

PTOWNWEST

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P TOWNWEST

*The mission of Ptownwest is to reconnect,
promote and create gay community*

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Winter Party Attendee Who Caught Coronavirus Posts Shocking Photo of Virus' Effect on his Body

When Mike Schultz attended the National LGBTQ Task Force's Winter Party in Miami, he had no idea what the consequences would be. Held right on the cusp of nationwide shutdowns and bans on large gatherings, several of the circuit party's attendees later tested positive for coronavirus.

"I wanted to show everyone how badly being sedated for 6 weeks on a ventilator or intubated can be," Schultz posted on Instagram along with shocking before-and-after photos of the toll the virus took on his body.



"Amongst other things, covid19 reduced my lung capacity with pneumonia. Over 8 weeks I've been away from family and friends Getting stronger every day and working to increase my lung capacity."

At least three men have died from COVID-19. Schultz was hospitalized for weeks on a ventilator; approximately 90% of victims put on the machine do not survive.

A registered nurse from San Francisco, it was Schultz's first time attending the bash. He traveled back to Boston with his boyfriend after the party and was hospitalized in New England.

He was released from the hospital yesterday several pounds lighter, but in good spirits - especially after being reunited with his partner. He's a survivor.

UMass Amherst Economist M.V. Lee Badgett Makes "The Economic Case for LGBT Equality" in New Book

AMHERST, Mass. - Finding that homophobia and transphobia cost 1% or more of a country's GDP, University of Massachusetts Amherst economist [M.V. Lee Badgett](#) argues in a new book that in addition to moral and human rights reasons, we can now also make a financial argument for LGBT equality.

In "[The Economic Case for LGBT Equality: Why Fair and Equal Treatment Benefits Us All](#)," published today by Beacon Press, Badgett uses recent research and statistics to analyze how hostile anti-LGBT practices and environments affect both the U.S. and global economies.

In a [recent review](#) of the book, the literary trade publication *Kirkus Reviews* wrote that Badgett's "concise, sound arguments demonstrate why it is necessary to 'expand freedom and equality' across the globe," and that the book is "both a convincing discussion and a call to reformative action for LGBT equality across economic sectors of the world." "The economic case works," Badgett says. "In the U.S. we've seen it help us move toward marriage equality. The ability to marry was good for the economic well-being of LGBT families, and also brought new opportunities to local businesses. That example can be applied in many other parts of the world.

Badgett notes that LGBT equality remains a persistent and pertinent issue worldwide. The continued passing of discriminatory laws, the prospect of dismissal from jobs due to sexual orientation and or gender identity, harassment and bullying in school, the threats of violence and hate crimes on the streets, exclusion from intolerant families and the health effects of stigma all make it incredibly difficult for members of the LGBT community to live their lives.

In examining the consequences of anti-LGBT practices across multiple countries, including the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Australia, India and the Philippines, Badgett reveals the expensive repercussions of hate and discrimination, and how our economy loses when we miss out on the full benefit of LGBT people's potential contributions. She likewise demonstrates how LGBT equality and inclusion within organizations increases their bottom line, thereby allowing for countries' economies to flourish.

"The denial of LGBT equality is morally wrong," says Janet Yellen, Distinguished Fellow at the Brookings Institution and former chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve. "Lee Badgett's superbly researched book also shows the immense economic losses that result from this inhumanity. Eye-opening in its global scope, this book is a must-read for all business leaders and policymakers." A professor of economics and former director of the School of Public Policy at UMass Amherst, Badgett's previous books include "*Money, Myths, and Change: The Economic Lives of Lesbians and Gay Men*" and "*When Gay People Get Married: What Happens When Societies Legalize Same-Sex Marriage*," from which she drew in her testimony in the landmark *Perry v Schwarzenegger* trial challenging California's Proposition 8 referendum banning same-sex marriage.

More information about the new book, and a link to purchase it online, is available on the [Beacon Press website](#).



