



# The Task Force in the News

Media Highlights

July 30 – August 4, 2005

Roberta Sklar, Director of Communications

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## Family Affair

### ***Millions More Movement Unity Takes a Hit from One of Its Own***

by Will O'Bryan

Published on [07/21/2005](#)

The big picture is a family portrait. It's a picture of the African-American community coming together to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Million Man March with the further-reaching Millions More Movement. Rev. Al Sharpton, the 2004 Democratic presidential primary candidate -- one of the few to support same-sex marriage -- is onboard. So is the controversial Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam; writer and economist, Julianne Malveaux; Rev. Jesse Jackson; civil-rights leader Dorothy Height, and so many others. This family portrait, on its surface, is a picture of inclusiveness, an effort to pull the community together to tackle problems of education, poverty, AIDS, crime and more.

But while so many of this nation's black leaders -- religious, political, cultural, entrepreneurial -- are coming together in an effort to right the wrongs that continue to plague this community, division has crept in. At first subtle, this schism recently rushed to the fore.

The subtle beginning was silence. Local black GLBT activists say that Rev. Willie Wilson, national executive director of the Millions More Movement (MMM) commemoration event, invited them to take part in MMM events scheduled for Oct. 14-16 in Washington. This was not surprising. After all, Wilson was among the first African-American clergy to start a dialogue addressing homophobia in the church.

MMM organizer Farrakhan also promised GLBT inclusion in the movement, say gay activists.

Then came May 2, and the MMM organizers' official announcement of the commemoration event. The National Black Justice Coalition, the one organization in the country advocating exclusively for GLBT African Americans, was not there.

"When the organizers of the march had their initial press release and we weren't invited, and we sent letters to Rev. Wilson and other organizers and didn't get a response, then we decided to have a pre-march rally," says NBJC Communications Director Ray T. Daniels. Whether this rally will be a celebration or a protest remains to be seen. What is certain is that while MMM events fill the National Mall, a black GLBT presence will fill Freedom Plaza.

At the local level, black GLBT activists had been reviving the D.C. Coalition. The group, initially formed in 1978, had fallen into a period of inactivity. The MMM provided impetus to revitalize the organization, which has been meeting regularly for the past six months or so. Officially, however, the group remains ad hoc until elections take place. Elections or not, having longtime GLBT leaders such as Carlene Cheatam and Philip Pannell in the mix means the Coalition has a voice that will be heard -- even if Wilson may not be listening. Like the NBJC, the Coalition has complained that Wilson has "been completely unresponsive for six months" to their attempts to gain GLBT participation on the MMM steering committee.

This unresponsiveness raised suspicions among members of the black GLBT community. People wondered why they were apparently getting a cold shoulder. Things heated up July 3, when Wilson delivered a sermon at his Union Temple Baptist Church in Anacostia. Pannell got a recording of that sermon and delivered it first to the *Washington Blade* on July 13, then to the *Washington Post* shortly thereafter. The city has been talking about the sermon ever since the *Blade* story, published July 15.

"That's one of the reasons many of our women are becoming lesbian," Wilson told his congregation, pointing to women who earn more than their husbands. "You've got to be careful when you say you don't need no man.... If you don't need a man, what's left? Lesbianism is about to take over our community...."

"I ain't homophobic because everybody in here got something wrong with him.... But when you get down to this thing, woman falling down on another woman, strapping yourself up with something -- it ain't real.... It ain't natural. Anytime somebody got to slap some grease on your behind to stick something in you, there's something wrong with that. Your butt ain't made for that.... It's destroying us."

The morning the story broke, Pannell was a guest on the Joe Madison radio show on WOL. "I was really shocked," Pannell said of the sermon. "It was not the Rev. Wilson I know, love and respect." He described the sermon as "overly graphic, venomous and vitriolic." Of assurances that GLBT voices would be part of the MMM event, Pannell added, "Obviously, every invitation is not a welcome."

Wilson's sermon turned a cold shoulder into something far more overt and offensive. And if Madison's radio show is any indication, it may do more to isolate Wilson than the gay community.

"It's obviously insulting," Madison told his audience, saying that Wilson should apologize. "This is beyond name-calling. It isn't even logical.... It's absurd.... Willie Wilson does not speak for me." Callers to the show, for the most part, seemed to agree with Madison.

A day later, July 16, Wilson got his chance to apologize during a citywide meeting of the MMM at Scripture Cathedral at Eighth and O streets, NW. He was joined onstage by MMM supporters such as Malveaux, Councilmember Vincent Orange (D-Ward 5), and Malik Zulu Shabazz of the New Black Panther Party. Children filled the stage singing hymns as about 250 attendees slowly filled a portion of the pews that early Saturday evening.

Rev. Barbara Skinner, one of the first to speak, set a tone in keeping with the MMM themes of unity. "How many of you believe that it's time for us as a people to come together? To break down every barrier between our people?" she asked. "You have as much right as everybody else on the planet to be respected. I don't have to agree with you to respect you."

