

EQUALITY

e-newsletter

T E X A S

October 1, 2009

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How You Can Help

[Ask your friends](#) to join the EQTX Action Center and Make Equality Happen.

Verify the accuracy of your contact info and email subscriptions. [Login to your Action Center account](#).

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Take Action

[Equality Texas Action Center](#)

Equality Texas Contact Information

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Austin, TX 78768-2340

From Executive Director Paul Scott

Dear Equality Texas Member,

This past weekend the boards of directors of Equality Texas and Equality Texas Foundation met in Dallas to work on our strategic planning and 2010 annual plan. As we met for two days, we discussed the importance of our work that is happening across Texas. We continue to commit our energy and resources to our mission to make equality happen here in Texas. The importance of our focused mission is represented in the voices of students and parents in our safe school forums this month. The need for our work is illustrated by attempt to repeal domestic partner insurance benefits for El Paso city employees. The reality of discrimination is represented by the Austin lesbian couple threatened with violence while taking a morning walk.

As we work with each of you to make equality a reality in Texas, we also know the importance of supporting our members' participation in the upcoming National Equality March in Washington. For those members that will be traveling to Washington, DC, please consult the following resource websites if they have not already done so:

National - [Equality Across America](#)

Texas - [The Texas Contingent](#)

Whether or not you go to Washington, we ask you to think about how you can take direct action to affect change in Texas.

We ask you to spend time and resources to elect Annise Parker as the first openly lesbian mayor of Houston and the first openly LGBT mayor of our nation's fourth largest city. **Annise Parker's election to office is a critical battle that must be won in order to advance equality in Houston and in Texas.** The weeks just before this November's election are critical to a successful get-out-the-vote operation.

We ask our members in West Texas to continue to support the City of El Paso's provision of domestic partner benefits for their city employees. We are expecting a possible ballot initiative that could come as early as next May to protect these benefits. Additionally, we ask our members in North Texas to hold Fort Worth and TABC officials accountable for their actions in the Rainbow Lounge raid, and asking members to become involved with Fairness Fort Worth.

With these battles happening here in our own backyard, there are some great opportunities to channel energy into direct action with immediate results. We must harness the power of Texans that support equality and demonstrate our ability to move people to make positive change here, as well as in DC.

We think all activism is a good thing. When participants in the National March come home, we ask that they devote their time, energy and resources to do the work that must be done right here in Texas.

Sincerely,

P: 512-474-5475
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[Email](#)

[Web](#)

[Blog](#)

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of board member Douglas Plummer and

Midtown Office



Equality Texas will have an outreach table on October 11th at



OctoTea benefits the Paul Kirby Emergency Fund of AIDS Services of Austin.

Click on the logo for information and tickets.

New Board Member

Update: (full announcement will be sent at a later date.)

Ronnie Whitman and her wife Christine live in Willis, TX. Ronnie has been an insurance professional for 25 years and is an active volunteer across east and southeast Texas. She is a member of the Cut & Shoot Charities - Harley owners Group. She is active in the Greater Conroe/Lake Conroe Chamber of Commerce as a member.

Jeanne Rubin is an active volunteer and advocate in North Texas. She is a national media consultant residing in Frisco. She works with Youth First Texas and is a member of the CGLA Victory Committee.

Paul E. Scott, Executive Director

P.S. Will you help us continue our work by [investing in Equality Texas](#) today? Your [contribution](#) makes a real difference.

EQTX: Making Equality Happen in Texas

Equality Texas Vandalized



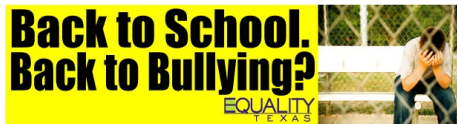
The offices of Equality Texas were vandalized over the weekend sometime around 3 a.m. on Sunday. The large front plate glass window was broken out. Fortunately, nothing was taken from the office and there was no entry to the building.

We were the only office hit in our immediate area, however we now believe we were the victim of random malicious mischief. On Wednesday morning we learned that one of our residential neighbors was awakened around 3 a.m. Sunday morning by the sound of breaking glass and saw one teen male running away from our building.

Repair costs and additional security will run around \$1,200 - if you'd like to help us, please donate [here](#). Thanks to all the local businesses and individual donors from across the country for their support!

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Safe Schools Forums in Austin, Houston and San Antonio



Every student in Texas schools deserves an education free from the harmful physical and emotional effects of harassment and bullying. However, as schools across the state are reopening for the Fall term, thousands of Texas children dread going to school to face the taunts, jeers, humiliation, physical intimidation and pain inflicted through harassment and bullying.