How Technology can Reduce Isolation for LGBTQ Elders

Today we are all adapting to the complications of COVID-19 and its impact on our daily life. As we abide by current “stay-at-home” orders, we are learning how this reality may affect others in our communities. Researchers have found that social isolation and the subsequent feelings of loneliness can be [lethal](#). The AARP Foundation put some perspective on this when it [announced](#) that social isolation can cause similar health effects to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

While we are all experiencing some level of isolation, the difficulty truly is compounded for some at-risk communities. Perhaps these feelings are no greater than for our LGBTQ older adults, who already have a higher percentage of health issues ([Williams Institute](#)) that could lead to more serious risks from COVID-19. Their need for accessible connected technology may exceed those of other communities; a high-speed broadband connection to shop for groceries at home, communicate with healthcare providers without leaving home, and stay informed with news and information from the immediate community as well as broader public health updates.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed existing inequalities, and exacerbated struggles already present for vulnerable populations. [Reports](#) estimate that there are around 3 million LGBT adults over age 50, and by the end of this decade the number will grow to around 7 million. LGBT older individuals’ loneliness and isolation are compounded by several factors: they are twice as likely to live alone; four times less likely to have children; often confront discrimination and social stigma; and are more likely to face poverty and homelessness and be in poor health. The Williams Institute [has revealed](#) that older LGBT adults face social and health disparities in a number of critical areas, resulting in worse physical and mental health compared to heterosexual older adults.

The current economic conditions add another layer of stress to an already burdened community. While many have experienced financial hardship during this pandemic, LGBT people [collectively have](#) a poverty rate of 21.6%, which is much higher than the rate for the cisgender straight people of 15.7%.

All of these factors contribute to the health and wellbeing of the LGBTQ older adults during this COVID-19 pandemic. For all LGBTQ individuals, going online has always been a “must-do” activity. Research conducted by The [LGBT Technology Partnership](#) has revealed that 80% of LGBTQ respondents participate in a social networking site (such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter) compared to 58% of the general public. Searching the internet for health information is particularly important for lesbians whose unique health needs are often overlooked.

The LGBTQ older community are a critical at-risk segment within the larger digital divide plaguing our aging population. With only a little over half of those age 65 who now have broadband at home ([Pew Research](#)), the opportunity for older “at risk” communities existing in isolation without a tech “lifeline” raises great concern.



We suggest that a multi-pronged approach is essential to serve this underserved community. First, the policy world needs to increase efforts to expand telehealth services, especially for older patients, to help combat the realities of the coronavirus.

Additionally, as the country moves to contact tracing it is vital to remember that any tech-heavy solution may have a disparate impact on seniors who may be less tech savvy than other populations.

Finally, support must be maintained and even increased to community and social organizations that target older LGBTQ individuals. Community centers, places of worship and social organizations that cater to this community need to receive special training, education and resources that can help protect this vulnerable population.

The COVID-19 virus will continue to affect each of us, but the increased vulnerability of our senior and LGBTQ communities requires unique strategies to ensure everyone stays as safe and healthy.



At Least 117 Members of the LGBT Community Were Killed in Mexico in 2019 ‘Because of Their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification’

- 117 members of the LGBT community were killed in Mexico in 2019, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's first year in office
- According to Letra S, a gay rights organization in Mexico, the 2019 murder figures eclipsed 2018 totals by 27 percent
- Letra S said the victims were killed because of their sexual orientation
- A total of 441 LGBT persons were murdered during the last five years in Mexico
- Recent data shows that 26 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people have been killed this year through April 30

Why Banning Anti-LGBT ‘Conversion Therapy’ isn’t Enough

Lawmakers around the world have proposed new legislation to ban ‘conversion therapy’ - attempts to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

In Canada, for example, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said banning conversion therapy was a “top priority” for his government, while lawmakers in Australia, France, Ireland, New Zealand, and Spain have also called for bans.

The UN’s special rapporteur on torture has said that, in some instances, conversion therapy can “lead to severe and life-long physical and mental pain and suffering and can amount to torture and ill-treatment.” According to the American Psychological Association, ‘conversion’ or ‘reparative therapy’ for LGBT people has been linked to cases of depression, anxiety, and suicidality.