Orange echoed Skinner, emphasizing, "Together we stand, divided we fall."

Wilson, greeted with much applause, did not, however, use this opportunity to apologize.

"A blessed moment it is, brothers and sisters, to dwell together in unity.... That's what we're all about," Wilson began, seeming to take pages from the Books of Skinner and Orange. He read a list of attending organizations, including the D.C. Coalition. "This is a diverse effort we're putting together here.... We've got to bring in everybody."

It was not long before Wilson's address turned. He was saving his most passionate rhetoric to lash out at "negro spies," presumably Pannell.

"If you've got a problem with me, come talk to me!" Wilson shouted, complaining of calls from the press the day before. "What happens in this house, stays in this house.... I don't like being talked about, being lied on. But the cause is greater than the pain.... I ain't your enemy. I ain't done nothing to you.... I'm asking all of us, come together. We need to make a covenant with each other.... I'm not going to be the one to betray the covenant."

Pannell and others insist they have tried to talk to Wilson about his comments, to no avail. At a Sunday meeting of the local, black GLBT community to discuss MMM, Cheatam offered that she alone has planned a meeting with Wilson, after giving him her card at the end of the Saturday meeting, which she said brought her to tears.

"He called me, and I'll be speaking to him sometime this week," Cheatam told the group at the Sunday meeting, while some argued that there should be no closed-door meetings with Wilson. "It's my plan to go alone.... I'm not going to be co-opted. I'm not going to go in there and just roll over."

Others who were at the Saturday MMM event shared their perceptions with the group. "I was at Scripture Cathedral yesterday," offered longtime HIV/AIDS activist and performance artist Michael Sainte-Andress, at times choking back tears of his own. "I really just wanted to spit in the face of Rev. Wilson. My heart was being broken over and over and over again.... This man was hateful. He was mean. And he was nasty."

Sainte-Andress had supported Wilson's successful 2000 bid to join the board of the University of the District of Columbia.

While it seemed that attendees of the Sunday meeting could have spoken into the wee hours about this conflict, Cheatam kept the meeting on track. Necessity demanded that much be accomplished that night, considering the start of the meeting was interrupted by an interview with Pannell taped earlier by WJLA. A second interruption came before the meeting's end when WTTG called the meeting site, Freedom Fellowship Christian Church in Northeast, seeking a comment from the group -- within 20 minutes -- about the Wilson affair.

From this fast-paced meeting, the ad-hoc group of activists pulled together a list of four "requests": a public apology by Wilson, as well as his immediate resignation as executive director of the MMM; two speakers, a female and a male, to represent the GLBT community at the MMM commemoration; a MMM steering committee seat for the NBJC; and acknowledgement of the group's meetings as official components of the MMM Local Organizing Committee.

The group's July 17 statement also called for the mayor, city council, gay-affirming religious groups, women's groups and "other national civil rights organizations" to denounce Wilson's statements.

That statement came on the heels of Wilson's Sunday morning sermon, in which he said his seemingly homophobic comments were taken out of context, the *Washington Post* reported Monday. Wilson did not return a *Metro Weekly* request for comment.

Other groups and individuals have begun rallying in response to the statement issued July 17 by the African-American GLBT community group.

"Rev. Wilson has abandoned the truth," said Donna Payne in a July 18 statement from the Human Rights Campaign. Payne is HRC's senior diversity organizer, as well as the vice president of the NBJC. "Just five years ago, the reverend held a service to bring the black community together over gay issues. He called for the church not to be 'religious haters but people who know how to extend love.' Now he's using the pulpit to rip apart a divided community. It's shameful."

**Adds Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force: "When I read the comments, I couldn't believe them.... I was deeply shocked and appalled...and strongly support the [activist group's] demands. We'll provide whatever help we can."**

Vincent Morris, director of communications for Mayor Anthony Williams, offered: "The mayor has a long history of strong support for the gay and lesbian community. That support will continue."

Council member Marion Barry (D-Ward 8) declined to comment, as he is slated to meet on July 19, after *Metro Weekly* deadline, with members of the GLBT African-American community to discuss the issue.

Alan Heymann, director of communications for Councilmember Jim Graham (D-Ward 1), says that Graham is trying to arrange a meeting with Wilson. Graham also issued a statement: "As an openly gay

council member, I am troubled by remarks made by the Rev. Willie Wilson on July 3. I believe that we should do all we can to respect all of the diversities that make up the District of Columbia. From mutual respect, we find common ground that makes for a better quality of life for everyone. Rev. Wilson, as one of this city's leaders, can really contribute to that objective. I am optimistic in that regard because my past interactions with Rev. Wilson have been positive."

Carol Schwartz (R-At Large), the only council member to vote against Wilson joining the UDC board in 2000, said at the time that a vote for Wilson was a vote for "intolerance and divisiveness."

Today, says Schwartz, "Rev. Wilson's belittlement of various communities continues, and that saddens me. Leaders need to bring people together, and not be divisive. Or they shouldn't be leaders."

