

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

GLBT Issues: supported, hated or alienated



Gay Rights: a timeline of events

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The rights of homosexuals have always been controversial. From World War II where homosexuals were forced to wear pink triangles on their clothes to the brutal killing of Matthew Shepard the rights of homosexuals have not always been upheld.

However throughout history there have been many improvements and setbacks in achieving equal rights for homosexuals in marriage and everyday life. Here is a time line of some organizations and policies that have been established in the ongoing fight for

homosexual rights.

1924

The Society for Human Rights in Chicago becomes the country's earliest known gay rights organization.

1948

Alfred Kinsey publishes *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* which reveals to the public that homosexuality is far more widespread than was commonly believed.

1951

The Mattachine Society, the first national gay rights organization, is formed by Harry Hay, considered by many to be the founder of the gay rights movement.

1956

The Daughters of Bilitis, a pioneering national lesbian organization, is founded.

1962

Illinois becomes the first state in to decriminalize homosexual acts between consenting adults in private.

1969

The Stonewall riots transformed the gay rights movement from a small number of activists into a widespread protest for equal rights and acceptance. Patrons of a gay bar in New York's Greenwich Village, the Stonewall Inn, fight back during a police raid on June 27, sparking three days of riots.

1973

The American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its official list of mental disorders.

1982

Wisconsin becomes the first state to outlaw discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

1993

The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy is instituted for the U.S. military, permitting gays to serve in the military but banning homosexual activity. President Clinton's original intention to revoke the prohibition against gays in the military was met with stiff opposition; this compromise, which has led to the discharge of thousands of men and women in the armed forces, was the result.

1996

The Supreme Court strikes down Colorado's Amendment 2, which denied homosexual people protections against discrimination, calling them "special rights." According to Justice Anthony Kennedy, "We find nothing special in the protections Amendment 2 withholds. These protections . . . constitute ordinary civil life in a free society."

2000

Vermont becomes the first state to legally recognize civil unions between same-sex couples. The law states that these "couples would be

entitled to the same benefits, privileges, and responsibilities as spouses." It stops short of referring to same-sex unions as marriage, which the state defines as heterosexual.

2003

The U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Lawrence v. Texas* that sodomy laws in the U.S. are unconstitutional. Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote, "Liberty presumes an autonomy of self that includes freedom of thought, belief, expression, and certain intimate conduct."

In November, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that barring same-sex couples from marrying violates the state constitution. The Massachusetts Chief Justice concluded that to "deny the protections, benefits, and obligations conferred by civil marriage" to gay couples was unconstitutional because it denied "the dignity and equality of all individuals" and made them "second-class citizens." Strong opposition followed the ruling.

2004

On May 17, same-sex marriages become legal in Massachusetts.

2005

Civil unions become legal in Connecticut in Oct. 2005.

2006

Civil unions become legal in New Jersey in December.