In 2018, the European Parliament called on states to ban these practices - though it did not give guidance on how conversion therapy should be defined or curbed. This is important because the details matter, and a rush to adopt punitive

legislation, imposing criminal penalties on non-violent and non-coercive practices as well as abusive ones, has overshadowed the need to support survivors.

Countries are doing the right thing by regulating coercive and harmful 'gay cures'. But these laws must be based on human rights and offer meaningful solutions for people who are harmed - rather than focusing almost exclusively on penalties for practitioners, which is the path that many countries seem to be following.

In 2016, for instance, Malta became the first country to ban some forms of conversion therapy. Practitioners face fines of up to €5,000 or six months in prison, with stiffer penalties for licensed professionals

Germany's parliament recently approved a ban on promoting or providing conversion therapy for under-18s, and made its practice a criminal offence punishable with imprisonment.

Ireland, New Zealand and France are considering criminalising advertising or performing conversion therapy on children and adults, with prison terms for offenders. In Ecuador, conversion therapy practices comparable to torture can be punished with up to thirteen years in prison

Protecting human rights

While these responses are new, conversion therapy isn't. It grew in popularity in the 1960s and '70s, when homosexuality and transgender identity were considered mental disorders and 'cures' included counselling, physical punishment and even surgical intervention.

Since then, LGBT identities have been widely recognised as a normal form of human development; the World Health Organisation has declassified 'homosexuality' and 'gender identity disorder' as mental disorders; and 'conversion' attempts have been discredited as ineffective and harmful.

Despite these changes, attempts to 'cure' LGBT people persist globally. A key challenge for lawmakers seeking to ban these practices is that they involve a wide range of activities including verbal and emotional abuse, restrictions on movement, physical and sexual assault, talk therapy and religious counselling.

Proposed bans in Ireland and New Zealand do not distinguish between different forms of 'therapy', all of which would be criminalised.

Backers of a ban in France have also signalled that they intend it to be sweeping, and for it to expressly regulate religious counselling.

These moves are potentially problematic. To be consistent with human rights principles, such bans must include safeguards for expression, so that speech that is not coercive or abusive isn't criminalised. Penalties such as incarceration should be strictly proportionate to the harm caused.

Lawmakers certainly can and should ban practices targeting vulnerable individuals, including children. These activities also can be prohibited within therapeutic or commercial settings as fraudulent or unethical.

They can reinforce that message by requiring mental health professionals to learn about the dangers of conversion therapy, and by investing in public educational campaigns against these practices, including in schools.



But they must be clear and precise about what bans prohibit, and careful not to criminalise private opinions about same-sex activity or transgender identities. This would be bad for freedoms of belief and expression - and it could turn campaigners against LGBT rights into martyrs, giving them new platforms.

Supporting survivor

A human rights approach to conversion therapy would not be purely punitive. It would focus on delegitimising conversion therapy practices, holding practitioners accountable for damage they cause, and supporting survivors.

While criminal law is one tool, lawmakers could also expand civil liability for the physical or mental pain and suffering that conversion therapy can inflict.

Taiwan, for example, fines practitioners and suspends their professional licences, and similar penalties have been levied in Brazil. Most of the US states that have banned conversion therapy impose professional disciplinary measures on practitioners, not criminal penalties.

Effectively addressing conversion therapy requires training mental health professionals to affirm a diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities. It means creating and publicising systems for individuals to report abuse. And it means funding and expanding services for survivors, as Germany has.

Eliminating discrimination in practice as well as policy and law, would be a huge factor in reducing the numbers of conversion practitioners' clients.

Ultimately, the most effective and rights-respecting approach is to bring about a world where efforts to change sexual orientation and gender identity are widely recognised and rejected as a harmful fraud.

#OrlandoStrong

A memorial to the victims of the Pulse nightclub mass shooting was vandalized by white supremacists. The mural is located on the side of the Orlando LGBTQ organization, The Center.

A white nationalist hate group, The Patriot Front, appears to be responsible. Stickers from the group were placed on the mural.