Alexander Robinson, executive director of NBJC, hopes that the GLBT African American community's efforts for inclusion in the MMM events will be successful.

"We'll have hundreds, if not thousands, of same-gender-loving gay, lesbian, bi, trans, queer African Americans who are standing tall, standing proud, speaking our truth, demanding respect and attention -- not only from the African-American community, but the community at large," he says. "It's way past time. We're way overdue. Black gay and lesbian folks have been involved in the black civil rights movement from the beginning."



## **MIAMI GAY, LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO HOLD MEMBERSHIP DRIVE**

*OIA Newswire*

MIAMI – The Miami Dade Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce will kick off its membership drive at Bongo's Cuban Café, 601 Biscayne Blvd. in downtown Miami behind the American Airlines Arena July 21, 2005, 11:30 a.m. Organizers say the event will be a great networking opportunity, as everyone in attendance will introduce themselves to the group.

MDGLCC has received close to 150 reservations so far and is asking anyone interested in attending to call as soon as possible to reserve.

Table sponsors include Jason Loeb of Sudsies, Vicki Brail of Geriatric Care Management, Michael Aller of The City of Miami Beach, Steven Haas of Tuscan Steak/China Grill Management, Brian Tannebaum of Tannebaum Weiss, Marty Davis of Davis, Hellman and Suarez, Dr. Todd Narson of Family and Sports Chiropractic Center, Neisen Kasdin of Gunster Yoakley and Stewart, **Michael Bath of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**, and George Neary of The Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Membership in the Miami-Dade Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce is a key to unlocking opportunities for professional and personal growth, say event organizers, because as the saying goes, success is not based solely on what you know, but whom. The organization is committed to helping the local GLBT community make connections via higher visibility, well-attended networking functions, education, access to news and information, and a chance to get involved to evoke positive changes within the community.

The cost is \$30 per person with RSVP or \$40 at the door. Parking is available under the American Airlines Arena for \$3. Call 305-573-4000 to make reservations.



## Traditional Marriage Plummet

by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

Posted: July 19, 2005 12:01 am ET

(New Brunswick, New Jersey) While gays and lesbians fight for the right to get married the number of straight couples tying the knot has declined by 50 percent since 1970 a new study shows.

The survey, by the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University, shows that the divorce rate is also dropping but not as dramatically.

"One partial reason for the lower divorce rate is that more Americans are opting to stay single or live together instead of marrying," says David Popenoe, co-director of the National Marriage Project and professor of sociology at Rutgers.

"People who otherwise might marry and then divorce are instead no longer getting married." Popenoe said.

The study, released Monday, comes as religious conservatives make claims that same-sex marriage would dilute traditional marriage, endangering the institution.

Eleven states last November passed constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage following arguments that to allow gay and lesbian couples to wed would weaken traditional marriages.

The same argument was repeatedly made during the debate on same-sex marriage legislation in Canada and Spain.

"The irony of the statistical picture reported in the study is that thousands and thousands of committed, long-term same-sex couples around the country badly want to get married but are shut out of the institution," Susan Sommer, Senior Counsel at Lambda Legal and lead attorney in a lawsuit seeking marriage for same-sex couples in New York told 365Gay.com.

"Many of these are parents of children who need the legal protections that come only with marriage."

The one state in the US where same-sex marriage is legal - Massachusetts - has the lowest divorce rate in the country.

The Rutgers report also noted that while more and more heterosexual couples are preferring cohabitation to marriage, cohabitating unions have a significantly higher break-up rate than marital unions.

The report also said the United States has the lowest percentage - 63 percent - among Western nations of children who grow up with both biological parents.

**"The report underscores what we've been saying for a very long time. The problems that the institution of marriage is having has nothing to do with gay people," said Matt Foreman, the executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.**



July 29, 2005

## **Activists revisit strategy after marriage setbacks New goals emerge in states where gays lost on Election Day**

**By Ryan Lee**

*Editors' note: This story is the second of two parts on how the fight over gay marriage impacted the gay rights movements in states that faced ballot measures in 2004, or face them in the coming months, and those that did not.*

Not all gay organizations in states that suffered losses on gay marriage in 2004 are shying away from fights over rights for same-sex couples.

A gay marriage ban passed in Oregon in 2004 by a 56-44 percent margin, despite national groups like the Human Rights Campaign and the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force funneling the vast majority of their anti-amendment resources into that state. Earlier this month, the Oregon state Senate passed a bill creating civil unions supported by Basic Rights Oregon, a statewide gay group.

The Human Rights Campaign said it contributed \$474,000 to last year's ballot fight in Oregon, some \$314,000 directly to the group fighting the measure and \$160,000 on get-out-the-vote efforts.

**Some \$867,858 was contributed by the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, \$662,858 of which went directly to the campaign against the amendment, according to the Task Force.**

"We suffered a setback last year, but at the same time I think people would tell you we're further ahead than we were a year ago because the visibility about our issues is so much higher," said Rebekah Kassell, communications director for Basic Rights Oregon.

