

OUT FOR JUSTICE

Equality For Families

The Supreme Court's recent decision in our marriage equality case brought the freedom to marry to the entire country, affirming the equal dignity of our families.

This is a tremendous victory, but the law does not yet fully protect all LGBT families, who continue to face challenges and roadblocks because state laws haven't caught up with the diversity of family life in the 21st century.

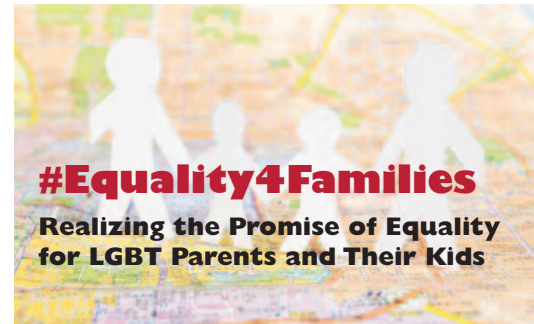
NCLR has launched the #Equality4Families campaign to raise awareness about the need to continue and deepen our work to reform state laws so that they fully protect parents' rights to care for their children. Since our start in 1977, we have worked tirelessly to ensure that every family in every state is fully protected by the law.

We have made tremendous progress, but there are still many legal obstacles that families face across the country. For instance, some LGBT parents are still at risk of losing their children because many states do not have adequate protections for non-biological parents. This can be true even for married parents, especially if they married after their children were born.

Married lesbian parents could also be at risk of having their sperm donor recognized as a legal father—instead of the non-biological mother—in some states, if they used a known sperm donor.

Until we achieve #Equality4Families, NCLR still strongly recommends that every non-biological parent get an adoption or a court judgment recognizing them as a parent. Unfortunately, this is still the only way to make sure that parents will be legally recognized in every state.

We have come so far, and we can finish this work together. NCLR will be here fighting for our families until all families, married or not, are fully respected by the law in every state.



Debbie and Kari Chin, with their two children, and two other couples are NCLR's plaintiffs in a case challenging Florida's refusal to acknowledge them as parents on their kids' birth certificates.



Learn more about #Equality4Families at www.NCLRights.org/Equality4Families

Letter From the Executive Director

I've been at NCLR for 21 years, Executive Director for 19 years. In those two decades I've had my heart broken and spirit wounded as I've met and talked with thousands of LGBT individuals, young and old, who suffered the harms of growing up and living in a culture that refused to see our humanity and in many cases, actively suffocated our dignity and belief in what was possible.



Kate Kendell, Esq.

Those decades and the innumerable sacrifices so many in our community made, the hundreds of cases and clients NCLR has championed, the countless losses of relationships, family, jobs and lives have not been in vain. We have now witnessed an almost unimaginable sea-change in America. We are witnesses to a new high-water mark in our movement.

Winning marriage equality bends the arc of the moral universe and it gives us a window into all that is possible. When NCLR began litigating marriage and relationship recognition cases 15 years ago I did not imagine we would see this day so soon. Nor did I imagine that NCLR would be at the U.S. Supreme Court as co-counsel in one of the cases that won the freedom to marry. I dreamed, but did not really believe. And yet, here we are.

I know winning marriage equality and the events of this year will not soon be surpassed. I also know that the close of the chapter on marriage equality is not the end of story of the liberation of LGBT people. As you read these pages you will get a snapshot (we only have so much room) of how much work still remains. But look what you helped us do. The nation tilted closer to living up to its promise of "equal justice under law" this year. Please help us make that promise a reality for everyone in our community.

Let's do this!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kate Kendell'.

Kate Kendell, Esq.
NCLR Executive Director

Supporting Transgender Students

Now that summer is coming to a close, parents and school-aged children are preparing for a new school year. For many, this process is just as care-free as the summer itself: shopping for clothes, getting new school supplies, comparing class assignments with friends, and squeezing out as much from the remaining summer as humanly possible.

But transgender students typically don't have that luxury. Unlike their non-transgender peers, the lead-up to the first day of school can be unnerving, especially if they transitioned over the summer break.

While parents of non-transgender students jockey to get their children into the "best" teacher's class, the parents of the transgender student are meeting with school and district administrators to ensure that their child's gender identity will be respected and that the school will create a safe and supportive learning environment for students. In other words, these parents are asking that their child be treated

like all the others—that transgender girls are treated like all other girls and transgender boys like all other boys.

