

Working with Faith Communities for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Human Rights



Analysis of same-sex adoption laws in Arkansas

The Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative released “Faith and Family Equality” this May with generous support from the Arcus Foundation. The report examines the 2008 ballot initiative in Arkansas that aimed to ban same-sex adoption and analyzes the efforts of religious groups on both sides of the issue: conservatives who sponsored the initiative, worked to get it on the ballot, and engaged in a strong grass-roots campaign to win, as well as moderate and progressive religious groups who joined with LGBT advocates, children’s rights experts and advocates, medical professionals, and others to defeat the ban. The ban passed in November 2008, but an Arkansas state judge struck down the law as unconstitutional earlier this year. “Faith and Family Equality” provided an in-depth analysis of the battle and created a list of “lessons learned” to help LGBT and faith groups work more effectively in coalitions in Arkansas and in states across the country. We paired the report’s release with an advocacy briefing to LGBT rights advocates and religious leaders involved in adoption policy.

Collaboration between faith and advocacy groups in Michigan

It is important for advocates fighting for equal rights to engage strategically with progressive and moderate faith communities. The Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative conducted in-depth interviews and onsite roundtable conversations this year with over 90 faith and LGBT leaders in the state of Michigan to assess effective collaborations and challenges between the faith and advocacy communities. The project also sought to discover levels of awareness regarding second parent adoption, as well as its “winnability” compared to other LGBT issues in the state. We prepared this work for the Arcus Foundation.



Bishop Gene Robinson

CAP was proud to announce in March that Bishop Gene Robinson joined CAP as a part-time, visiting Senior Fellow. Bishop Robinson brings a well-respected religious perspective to various areas of public policy, including LGBT rights, economic justice, and health care. Bishop Robinson has made significant contributions since joining CAP, including writings on the separation of church and state in repealing “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” and a published *Washington Post* op-ed on the Catholic church’s sex abuse scandal.

CAP hosted an event in June on global LGBT rights with Bishop Gene Robinson, Uganda Bishop Christopher Senyonjo, and Assistant Secretary of State Michael H. Posner. The conversation addressed LGBT issues in Africa, including antigay legislation and religious forces that are fueling hatred, in particular recent efforts in Uganda's parliament to make homosexuality punishable by death or long-term imprisonment.



What religious groups are doing on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues

The Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative monitors religious progress on LGBT issues across the nation and has most recently spotlighted the steady progress of two important religious groups in America: the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and evangelical communities. We covered the PCUSA's convention this summer, where representatives voted to allow ordination of LGBT church leaders and to extend benefits to same-gender partners of church staff, but not to allow discussion of expanding the definition of marriage. We

also highlighted recent polling within evangelical communities—particularly young evangelicals—regarding legal recognition of same-gender relationships through either civil unions or marriage.

Moving forward

The Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative will continue its state-specific research on faith and LGBT collaborations this fall. We will build on findings from our Arkansas report to work with faith leaders, advocates, and others. The goals are to strengthen collaborations between LGBT and faith communities, identify promising leaders, and highlight what works. We will also continue our work with LGBT Progress—CAP's program dedicated to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights—in order to bring authentic faith voices and messages to the struggle for equality and human rights.

For more information about our work on LGBT issues, please visit: www.americanprogress.org/projects/faith/

The Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative of the Center for American Progress works to identify and articulate the moral, ethical, and spiritual values underpinning policy issues, while also working to safeguard the separation of church and state and promote a society and government that strengthens the common good and respects the basic dignity of all people. Here are some highlights from our recent work on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equality.