"I was eating tacos next door to The Center (an LGBTQ organization) and wanted a photo of this mural. I took a picture then noticed something was covering the P," they wrote. "I walked up and it

was a sticker of a man with a gun and an American flag type background. Under it gave a website for the group Patriot Front. I was upset someone would vandalize the mural, ripped it down and threw it away, didn't think to take a photo of the sticker. The ones at the bottom of this collage are similar."

"I didn't Google the group until I got home then found out they were white supremacist and the group is responsible for the shooting in Charlottesville at the rally. I went to The Center's Facebook page and saw that they were also vandalized today by someone cutting their phone lines. I have messaged them my findings. Stay safe Orlando and f**k these guys. Rip down any stickers you see like this."

Orlando Weekly also reports that The Center's phone lines also appear to have been cut. The aid organization was unable to field calls from those in need during the pandemic.

"Thank you to everyone from around the corner and around the world for reaching out with messages of love," The Center posted on Facebook. "We felt it! #OrlandoStrong"

On June 12, 2016, Omar Mateen entered the nightclub and began shooting patrons of Pulse's Latin Night at 2:02 am. He later pledged allegiance to ISIS, motivated by Islamic extremism.

A national memorial has been planned at the site of the attack.

LGBT Moments At Biden Virtual Fundraiser

Former Vice President and presumptive Democratic Presidential nominee Joe Biden attended a virtual fundraiser on Wednesday evening in which he mentioned recently deceased transgender Supreme Court litigant Aimee Stephens and three LGBTQ policies he'd fight for as president.

Biden said he was about to call Stephens when his aide stopped him to say she had passed away.

During the fundraiser, Vlada Knowlton, a mother of a transgender child, asked Biden what he'd do to protect the trans community from discrimination and "unjust attacks."

In response, Biden mentioned the recent death of Aimee Stephens, a funeral home worker whose firing for being trans is currently being examined by the U.S. Supreme Court, potentially determining trans employment rights for generations to come.

“I was supposed to call her [on Tuesday],” Biden said. “I had her picture and her bio on my desk, I was supposed to call her. I’m looking over at Annie (Tomasini, his traveling chief of staff), I guess it was yesterday at 2:00, and Annie came in to me with tears in her eyes and said they passed away,” Biden said.

Biden then said as president he’d ban conversion therapy, something he called “sick,” get the Equality Act passed through Congress, allow trans people to join the military again, and allow trans people to choose their correct gender when registering to vote.

“You ought to be able to just put X on sex, and be able to – you don’t have to explain a damn thing. If you’re a registered person in that place, you should be able to vote,” Biden said.

Biden also plugged the re-election campaign of Alabama Senator Doug Jones.

“It’s a stupid thing for me to say,” Biden said, “if you’re gonna give me a little extra money don’t. Send it to Doug Jones. I really mean it ... He’s a good decent man, he’s the kind of person we’re talking about.”

Jones has a gay adopted son, Carson, who gave anti-gay Vice President Mike Pence some serious side-eye when Pence swore-in Doug to the senate.

Earlier this month two major LGBTQ rights organizations endorsed Biden for president.

Ruth Shinn, Advocate for Women and LGBT People, Dies at 97

Ruth Shinn, who made a national name as an advocate for gender, racial and LGBT justice but was known in her family for a childlike joy about things like sharks' teeth, blooming mountain laurels and swimming in her 90s, died May 1. A

presumptive cause, her family said, was covid-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

Shinn's 97 years included phases living in different parts of the world, but her last 50 years were spent in Washington.

She served as chief of the legislative analysis division of the Labor Department's Women's Bureau, where in the 1970s she played a key role in strengthening affirmative action requirements for federal contractors, particularly around gender, said her grandnephew Marc Shinn-Krantz. She was a founding member of the National Women's Political Caucus, which recruits women to run for political office, and was on the working group for then-first-lady Hillary Clinton's health-care task force in 1993, Shinn-Krantz said.

Shinn for about a quarter-century - 1944 to 1969 - - worked in leadership at the YWCA, her grandnephew said, including as vice president of the national board. Her passion, he said, was improving gender and racial equality, and she helped racially integrate student dorms at the University of Nebraska's YWCA. She worked for the group at Carnegie Mellon and in Utica, New York.



