



## VICTORY

### **CALIFORNIA TRANSGENDER BILLS SIGNED**

#### ***Further Prohibiting Discrimination Against Transgender People***

On Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005 Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed bills into law that increased legal protections for the LGBT community.

One bill (AB 1586) requires that health insurance providers do not discriminate against transgender people. The bill adds transgender protections to existing anti-discrimination provisions that regulate insurance companies and health care service plans.

The Civil Rights Act of 2005 (AB 1400) was also signed. This bill strengthens protections against discriminatory practices toward LGBT people. "Businesses should be discrimination-free, and our community deserves nothing less than full equality," said Equality California Executive Director Geoffrey Kors.

Assemblymember Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) had this to say about AB 1586, "Transgender people are part of our human family and they deserve equal access to health coverage and treatments available to everyone else. AB 1586 goes a long way toward ending the indignities that transgender men and women face when trying to access healthcare. This is a matter of human compassion and basic fairness."

"California activists and advocates are working hard to ensure the transgender community fair and equal access to health care. There is a great need for access to fair and equal health care for transgender people across the country. NCTE hopes that this push for justice for the LGBT community with regard to health care and business practices will spread to a national level", said Mara Keisling, Executive Director of the National Center for Transgender Equality.

California organizations and activists have worked for years doing research to bring strong proof that discrimination toward the LGBT community is still a tremendous obstacle. One such study conducted by the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the Transgender Law Center was cited by the American Chronicle as an important resource for revealing the real discrimination that members of the transgender community face with regard to health care.

Chris Daley, Director of the Transgender Law Center, explained "AB 1586 is a powerful new tool for transgender people and their families who want to be able to utilize their health insurance free of discriminatory restrictions. Its passage clarifies the duty that insurers have to provide access to coverage and services and encourages community members to work with attorneys, advocates and state regulators to make social change one policy at a time."

NCTE thanks Assemblymember Koretz, Equality California, the Transgender Law Center, the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the many advocates in the state of California for their hard work. NCTE celebrates this victory for the LGBT community!