate from Columbia University's Institute for Not-for-Profit Management.

## Leading With Values: Eastern Bank's Commitment to Equality



**The list of corporations that have dissolved or scaled back Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs** – including LGBTQ+ initiatives – since the start of the second Trump administration is lengthy. It includes many companies long seen as allies. Eastern Bank isn't on that list.

"One of our core values is diversity, equity, and inclusion," said Bob Rivers, Eastern Bank's executive chair and chair of the board. "Another is innovation, and they're linked. Engaging different perspectives leads to better performance, thinking, and understanding."

Under Rivers's nearly two decades of leadership, Eastern has grown dramatically – transforming in 2020 from the nation's oldest and largest mutual bank to a public company with \$25 billion in assets and 100+ locations in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Last month, it finalized its acquisition of Brockton-based HarborOne Bancorp, continuing steady expansion.

Rivers also strengthened Eastern's legacy of community building, accessibility, and philanthropy with major investments in the LGBTQ+ community, crediting the 2010 acquisition of Wainwright Bank, a staunch LGBTQ+ ally, with spurring this focus. That year, Eastern became the first of 70 business signatories on an amicus brief opposing the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in our Gill v. OPM lawsuit. The bank also began sponsoring GLAD Law's Spirit of Justice Award Dinner and providing other generous support.

Rivers's personal commitment to equality is just as powerful. In 2018, he rallied business leaders to support the "Yes on 3" campaign defending Massachusetts' trans-inclusive nondiscrimination law. He supports GLAD Law individually as a member of our Equal Justice Council.

Unsurprisingly, Eastern Bank has earned a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index for 11 consecutive years.

We spoke with Rivers about remaining steadfast in supporting LGBTQ+ inclusivity amid the Trump administration's anti-DEI push, and why other businesses should do the same. "We've got to fight like hell," Rivers

said. "As a society, we've come too far to go backwards."

### **Given the decline in DEI, it's refreshing to hear you discuss its benefits. What values underlie Eastern Bank's support for LGBTQ+ inclusion?**

Our mission has always focused on those who are less represented in our society, going back to our founding in 1818. We were the third mutual bank established in the US, as a bank for all people at a time when there was no national currency or banking system, and only the wealthy had access to merchant banks. Our founders unlocked that capital not just for their own businesses but to provide a safe place to save and borrow for everyone – including women, for whom we were among the first in the country to allow to open bank accounts.

Our emphasis upon supporting the LGBTQ+ community began with our merger with Wainwright Bank because that was an organization that was beloved in the gay community, deservedly so. We wanted to show we were worthy of the mantle, that we could carry it forward, and also elevate it.

### **What is Eastern Bank doing to ensure federal anti-LGBTQ+ policies and rhetoric don't undermine your employees' sense of safety and belonging, especially now?**

Internally, we use many tools, including anonymous surveys that gather some demographic information, to gauge how people are feeling.

We now have 13 employee resource groups (ERGs), including Equality Under the Blue for LGBTQ+ employees. These employee-organized groups make sure we're connected in community, aware of the issues, and identifying advocacy and sponsorship opportunities. They help us understand employees' experiences and where we should lean in.

We use the Corporate Equality Index metrics to measure how we're doing as a business in the eyes of the Human Rights Campaign and the broader LGBTQ+ community.

Our DEI dashboard tracks demographic

representation across leadership, the board, and other roles. We set targets for diversity because as a community bank we want to reflect the people and places we serve. It begins with talent and fit – but with strong intentionality around proportionate representation.

Our purpose statement is, "We do good things to help all people prosper," and that's our guiding principle. I always talk about Eastern as a social enterprise wrapped in a financial services company, because our mission and values are really at the core of who we are. The financial services business provides us the resources to advance that mission. In these times we've decided to stay the course. I wrote to all employees in March explaining that DEI is in our DNA, rooted in our history and our values, and changing that would undermine the essence of who we are.

### **How does Eastern foster intersectional collaboration?**

Intersectionality is essential. We're a diversified business and we worry about siloism in our organization because our business thrives on collaboration, cross-referrals, and mutual relationships. It's the same with our ERGs. They sponsor events open to all, and often collaborate. Employees may be part of Equality Under the Blue and also the Black Professional Alliance, Latinos in Action, or Parents and Families. That overlap makes conversations richer and helps people see that everyone carries multiple identities that aren't always visible. That opens your perspective, making you more welcoming, and it bonds people because they realize that fundamentally we care about the same things. As a result, we track intersectionality in our DEI dashboard and surveys.