"I think what our opponents wanted us to believe is that people have spoken, and spoken against gay people, period. We don't believe that," Kassell added.

In Michigan, priorities change

The resiliency of activists in Oregon reflects the determination of activists in other states who have already faced defeat at the ballot box, said Seth Kilbourn, vice president of HRC's Marriage Project.

"I think as groups pick themselves up and move forward, the best thing they can do is continue telling the stories of our lives," Kilbourn said. "By telling those stories, that's how we're going to achieve success in all of the other political areas."

After almost 60 percent of Michigan voters approved a gay marriage ban last year, gay groups in the state wanted to return to their priorities of securing a civil rights act and second-parent adoption rights, said Chris Swope, executive director of Michigan Equality.

"I think people wanted to catch their breath from it, but what we do need to work on is making sure our constitutional amendment has a narrow interpretation," Swope said.

Despite the time spent in 2005 fighting to keep domestic partner benefits from being nullified by the amendment, Equality Michigan hasn't been paralyzed, Swope said.

"We were worried a little bit early on that [the amendment's] passage might affect some legislators'

willingness to support our community, but that hasn't been the case because of our political involvement," Swope said, noting that a civil rights law and hate crimes bill were both reintroduced in the Michigan Legislature in 2005.

#### Readying for future fights

Even after witnessing gay marriage bans pass in every state in which they were considered in 2004, gay groups that face anti-gay marriage initiatives in 2005 and 2006 are eager to fight even if they believe they can't win, said Toni Broaddus, executive director of the Equality Federation, a coalition of Statewide gay rights groups.

Earlier this year, Kansas voters approved a constitutional ban prohibiting gay unions. Texans face the issue in November. In 2006, voters in at least four states - Alabama, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee - will face a similar measure.

"I think everyone feels pretty strongly that we have to mount some sort of defense, but strategically, the most immediate victory of defeating the amendment may not be the most important," said Broaddus.

"We need to see this as just another piece of the larger picture of the struggle for full equality, and we need to look at these ballot measures as an opportunity to work toward that," she added.

In Texas, activists want to make the campaign against the marriage ban focus on more than same-sex unions, said Heath Riddles, communications director for the Lesbian & Gay Rights Lobby of Texas.

"I know for the community involved with trying to defeat this, we're using it as a true opportunity to build resources and build political power," Riddles said. "We'll be building a statewide coalition with an unprecedented number of allies at the table, and that alone is a win.

"If we don't effectively use this marriage debate to raise awareness and let people see we are hard-working, tax-paying Texans, then we will have failed," Riddles added.

Gay Texans are split on whether marriage should be a top priority of the gay rights movement there.

"I would like to marry the man I love and have all the full rights and responsibilities that every other one of my family members and Americans have," said Johnny Cadriel, a gay Houston resident. "I own my own business and pay taxes just like straight people. Since Stonewall, we have seen constant and steady change and I think this is an issue whose time has come."

Everyone should have the option to marry if they please, but if gay groups focus solely on marriage equality they will not be relevant to all gays, said Alec Luckenbach, another gay Houston resident.

"Progress is important, but the [marriage] service itself I am not so sure [about]," Luckenbach said. "I am pro the idea, but never really thought about it for myself. I am not quick to be the marrying kind."

The fight over gay marriage didn't keep LGRL from introducing legislation this year to curb anti-gay bullying in schools, Riddles said.

Organizers in Texas said they've received strong support from HRC and the Task Force, Riddles said.

**The Task Force said it learned from the ballot measures last year that "campaigns must start early and campaign messaging should address marriage equality aggressively. That is why we are urging states that are facing amendments in 2006 to start their campaigns now and are assessing the effectiveness of various messages on voter behavior."**

#### Fight on in Virginia

A proposed gay marriage ban took up "a significant portion" of Equality Virginia's resources in 2005, when

both chambers of the state legislature approved the measure, said Equality Virginia Executive Director Dyana Mason.

According to Virginia law, the amendment must pass the General Assembly again in either 2006 or 2007 before it would go before voters.

"I think we do have a chance of stopping it in the General Assembly next year," Mason said.

She added that the organization is also preparing for an eventual campaign against a ballot initiative that would include having door-to-door conversations with voters and hosting town hall forums.

Despite the prominence of the gay marriage issue, Equality Virginia successfully lobbied to kill two anti-gay bills during the 2005 state legislative session, one that proposed banning gay-straight student alliances in public schools, and another that proposed barring gay men and lesbians from adopting, Mason said.

"Regardless of what happens with the marriage question, our movement will continue in this state, and we're laying the plan now so we will be stronger than we were before the amendment," Mason said.

Many state organizations are trying to multi-task so that fighting a gay marriage ban does not consume all available resources, said the Equality Federation's Broaddus.