Shinn was also the first woman to serve as moderator - or leading officer - of First Congregational United Church of Christ in the District of Columbia, her grandnephew said. In the 1970s the congregation was deeply divided over the leadership's decision to host Metropolitan Community Church, one of the early LGBT religious denominations. It voted for MCC to leave.

With her 1955 degree from Yale University's divinity school, she helped lead the congregation to a later

vote to continue sharing space with MCC, Shinn-Krantz said. Church remained an important part of her life to the end.

Shinn-Krantz said that while Shinn had huge professional success after she retired in 1995, younger people in her family associated her with hosting big, warm gatherings at her cottage on the Chesapeake, blowing huge bubbles and swimming several times a week in her 90s.

"She was so into things. We'd be driving past mountain laurels in bloom and she'd be wildly gesticulating about it. It could have been anything - she was just so enthusiastic," he said. The cottage was "the most amazing place. But it was her, not the place."

Ruth Shinn never married or had children. She was born May 30, 1922, in Kansas City, Missouri, but she, her two brothers and their parents moved often to follow the work of their father, a preacher.

Her health had been good until the last couple of years, her grandnephew said, when she was mostly confined to bed. She'd recently moved from D.C. to a nursing home in Potomac, Maryland.

She did not receive a covid-19 test, but several patients on her floor and staff members tested positive around the time she developed pneumonia and a fever.

"To us, the cause of death at 97 years and 11 months of age is the least important piece of Aunt Ruth's amazing story," her grandnephew said

Biden Pledges to end Violence Against Trans Women

In response to news reports about the 10th trans person to be murdered this year, presumptive Democratic presidential nominee and former Vice President Joe Biden pledged via Twitter to end violence against trans women. In response, some right-wingers have lost their minds.

"We cannot be silent in the face of rising violence against transgender people of color—like the recent tragedies in Missouri and Puerto Rico," Biden wrote in a May 10 tweet. "It's our moral obligation to end this epidemic, and ensure everyone can live open and proud and free from fear."

Anderson Cooper to Co-Parent New Son With Ex

New dad Anderson Cooper has said that he will co-parent his son, Wyatt, with his ex-partner, Benjamin Maisani. While the arrangement might seem strange to some, Cooper's reason is both heartbreaking and beautiful.



Howard Stern asked Cooper the question many have wondered: "Don't you want a clean break from this guy?"

Cooper and Maisani were together for 10 years.

"I don't really have a family, so my friends become my family," Anderson explained. "And this is somebody that I was involved with for 10 years. He's a great guy."

"We didn't work out as a couple... but when I was a little kid, it was just my mom and my brother. But it was my mom and she was not the most parental person."

"I wish some adult, after my dad died, had stepped in, and just been like, you know what? I'll take you to a ball game, or let's go out to lunch every now and then, and let's just talk," he continued. "No one ever did that."

"So I thought, if something happens to me or even if something doesn't happen to me, if more people love my son and are in his life, I'm all for that," he said. "My ex is a great guy and it's good to have two parents, if you can."

Cooper's father died when the out newscaster was 11. His brother died of suicide ten years later at age 23.

Cooper's mother, Gloria Vanderbilt, died last year. The two were extremely close.

KFC Heiress to Hire LGBTQ

Kaila Methven, a lingerie designer who is also heiress to Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) fast-food chain, has reportedly launched a program to help employ LGBTQ people who have lost their jobs during the coronavirus epidemic while raising \$1 million for LGBTQ charities and social organizations associated with the electronic dance music (EDM) community.

Methven – whose grandfather founded Rainbow Chicken Unlimited, the company that acquired KFC in the 1980's – wants to hire LGBTQ people, domestic violence survivors, and people in the sober community through a newly conceived Independent Contractor Program within her organization the Peace Love Unity Respect (PLUR) Association.

