

Legal Change in Quebec without required genital surgery

After over 2 years, it is finally over. There are many details, but for the purposes of getting this out to everyone who may be affected, they are not listed here.

There are many FTMs who have moved out of Quebec, but nevertheless had to have their birth certificates altered here. They too were unable to do so unless they underwent surgeries that are now no longer required.

Dale Altrows completed his gender transition at the Gender Programme of the Montreal General Hospital, one of three Gender Clinics in Canada. He has had hormone therapy, a mastectomy, and a complete hysterectomy: the interventions required by the Director of Civil Status prior to this whole affair.

In December 1996, D.A. applied for a change of designation of sex status. After months of bureaucratic wrangling, the Name Change Bureau informed Dale Altrows that a vaginectomy would be required before a gender change could be le-

gally recognized.

Several experts and surgeons in the field of transsexuals intervened, and the Bureau withdrew this demand - only to insist upon the need for the « construction of male sex organs » a full ten months later!

On March 24th, 25th and 26th, the hearing of D.A. vs. Guy Lavigne was to take place at the Superior Court of Quebec in Montreal. For the first time a decision of the Director of Civil Status concerning the change of designation of sex was being challenged.

Mr. Altrows was being opposed by the Attorney General of Quebec, which had intervened to represent the Director of Civil Status, Mr. Guy Lavigne.

On March 3rd, the Director of Civil Status had decided to revise his previous refusal and to accord the change of designation of sex. This decision therefore clarifies a law that was wrongly

being interpreted, disabling the transphobic attitudes of the bureaucrat who arbitrarily imposed such unreasonable demands, as well as preventing such happenings to occur in the future.

The interventions which are therefore now legally required to Change one.

Phyllabuster note: It just proves that when a good idea's time has come, many people independently discover it at about the same time. And so it is with my push of recent years, as you read in the Virginia Prince acceptance speech, for removing the LEGAL NEED for genital surgery.

Others were pushing the same idea. Happy days for this courageous FTM. Send him lots of love and congratulations for "staying the course." Well done, Dale. Contact him at: tada@sympatico.ca.

As many of you may already know, I have been involved in a major battle with the Quebec government regarding civil status (name and designation of sex).

Equality denied at home

Equality denied at home: Visibly gender variant people are not included in Maryland Antidiscrimination Bill despite assurances by Gay and Lesbian Lobby Group

Silver Spring, Maryland - Maryland's House of Delegates passed an antidiscrimination bill yesterday that provides protection from discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations for gay men, lesbians and bisexuals with passing privilege (who are straight-appearing and acting).

However, House Bill 315 does not cover visibly gender variant people, which includes effeminate gay, bisexual and straight men, masculine lesbian, bisexual and straight women, and transsexual, transgendered and intersexed people.

The bill originally contained fully inclusive language that would have provided protection to all gender variant people in Maryland. During hearings for the bill, Liz Seaton, Executive Director of the Free State Justice Campaign (FSJC), was asked by a committee member if her organization would continue to support the bill without the new inclusive language.

According to an eyewitness, Seaton chose not to express her organization's unequivocal commitment toward the new language.

The House Judiciary Committee apparently took her answer as a go-ahead to adopt "compro-

mise" language, stripping the section of the bill protecting visibly gender variant people.

Visibly gender variant people (who lack passing privilege) comprise a sizable minority of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community of Maryland.

It's Time, Maryland! (ITMD) a state chapter of It's Time, America! has been advocating for the rights of transgendered and other visibly gender variant citizens of Maryland for the past five years.

During that time, ITMD has fought for inclusive antidiscrimination language in FSJC's antidiscrimination bill, finally achieving that goal this session.

Accordingly, ITMD members have worked closely with FSJC, serving on committees and also contacting their delegates and state senators to express their support. Two transsexual women even testified for the bill, at no small risk to themselves.

Violence against transgendered people, while under-reported in the media, has reached pandemic levels.

1999 marks the fourth time in five years that the Free State Justice Campaign has either blocked the inclusion of visibly gender variant people or failed to deliver on its promise to include them. "We are extremely disappointed - again - to not

be included in the antidiscrimination bill" said Mary Konchar, ITMD Co-chair and a resident of Baltimore. ITMD

Spokesperson Jessica Xavier said, "It's clear that we were the bargaining chip. FSJC made us the sacrificial lamb to pass this bill." She added, "While excluding transgendered people is nothing new for FSJC, they've also betrayed visibly gender variant gay men and lesbians. They've sold out their own kind.

In a front page article in the March 20 (Saturday) Baltimore Sun, Delegate Dana Dembrow (D, District 20) was quoted as asking his fellow House Judiciary Committee members, "So why are we saying it's OK to discriminate against transsexuals?" That question might better have been asked of the Free State Justice Campaign.

(Phyllabuster note: In my personal opinion, there are maybe five other TG activists that I respect as much as Jessica Xavier, certainly none more.

With great courage, she and her friends keep fighting for justice in Maryland. This time the TGs were screwed again by the state lesbian and gay political group during the very week that many of us celebrated "Equality Begins at Home." But it seems for the TGs in Maryland it was "Equality Denied at Home."

Gender Questioning Teen in Cleveland Ends the Pain

Cleveland, OH: Fifteen year old Nicole Seely identified as a boy. "She decided that her outside persona was more like a boy," said her mother, Elaine. "She presented this to the world and said, 'This is who I am.'"

The Cleveland News-Herald reports that, since 3rd grade, Nicole had "gravitated toward masculinity" according to her father, Greg. She wore short hair, boys' clothes, and acted like a tomboy.

For defying gender norms so blatantly she paid the price at school. Classmates taunted and ridiculed her. The problems grew worse when she entered 8th grade. Life became miserable for her. "It wasn't just guys, it was girls too that were ha-

arrassing her," said her mother.

Nicole kept her problems to herself. Even school officials were unaware of the severity of the situation. On 13 Oct 98 Nicole could take it no longer.

She killed herself using her father's .22 rifle. "She pulled the trigger... because she felt it was the only way she could escape the torment inflicted on her by her classmates," said June

Said Shiplett, a friend of the family. "Every day she went to school was torture for her and she didn't know how to stop it."

(Phyllabuster Note: How many of us have the scars on our wrists from when we had enough pain? Unfortunately, the newspaper reporter

contributed to the problem of future teens by using the wrong pronouns in the article.

This young man deserved the courtesy of masculine pronouns. It is amazing to me how even a suicide does not seem to earn the right to the proper pronouns to some clod-heads. I hope that the journalist organizations will wake up, damn it!

I hope that all the local groups that deal with homeless teen "gays" will take a tip and recognize that some of these teen "gays" may in fact be teen "tgs".

For good books on the issue of our TG children, contact justevelyn@earthlink.net and MaryBoenke@aol.com.)