"Just because marriage became such an overwhelming issue didn't mean the state organizations stopped working on important issues like anti-discrimination laws and school safety," Broaddus said.

Mason said national gay rights groups have yet to step into their looming fight over a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. Other state groups are also concerned about help from national organizations.

"The national organizations don't have us on their radar screens in terms of assistance, yet," said John Clower chair of Indiana Equality. "They say time is very valuable, but we've got more time to defeat our ballot measure than most, if not all, of the other states."

But in states like New Mexico and Florida where a gay marriage ban has yet to make its way to voters, activists remain ready for battle.

"There's a large number of LGBT families in Florida, and the attack on our families has been a long-standing priority for our opponents," Equality Florida's Nadine Smith said.

"I think the things we have to do for success in any of these fights is continue to expand the universe of support and recognize that when we have real conversations with people about our lives, we move them to our side.

"To the degree that we avoid those conversations, we lose them," Smith added.

Johnny Hooks contributed to this report.

# The Boston Globe

## Beliefs drive research agenda of new think tanks

*Study on gay adoption disputed by specialists*

By Michael Kranish, Globe Staff | July 31, 2005

WASHINGTON -- President Bush had a ready answer when asked in January for his view of adoption by same-sex couples: "Studies have shown that the ideal is where a child is raised in a married family with a man and a woman," the president said.

Bush's assertion raised eyebrows among specialists. The American Academy of Pediatrics, composed of leaders in the field, had found no meaningful difference between children raised by same-sex and heterosexual couples, based on a 2002 report written largely by a Boston pediatrician, Dr. Ellen C. Perrin.

But Bush's statement was celebrated at a tiny think tank called the Family Research Institute, where the founder, Dr. Paul Cameron, believes Bush was referring to studies he has published in academic journals that are critical of gays and lesbians as parents. Cameron has published numerous studies with titles such as "Gay Foster Parents More Apt to Molest" -- a conclusion disputed by many other researchers.

The president's statement was also welcomed at a small organization with an august-sounding name, the American College of Pediatricians. The college, which has a small membership, says on its website that it would be "dangerously irresponsible" to allow same-sex couples to adopt children. The college was formed just three years ago, after the 75-year-old American Academy of Pediatrics issued its paper.

That pediatric study asserted a "considerable body of professional evidence" that there is no difference between children of same-sex and heterosexual parents.

The Family Research Institute and the American College of Pediatricians are part of a rapidly growing trend in which small think tanks, researchers, and publicists who are open about their personal beliefs are providing what they portray as medical information on some of the most controversial issues of the day.

Created as counterpoints to large, well-established medical organizations whose work is subject to rigorous review and who assert no political agenda, the tiny think tanks with names often mimicking those of established medical authorities have sought to dispute the notion of a medical consensus on social issues such as gay rights, the right to die, abortion, and birth control.

For example, Cameron's Family Research Institute, with an annual budget of less than \$200,000, tries to counter the views of the 150,000-member American Psychological Association, which has an annual budget of \$98 million. The tiny American College of Pediatricians has a single employee, yet it has been quoted as a counterpoint to the 60,000-member American Academy of Pediatrics.

Senior Bush aides, asked for the basis of the comment about adoption, now say they are unaware of any studies comparing heterosexual and same-sex adoptions -- by Cameron or by any pediatric association. The president, they say, was probably referring to studies that show children are better off living with both biological parents -- though those studies have nothing to do with adoption by same-sex couples.

But Cameron said that he feels confident that Bush was referring to his work, and that he once briefed two White House aides on his research, which is widely distributed through the Christian Communication Network, a public relations firm run by an antiabortion activist, Gary L. McCullough, who also was the press agent for the parents of Terri Schiavo.

Indeed, a web search found that Cameron's findings had been repeated on a variety of conservative websites and blogs.

Cameron said he has made a deliberate strategy of getting his research published in peer-reviewed academic journals, which he considers more effective than merely writing opinion articles. Cameron said the credibility that goes with being published in the journals enables him to be cited in court decisions and to promote his views in public appearances. Peer review "is the standard in the academic world," Cameron said. "It means that other people have looked at what you've done and said, 'It's OK.' "

But Cameron's adoption study, and at least 10 more of his works, appeared in *Psychological Reports*, a small journal based in Montana, which says its studies are peer-reviewed, although editor Doug Ammons said: "No reviewer has a veto right." The journal, which typically charges \$27.50 per page to print an article, is portrayed by Ammons as a "scientific manifestation of free speech."

By contrast, the largest professional journals, which are often cited as sources of medical information -- such as *Journal of the American Medical Association* and the *New England Journal of Medicine* -- say they will reject an article if any peer reviewer raises serious objections about its methodology. Those journals do not charge for publication.

Perrin, the Boston pediatrician, has watched these developments from a unique perspective. She was a lead author of the report by the American Academy of Pediatrics -- unanimously approved by its board of directors and its president and vice president -- that was supportive of same-sex parenting, and she has suggested repeatedly that articles by Cameron be rejected by medical journals.