The logo features the word "LGBTQ" in large, bold, grey capital letters. Below it, the word "LOYALTY" is written in a smaller font, with each letter in a different color: L (orange), O (yellow), Y (green), A (light green), L (blue), T (purple), and Y (pink).

The PLUR Association's Independent Contractor Program would hire members of these communities to work flexibly, independently and remotely with her "Madame Maven" lingerie fashion brand, a brand that includes the "Special K" line of bright

and sparkly undergarments inspired by dance music festivals.

"Giving people opportunities to work for themselves in the fashion industry and learning the 'ins and outs' while they learn about clothing, lingerie, and art has developed and really improved every aspect of the PLUR Association," Methven told Star Observer. "Art inspires me... love inspires me... so does sensuality and passion," she added.

In addition to helping employ those in financial need, the PLUR Association also hopes to raise \$1 million for LGBTQ charities and social organizations like EDM Cares, a group of electronic dance music enthusiasts who also do charitable works like food/clothing/toiletry drives for homeless shelters and events for disabled military veterans.

"I want my contribution to the world to be the soldier spreading the message and true meaning of PLUR," Methven said. "I aim to use my voice as a philanthropist, it's my dream to make a difference in the world. This is the beginning of days, we all unite globally as human beings."

The PLUR Association seeks to foster recognition of the need for respect, diversity, inclusion, and equality for people of all gender identities and sexualities in the workplace, according to Methven.

Announcing Pride In Pictures!

Send us a photo of your first time at Pride for a chance to be featured in our new editorial series, #PrideInPictures, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the first Pride march.

In your email, please include: your name, date and location of the photo, and what made this moment so special for you. You're welcome to share any other relevant info, as well.

Whether your first Pride was last year or 50 years ago, we hope to hear from you!

[Share Your Story](#)

Who We Are: LGBTQ Nation is the world's leading source on issues relevant to the LGBTQ community. Through independent, in-depth, and timely reporting, we empower readers to stay in-the-know, and become educated leaders and citizens. As a community-driven news platform, we welcome all of your comments, suggestions, corrections and news tips.

Gay College Track Star Wants to Leave Lasting Legacy for Struggling LGBT Athletes

Proud and openly gay, Trae' Robinson has posted a candid YouTube video detailing his struggles as a Division 1 athlete.

By Alex Reimer May 13, 2020, 10:04am PDT

The first breakthrough moment in Trae' Robinson's coming out journey as an openly gay man happened on the top of a campus parking garage late on his birthday night. With the celebration winding down, and the sun almost rising, Robinson stood on the garage's top floor and screamed. In the preceding months, the promising freshman track star started coming out to close friends. But now, he was ready for the world to know.

"I just screamed; I just screamed it," Robinson told Outsports. "I started crying. It felt so empowering. From that day forward, I just wasn't afraid to tell my story. I was never afraid to be who I intended to be. I was never afraid of just being Trae'."

Nowadays, Robinson is doing more than just being himself: he's opening up himself to anybody with an Internet connection. The five-time conference medalist recently posted a YouTube video about the challenges of being a Division 1 athlete, and the extraordinary demands it places on student-athletes. Robinson speaks at length about missing out on social events and tearing his body apart. Doctors told him he has the joints of a 32 year old, due to all of the wear and tear.

Robinson also speaks about his experiences as an openly gay athlete, and the additional challenges of being a senior co-captain, expecting to lead those who may engage in casual homophobia.

In a recent interview with St. Joe's student newspaper, "The Hawk," Robinson says he decided enough was enough, and was going to start addressing homophobic language in the locker room. As a freshman, Robinson would usually enter the room with his headphones on and mind his own business. One particular incident sticks out in his mind: a lacrosse player grabbed a towel from a teammate who had just exited the shower. In response, the player shouted at the top of his lungs that he was not a "fucking faggot."...search the YouTube for more

R.I.P. Agust "Buzz" Pusateri

R.I.P. August "Buzz" Pusateri, 81, HIV and LGBT Trailblazer

HIV positive since at least 1982, he participated in the Pitt Men's Study, a long-running AIDS research project.



August "Buzz" Pusateri Courtesy of Pitt Men's Study