This basic request is often met with lots of discomfort and concern and turns into a summer-long negotiation between the school and parents. This is particularly true when a school is asked to provide a transgender student with access to the bathroom or locker room that matches the student's gender identity.

But, it doesn't have to be that way. Having worked with families, schools, and districts across the country, we know that school and



At right: Asaf Orr, NCLR's Transgender Youth Project Staff Attorney, with client Brock and his mother, Shauna.

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#Rural Pride

The centerpiece of the #RuralPride campaign is a series of day-long summits hosted by USDA, NCLR, the True Colors Fund, and a number of local partners based in rural communities across

the country. In August, NCLR visited Lexington, KY and Jackson, MS. These summits give us a chance to focus on the unique needs of the rural LGBT community, highlight the important federal policy efforts underway to protect this community, and identify next steps to ensure all rural communities have access to the resources they need to thrive.



NCLR's Ming Wong presents during a panel discussion in Lexington.



Left to right: Ashlee Davis, USDA's Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights; Lexington, KY Mayor Jim Gray; Julie Gonen, NCLR's Federal Policy Director.

Learn more at www.NCLRights.org/RuralPride

Ariana Finds Safety and Asylum in San Francisco

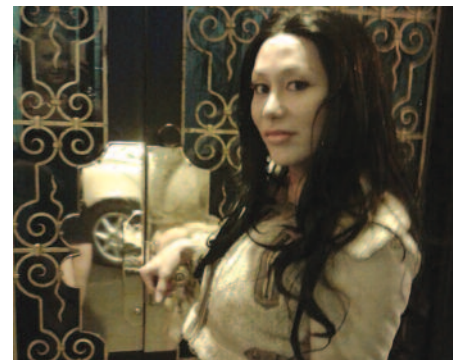
At just 12 years old, Ariana found herself living on the streets of El Salvador when her mother kicked her out of their home after Ariana told her she is transgender.

“I told her ‘I don’t know what’s happening to me, but I felt myself to be a woman,’ ” said Ariana, who was abused, harassed, and threatened by her mother as well as others in her community because she’s transgender. “I tried to beg her and tell her it wasn’t my fault.”

To survive, Ariana was forced to become a sex worker, where she faced further abuse and extortion by one of the most violent gangs in South America. Tired of the abuse, she and her friends turned to local police for help, only to face death threats once the gang discovered they

had been reported. Fearing for her life, she fled to Mexico, where she continued to face torment by others—and even from a member of the Salvadoran gang who had tracked her down.

Desperate to survive, she fled to the United States/Mexico Border and told immigration officials she was in danger and needed help. Upon her release from the Otay Immigration Detention Facility, she found refuge in San Francisco and was able to connect with a support group. In 2014, Ariana came to NCLR, where we represented her before the San Francisco Immigration Court. A year later, we helped her gain asylum. Thanks to NCLR’s Immigration Project, Ariana has started a new life in this country, where



NCLR Asylum Client, Ariana.

she can finally be herself. Ariana continues to take English classes and currently works at a hair salon, where she hopes to bring positivity and beauty to individuals through her work. Finally, she says, she’s happy and no longer lives with the type of constant fear that dominated her youth.

Supporting Transgender Students

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district administrators want to support the transgender students in their schools—they just don’t know what that support looks like.

That is why Asaf Orr, our Transgender Youth Project Staff Attorney, created *Schools In Transition: A Guide to Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools*. He is one of the nation’s leading experts on transgender youth and was one of the lead authors of the publication.

This first-of-a-kind publication walks parents, educators, and school administrators through

the process of supporting a transgender student’s transition. By providing the background information on the needs of transgender students combined with field-tested tips, the guide creates a roadmap for successfully supporting a transgender student, helping them navigate a task that would otherwise seem daunting and overwhelming. Following those steps ensures transgender students get the support they need, and the school fosters a safe and welcoming environment where all students can learn and grow.

Download the guide at www.NCLRrights.org/SchoolsInTransition

NCLR

**THE NATIONAL CENTER
FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS
NEWSLETTER
FALL 2015**

NCLR is a national legal organization committed to advancing the human and civil rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community through litigation, public policy advocacy, and public education.

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870 Market Street
Suite 370
San Francisco, CA 94102
Tel 415.392.6257
Development@NCLRrights.org

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