She said she was startled that the American College of Pediatrics had been formed partly in response to her article, and said she is "amazed" that Cameron continues to be published in peer-reviewed journals. Whenever she has been asked to review his work, Perrin added, she has found it obviously flawed in its methodology.

"Each time I have recommended to the editor that the manuscript not be published, because the science did not stand up to basic standards," Perrin said.

But as recently as June, two of Cameron's papers were published in *Psychological Reports*, garnering him more publicity.

#### A rift on homosexuality

Paul Cameron, 65, who received his doctorate in psychology at the University of Colorado-Boulder in 1966, received widespread notice in 1983, when he cofounded the Institute for the Scientific Investigation of Sexuality. That organization eventually turned into Cameron's Family Research Institute. Cameron used his tiny think tank as a vehicle to publish reports saying homosexuals were more likely than heterosexuals to commit crimes and to molest children.

The American Psychological Association quickly launched an investigation into Cameron's methodology after receiving complaints from some of its members. The association sent Cameron a letter in December 1983, saying it had decided to "drop you from membership" because he had not cooperated with the investigation. (Asked if the association still has concerns about Cameron, a spokeswoman, Rhea Faberman, said: "We are concerned about Dr. Cameron because we do believe that his methodology is weak.")

In 1984, the Nebraska Psychological Association issued a statement saying it "formally dissociates itself from the representations and interpretations of scientific literature offered by Dr. Paul Cameron."

The American Sociological Association issued a resolution saying: "Cameron has consistently

misinterpreted and misrepresented sociological research on sexuality, homosexuality, and lesbianism."

Despite the rebukes from professional organizations, Cameron seems to have found a ready audience for his research among those opposed to homosexuality for moral or political reasons.

In 1992, Cameron joined a fight against a proposed gay rights law in Colorado. Gale A. Norton, who was then Colorado's attorney general and who is now the secretary of the Interior in the Bush administration, defended a voter-approved measure that prohibited extending civil rights laws to gays. Norton's office paid Cameron \$15,000 as a consultant on the case, although his testimony was never used.

The US Supreme Court threw out Colorado's law. Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote for the majority that "a state cannot so deem a class of persons a stranger to its laws." Norton responded to the Supreme Court ruling by saying it "mocks the Democratic process."

In 2000, Cameron traveled to Maine to campaign against a gay-rights initiative. Most recently, Cameron's research has shown up in many political and legal fights. It was cited by dissenters in the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court case that led to legalizing same-sex marriage, and in a Florida Supreme Court decision that upheld a law banning adoption by same-sex couples.

In February, he testified in favor of a Virginia proposal to require that social workers learn the sexual orientation of adoptive parents.

Cameron's work is controversial even among conservative groups. For example, the Traditional Values Coalition claims to speak for 43,000 churches. For three years, the coalition has quoted Cameron's studies on its website in an article headlined, "Report Shows Homosexual Foster Parents Apt To Molest Children," and has told its membership to "read and distribute Dr. Cameron's report."

But when The Boston Globe asked the Traditional Values Coalition last week about Cameron, the group responded within minutes by removing all references to Cameron from its website. The group's spokeswoman, Daniella Lopez, said Cameron's research had been "mistakenly" put on the website. She would not say why the group thought it was a mistake to publicize Cameron's research.

A Christian media link

Cameron gets publicity partly by relying on the Christian Communication Network, an organization that has become a powerful tool for opponents of abortion, same-sex marriage, and stem-cell research. It is run by McCullough, the antiabortion activist, who had been the press agent for the antiabortion group Operation Rescue.

McCullough, a former watch salesman who honed his publicity skills by doing jailhouse interviews during his Operation Rescue days, was the press agent for the parents of Terri Schiavo. Schiavo had been diagnosed by court-appointed doctors as being in a persistent vegetative state; she died in March after her feeding tubes were removed.

McCullough says he persuaded the parents to release a videotape of Schiavo that, the parents said, showed Schiavo responding to them. The video became the focal point of the debate over whether Schiavo was really in a vegetative state and should be removed from life support. McCullough also published press releases purporting to cite medical expertise, such as one titled, "Terri Schiavo's Husband Fits Profile of Wife Abuser, Per Psychiatrist."

Schiavo's father, Robert Schindler, confirmed McCullough's role, saying he was a "valuable asset" who had also become a close friend.

As a publicity outlet for Cameron, McCullough has published press releases in the past several weeks with headlines that include these: "Gays Twice as Apt to Drive Under the Influence, says Family

Research Institute," "Gays 6X More Expensive Than Smokers, says Family Research Institute," and, "Weird Behavior Among Gays Due to Mental Illness? Asks Family Research Institute."

McCullough said he publicizes such material not just because Cameron is a paying client, but also because he believes homosexuality "is a destructive behavior." He said that he had not examined the basis for Cameron's research, but that he felt certain that if there were a problem with it, a reporter would have inquired about it.