### **How would you like other businesses or leaders to show up for the LGBTQ+ community right now?**

I'd like them to be consistent and continue the work they had been doing. We've marched in Boston Pride, for example, for

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many years, and a lot of companies dropped out this year due to fear of backlash by the Trump administration or whomever. Some of those fears are real, some imagined, some of them are overplayed.

Even as a public company, shareholders have never pushed back on any of our advocacy. Analysts don't tell me, "Gee, we're worried you're putting your business at risk." When closing our latest merger with HarborOne, no one questioned whether our stances would affect approval. So, my advice to businesses: it's not as risky as you think.

I know that's easier for me to say because Eastern New England is our market focus. Businesses headquartered here that have significant operations in red states are being scrutinized for their practices. And even though they may have backed off DEI in those locales, those states are using it as a wedge against what those businesses might do here.

Our approach is to think about what our values are and stand behind them and fight for them, as opposed to fighting against something or someone else.

**Eastern Bank has supported GLAD Law in many ways. Why is it important for you to support our work?**

GLAD Law is on the front line of advocacy for the nation with respect to LGBTQ+ rights. You're an essential partner because we aren't lawyers; we care and want to support and amplify the work, but we need GLAD Law to help educate us on where to lean in.

**Can you share examples of any lessons learned?**

I first met Mary Bonauto in 2010 during the Wainwright merger. She asked us to sign the amicus brief in the DOMA lawsuit. I said, "Count us in." Our involvement

gave us a level of knowledge and led to things we did on our own. Under DOMA, same-sex spouses weren't recognized in the federal tax code, so we paid affected employees a stipend to offset the disadvantage in their tax benefits until the law was struck down.

We also switched our health insurance provider, with whom we had a long relationship, because we wanted an insurer that would cover transgender health care.

**You really walk the talk.**

We want employees to know this isn't lip service. We care about them, we care about the communities they're part of, and we're going to take action through philanthropy, policy, and advocacy.

Our mantra is "right and smart." What do we believe is the right thing to do, and how is it synergized with our business, which is the smart thing to do? Often, the synergy is just the platform our business gives us to talk to other businesses. In talking to other business leaders about LGBTQ+ or other issues, I don't spend a lot of time on the "right." Sadly, the moral imperative may not always resonate [in business conversations], but "smart" always does. If you can address how supporting a particular cause is good for business – be it talent attraction, retention, development, your customer base, reputation, etc. – they're with you.

In times like these – when civil rights, the LGBTQ+ community, and democracy itself are under threat – many companies have abandoned practices they once knew were both right and smart, and in doing so they've undermined their own credibility. For Eastern Bank, we chose this road a long time ago. This is who we are, and that's the hand we're going to play.

*This article originally appeared in the Winter 2025 Briefs and Annual Report*

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**PrEP ACCESS**

This means the current administration could roll back PrEP's no-cost coverage requirement and reverse at will the prior authorization guidelines – resulting in out-of-pocket costs, new insurance hurdles, and increased obstacles to PrEP access.

GLAD Law is supporting legislation advanced in the Massachusetts House budget that codifies into state statute the current federal law and policy requiring insurance coverage for all FDA-approved PrEP medications without co-pays, deductibles, or prior authorization. Like Massachusetts' recent action to decouple vaccine approval provisions from the federal framework, this measure takes the same step with respect to PrEP. If passed in the Senate and signed into law, it will help prevent a decline in utilization and realize the promise of PrEP to eradicate HIV.

We're grateful to Massachusetts House leadership, including Speaker Ron Mariano, House Ways and Means Chair Aaron Michlewitz, and Majority Leader Michael Moran, as well as House and Senate bill sponsors Representative Jack Lewis and Senator Julian Cyr, for recognizing that we cannot rely on a federal government that has shown hostility to HIV prevention and public health; Massachusetts must act now.

Preventing HIV isn't just about medical advances; it is a policy choice. When cost, stigma, bias, red tape, and political agendas stand between people and prevention, infections rise. When access is simple, affordable, and widespread, infections fall.

"PrEP is our best opportunity to end the HIV epidemic, but that potential only matters if people can actually get it," said Ben Klein, Senior Director of Litigation and HIV Law. "Right now, federal actions are putting that access at risk. States have the power to step in and codify coverage for PrEP without cost and prior authorization barriers. Massachusetts continues to be a national leader to ensure that this lifesaving prevention reaches everyone who needs it."



**Want to keep getting updates on LGBTQ+ and HIV advocacy?**

Sign up for our email list, get the latest on GLAD Law's work and how you can help protect LGBTQ+ rights and keep our community moving forward.

Already on our list?

Make sure your email provider is letting our emails through. Add [gladlaw@gladlaw.org](mailto:gladlaw@gladlaw.org) to your contacts or safe sender list today.

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