The Equality Texas Foundation is concerned that most school districts' current policies on bullying and harassment may be inadequate, or inadequately enforced. As a result, the Equality Texas Foundation is hosting a number of Community Forums on Safe Schools.

The next Forum has been scheduled for:

Community Forum on Safe Schools - San Antonio
Wednesday, October 21, 2009
6:00 p.m.
UTSA Downtown Campus
Durango Building, Southwest Room
San Antonio, TX

Read about recent forums in Austin and Houston here:

[AISD Parents Speak: Could TAKS Test Make Bullies Worse?](#)

[Houston ISD Takes a Stand Against Bullying.](#)

Additional Community Forums are planned for North Texas and West Texas. Watch for additional information.

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Board Retreat in Dallas

The boards of Equality Texas and Equality Texas Foundation held their annual retreat in Dallas last weekend to focus on planning for 2010. The boards reviewed implementation of their strategic plans, developed outlines for 2010 annual plans and trained members in the areas of board roles and responsibilities.

At a meeting during the retreat, **Ronnie Lynn Whitman** (below left) of Willis, Texas, was appointed to serve on both boards effective immediately. **Jeanne Rubin** (below right) of Frisco, Texas was appointed to the Equality Texas Board of Directors. Her term will begin in January, 2010.



Board member Troy Greenstreet and his partner, Brent Willmott, hosted a reception Saturday evening for major donors. **Dallas State Representative Rafael Anchia** was a guest speaker at the reception.



Rep. Anchia was appreciative of Equality Texas' effectiveness in the most recent legislative session, noting our growing clout as a legitimate lobbying force. Our joint efforts in support of Rep. Anchia's bill for accurate birth certificates (HB2080) produced what Rep. Lois Kolkhorst described as "one of the best hearings she had ever seen."

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Phone Bank for Annise Parker



Equality Texas is asking its members to spend their time and resources to elect Annise Parker as the first openly lesbian mayor of Houston and the first openly LGBT mayor of our nation's fourth largest city. Annise Parker's election to office is a critical battle that must be won in order to advance equality in Houston and in Texas.

Sign up to phone bank on October 4th!

Join us for phone banking this Sunday, October 4th to mobilize supporters, update them with new information and encourage them to volunteer at events. Training will be provided for shifts from 1pm to 3pm, or 3pm to 5pm.

[Click here for more information and to sign up!](#)

If you live in Houston, volunteer phone banks are open each Tuesday and Thursday from 6 to 9pm.

[CLICK HERE](#) for 6 Easy Ways to Get Involved.

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News from Other Statewide Equality Groups

Maine: You Can Help Protect Marriage Equality

In May, Maine became the fifth state in the country to win marriage for same-sex couples. Within days of this victory, the opposition launched a People's Veto campaign - modeled after California's Prop 8 - to take away the right of same-sex couples to marry. Maine is now ground zero in the national fight for marriage equality.

To win, we need your help. Please consider a [Volunteer-Vacation](#), where you'll have the opportunity to volunteer full-time with the No on 1 campaign to protect marriage at the ballot box. This is a 1 or 2 week structured program offering an intensive, hands-on chance to hone your campaign skills.

Washington: Domestic Partnerships Under Attack

This spring, Governor Gregoire signed the 2009 Domestic Partnership Expansion Bill, completing the Domestic Partnership System in Washington State, giving all couples in Washington State equal protection under the law.

Opponents of the domestic partnership law are seeking to repeal it through a referendum. Referendum 71 would ask voters whether the law should be approved or rejected. A vote to "APPROVE" keeps the law so that all families will have these protections in all parts of the state.

Washington residents should call [Equal Rights Washington](#) at (206) 324-2570 to volunteer to help preserve the Domestic Partnership law. For more information, visit the [Washington Families Standing Together website](#).

Michigan: Defending Discrimination Protections

In July, City Commissioners in Kalamazoo, Michigan passed an ordinance prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, and public accommodations in the city. Anti-equality forces immediately challenged the law and submitted 1,624 signatures to put the issue on the ballot, suspending the law until election time.

Equality is not equality unless it's equality for all. The right-wing continues to demonize transgender people and to lie to uninformed voters. We need to stop them everywhere. We need to stop them in Kalamazoo. Visit the [One Kalamazoo](#) website to learn more. To find out how you can get involved, [click here](#).

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[Equality Texas](#) advocates and lobbies for the elimination of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

[Equality Texas Foundation](#) educates and engages the public about policies and their effect on Texans of all sexual orientations and gender identities/expressions.

The effectiveness of our work depends on the financial support of individuals who believe in equality for all people.

**YOU
MAKE
EQUALITY
HAPPEN**