An Internet search found that McCullough's publicity is widely cited, especially on conservative sites and blogs. McCullough, as a representative for groups ranging from the Christian Coalition to the National Right to Life Committee, touts his publicity apparatus as a crucial part of influencing national politics and policy.

"I'm like the liver or the kidney," McCullough said. "I'm like some internal organ that nobody sees but is a very important part of the body."

#### A White House echo

With his research widely publicized on the Internet and talk radio, Cameron says he believes his views have reached the White House.

In January, Bush was asked about adoption by same-sex couples. Bush responded that "private adoption firms can make whatever choice they choose to do," and that "I believe children can receive love from gay couples," but added: "Studies have shown that the ideal is where a child is raised in a married family with a man and a woman."

Bush's comments were made off the cuff in an interview with The New York Times. Asked six months later to account for the remarks, Bush's aides on parenting said they believe Bush was referring to more general studies about the benefits of children living with biological parents, even though those studies do not pass judgment on adoption by parents of the same sex.

Bush's chief domestic adviser, Claude Allen, said: "What we don't have is any data that have studied same-sex families."

Nonetheless, Cameron said he believes Bush's statement shows that the president had been influenced by his research, although Cameron said there was no way he could be sure. He said that he has talked with two White House officials about his studies, but that he could not remember their names.

#### A diverging view

Bush's statement startled Perrin, the Boston pediatrician who wrote the report about adoption by same-sex couples for the American Academy of Pediatrics.

In that report, Perrin wrote that the Academy "recognizes that a considerable body of professional literature provides evidence that children with parents who are homosexual can have the same advantages and the same expectations for health, adjustment, and development as can children whose parents are heterosexual."

The report was published in the Academy's journal, *Pediatrics*. It is the academy's summation of 31 studies on the topic.

While a typical paper published in a peer-reviewed journal is approved by a couple of editors and perhaps three outside reviewers, Perrin said her report underwent a more rigorous procedure, because it was approved unanimously by the academy's 10 board members.

Dr. Joseph Hagan, a Vermont pediatrician who chaired the academy committee that oversaw the report,

said that the Academy had reviewed all of the available literature. "If there are studies that show there are bad outcomes for these kids, we could not find them, and we looked, we looked really hard," Hagan said.

But some members of the academy said they were unhappy with the report. Dr. Joseph Zanga, a former president of the Academy, voiced concern that his opposition didn't stop the report from being published.

"Even though the paper has a disclaimer saying it is based on science, there is no science to support it," Zanga said in an interview.

So Zanga and about a dozen colleagues formed a new organization, the American College of Pediatricians. Zanga declined to give figures for the College's membership, but a fellow board member, Dr. Bose Ravenel, said there are between 150 and 200 members.

The College's website said there is scientific evidence that gays and lesbians are more prone to mental illness, substance abuse, and other problems, concluding with a strong warning against same-sex parenting.

"Given the current body of research, the American College of Pediatricians believes it is inappropriate, potentially hazardous to children, and dangerously irresponsible, to change the age-old prohibition on homosexual parenting, whether by adoption, foster care, or by reproductive manipulation. This position is rooted in the best available science."

The website does not mention Cameron as a source of the science, but Ravenel, the board member, said: "I've read a lot of his research. It is well done." (Cameron said he has discussed his research with some College members.)

The College has been widely quoted in the media, sometimes without an explanation, as saying that it broke away from the Academy, largely over the issue of same-sex parenting.

Perrin voiced a concern that the public may be confused about which organization has long represented pediatricians.

While Perrin has been startled by the College's effort to counter the Academy, she has been dismayed by Cameron's work having been published in peer-reviewed journals. She said that she had been asked to serve as a peer reviewer for at least three of Cameron's articles submitted to medical journals.

"I'm amazed that he is able to continue to be published," said Perrin, a professor of pediatrics at the Floating Hospital for Children, Tufts-New England Medical Center. Perrin emphasized that her concern is not just about Cameron, but also about the way his research is quoted by others to justify restrictions on adoption by same-sex couples.

A broad range in quality

Gregory M. Herek, professor of psychology at the University of California at Davis, who has followed Cameron's career, said: "Most members of the public assume that a paper published in an academic journal is a legitimate scientific study. They don't understand that journals vary widely in their quality and in the rigor of their review process. Cameron's work is methodologically weak and in many cases the conclusions he draws from his data are not valid."

Most recently, Cameron has said that "the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has suppressed a new study that concludes homosexuals are involved in criminality more than their heterosexual counterparts."

But Karen Hunter, a spokeswoman for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the government agency has "never conducted a study of criminal activity among homosexuals versus

heterosexuals. If we have never done a study, we would not be able to suppress it."

Cameron responded that his data came from a government drug-abuse survey, but the agency that collected the data said it could not replicate Cameron's findings.

Cameron's publisher, Psychological Reports, said it does not reject an article on grounds that it has received a negative review from peers, although it often asks for revisions.

