

SALUTE THE RAINBOW FLAG

The most potent weapon against the lesbian and gay community has been the stereotypes that we have ourselves aided in creating. Our parades are videotaped, but only our campiest brethren are not edited out; our statements are recorded, but only the most extreme are heard; our disagreements are noted, but only the most politically correct are not filtered out. We find ourselves portrayed as an army of leather and feather clad politically correct hot-heads marching in lockstep (in heels??) to the beat of the same drummer.

And yet, when any group raises its head, not to denounce our more eccentrically coffered siblings, but to disagree with the community's self appointed coat-and-tie leadership, we are ostracized.

It is not too much to say that there is a concerted effort within the gay and lesbian community to suppress the pro-life message. If you come forth as a pro-life gay man or lesbian, you are likely to be accused of sedition. To speak in defense of the unborn is to violate the last taboo of the gay community. The argument that sexual privacy rights necessarily are dependent on abortion rights is specious. In the 1973 the Supreme Court ruled that abortion was a constitutionally protected privacy right: In 1986 the Supreme Court ruled that consensual homosexual relations were not. Therefore, for lesbians and gays this specific constitutional theory of privacy rights is irrelevant.

When was the last time that the Human Rights Campaign Fund or any local gay political action committees endorsed a pro-life candidate for office -- even if that candidate was also pro-gay? And what about the routine diversion of funds raised by AIDS walks to abortion providers -- and this in the name of compassion for people with AIDS? Pro-life gays and

lesbians -- even those who have lost loved ones to AIDS -- have actually found themselves excluded from AIDS walks because they objected to this practice. When any march or rally is proposed to seek redress of a grievance of the lesbian and gay community -- anti-gay violence, for example -- it must be joined in equal measure with a demand for reproductive freedom and abortion on demand. We are exhorted in our publications and e-mail to resist any restriction on abortion as if it intended to replace the daily execution of 4400 of the unborn with 4400 of our own.

Of all Americans, those of us in the sexual minority community have the most reason to be concerned about protecting human life. After all, we know what it is to have our lives and rights trampled on, especially the basic human right just to keep on living. Homophobia has placed our right to life in danger every day: ask anyone who has been bashed or someone whose insurance will not cover lifesaving medical care. We fight back in every way that we can: we organize, we lobby, we vote. We claim the same basic rights heterosexuals take for granted.

But lesbian and gay Americans are not the only ones whose rights are jeopardized. Everyday, the ugly face of prejudice shows itself when the rights of others are shortchanged because of gender, race, state of health, ethnicity, religion, politics, etc. The gay community has come to the realization that we cannot work for our own rights alone but must work to achieve basic human rights for all those who suffer discrimination.

Why? Because our rights and the rights of others are the same human rights. As gay men and lesbian women, we stay that all human life deserves dignity and respect. No human life should be considered expendable and the basic right to live should be guaranteed without threat or harassment. That includes the

unborn, a voiceless minority with no defense against the worst of all abuses: death. Some 4400 are wiped out every day. Why must we speak for unborn people? Simply because they are people. To be pro-life and pro-gay is to affirm that human rights are not discretionary.

America's abortion policy violates this basic concept of human rights. Just like homophobia, abortion denies people their status as members of human society. Just like homophobia, abortion tries to rid society of real human beings who are considered threatening or undesirable. Just like homophobia, abortion denies one's place as a member of human society and even one's right to be alive in it.

No, not all lesbians and gays are "pro-choice" and it is far past the time when the stereotype imposed on us by some of the "leaders" of our community attempt to force upon us is removed. No survey suggests that members of the sexual minority community are any more pro-choice than the average American. While equal rights have not yet been won, we have grown into a community as diverse as the nation. Closet doors have been abandoned by the thousands. Invisibility and fear are fading into history. Gays and lesbians come from many different backgrounds and hold widely differing belief on many issues. We represent a diversity and pluralism of beliefs at which the rainbow flag only hints. To attempt to enforce a "party line" on all members of our community is to betray the very cause we are fighting for: The right to be different.

For years, mainstream society has rightly been condemned for not letting lesbians and gays participate fully in the American dream. Now we, in turn, are not permitting our own to be fully active in gay society. We wave rainbow flags and envision multi-colored mosaics but somehow these colors fade away when gay pro-lifers attempt to join the parade. Gays and lesbians who tout ideological diversity prove

themselves hypocrites when they ostracize gay pro-lifers.

If the gay movement is to win the struggle against bigotry and intolerance in mainstream American society, it must first eliminate bigotry and intolerance within its own ranks. We must not do the work of homophobes for them by stereotyping ourselves and enforcing a blanket of political correctness. Even worse, they hinder our entire march of civil rights. When gays and lesbians stereotype themselves with a uniform of political correctness, we make it easy for anti-gay fanatics to smear all of us.

The existence of the Pro-Life Alliance of Gays and Lesbians (PLAGAL) shreds both the stereotype which the lesbian and gay community has of pro-lifers as well as the stereotype which the straight community has of lesbian and gay Americans. The voices of lesbian and gay pro-lifers are testimony that gays and lesbians are, indeed, everywhere.

Twenty-five years ago others fought for our rights at Stonewall and we can best honor their memory by defending the rights of others today. Not only the rights of unborn Americans, but also the free speech rights of gay and lesbian Americans. After all, the fight at Stonewall was for our right to be different, not merely to replace the conformity demands of straight society with the conformity demands of certain elements of gay and lesbian society.

The freedom of gays and lesbians -- not the extermination of the unborn -- must be the benchmark for gay liberation.

Join Us

If you're part of the GLBT community or just an open minded individual who shares our Pro-life convictions, we invite you to join PLAGAL.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Membership: \$20.00
Includes subscription to PLAGAL
newsletter

Additional Donation: Contributions are
tax deductible

- \$10
- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- \$ _____

Mail To:

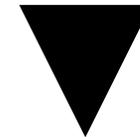
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**Human Rights Start
When
Human Life Begins**



**Pro-Life Alliance of
Gays and Lesbians**

*Educating the community
Serving the individual*