As Ammons, the editor, put it, "No opinion of a reviewer will ever veto, by itself, an article . . . We just simply invite them to comment. If they disagree with some aspect, they are free to submit a comment."

"People want to anoint something published in a scientific journal as 'The Truth.' It isn't and it can't be," Ammons said. He added that his publication does not have a political agenda, and he said he personally disagrees with much of what Cameron has written but believes he should be published.

An obvious opinion

In several interviews and e-mail exchanges, Cameron made no effort to hide his view of gays and lesbians.

He said his research is meant to warn that gays and lesbians and those sympathetic to them are people he calls "death marketers." "I am not sure how long they will take to destroy the US from within, but sufficiently weakened, the US will probably fall to another state before that occurs," Cameron wrote via e-mail.

"Those of us at FRI are determined to do our best to oppose these death activists. As you see, the Internet has given us far more clout than our limited budget and efforts could otherwise hope for." ■

# The Boston Globe

## Science in support of a cause: the new research

*Lately, advocates offer their data to advance views*

By Michael Kranish, Globe Staff | July 31, 2005

WASHINGTON -- David Reardon wears two hats when it comes to abortion. He runs the Elliot Foundation, which wants Congress to impose strict barriers to abortion. But he is also a researcher whose studies on abortion have been in peer-reviewed journals. His latest, in a British journal, says that women who have had abortions are "three times more likely to use illegal drugs during a subsequent pregnancy."

Reardon's findings support his proposal that abortion be defined as an act of "medical negligence" if a physician does not warn patients about risk factors such as psychological problems.

This dual role of advocate/researcher is becoming more common, especially as advocacy groups realize they can sway more opinions by asserting that their research is based on science, rather than simply on personal belief. Reardon, like many people who play this dual role, insists he can objectively look at the data without being influenced by his personal viewpoint.

"A lot of science is advocacy-driven," Reardon said. "The presumption, which scientists try to foster, is they are totally objective. We are all human. The beauty of science is that you present facts."

In recent years, many groups have sprung up to present research or medical advice that is intended to counter that distributed by larger, more established groups. For example, the Christian Medical and Dental Associations, which says it has 17,000 members, views itself as a counterpoint to the American Medical Association, publishing its own "ethics statements" based on research by its members and others.

The statements use scientific research to justify their opposition to abortion, the morning-after birth control pill and homosexuality. The group's director, David Stevens, said many physicians have joined after becoming uncomfortable with positions taken by the larger medical groups and wanting "to incorporate Christianity into medicine."

The National Physicians Center For Family Resources, meanwhile, says that taxpayer money should not be used to promote the use of condoms by unmarried individuals. The organization has a \$25,000 taxpayer-financed contract to create a website for the US government on safe sex.

Dr. John Whiffen, the chairman of the center, said promoting condoms to prevent pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease is "mind-boggling." He said he sees no problem with having a strong viewpoint against condoms, although, at the same time, his group is paid by the government to design a website on safe sex.



Dr. Ellen C. Perrin, a Boston pediatrician, disputes the methods and conclusions of Dr. Paul Cameron. "Children with parents who are homosexual can have the same advantages . . . as can children whose parents are heterosexual," she wrote in a study. (Globe Staff Photo / David L. Ryan)

"It is reasonable to assume that if the president is in favor of abstinence, he is not going to hire a group" that promotes the use of condoms, Whiffen said. That has drawn criticism from Representative Henry Waxman, the California Democrat, who has written to the Bush administration that "it is wrong -- and ultimately self-defeating --to sacrifice scientific accuracy in an effort to frighten teens and their parents."

Advocates for abortion rights also conduct medical research that buttresses their views.

Dr. Vanessa Cullins, vice president for medical affairs of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, said her organization conducts medical research on abortion and birth control.

Asked if the group can assess medical research and advocate its view at the same time, Cullins said her group appears in widely known journals, while "those who are against contraception and abortion publish their findings in what would be the equivalent of the National Enquirer."

Reardon, the antiabortion researcher, said such comments are unfair and show the need for research by alternative groups like his Elliot Foundation. "Planned Parenthood has its own agenda," Reardon said, adding that his research is also published in peer-reviewed journals.

Meanwhile, The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity, which cites medical evidence to oppose right-to-die cases, says it was founded after "more than a dozen leading Christian bioethicists gathered to assess the noticeable lack of explicit Christian engagement in the crucial bioethics arena." This year, the center's director of biotech ethics, Dr. William Cheshire, disputed court-appointed doctors who diagnosed Terri Schiavo as being in a vegetative state. Cheshire said Schiavo had responded to some stimuli, a view quoted by Governor Jeb Bush.

An autopsy found that the court-appointed doctors had been correct.

Before Schiavo's death, some critics questioned whether Cheshire was basing his appraisal of her condition on his religious beliefs. The center said last week that Cheshire would not comment. The center's director, John Kilner, said, "People shouldn't be disqualified from entering public discussions just because they have certain beliefs." ■