GLAD honors fighters on front lines of equal justice

Submitted by GLAD

GLAD hosted its 19th annual Spirit of Justice Award Dinner Friday, Oct. 12 at the Boston Marriott Copley Place. The event was chaired by attorneys Liz Doherty and Mario Nimock.

It featured powerful inspiration from Spirit of Justice Honoree Jose Antonio Vargas, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, filmmaker and leading voice for the human rights of immigrants; and featured speaker Sarah Hucksman, a young leader and advocate who was instrumental to passing a transgender non-discrimination law in New Hampshire this year.

All photos by Susan Symonds, InfinityPortraitDesign.com

Parent Power at the Polls
by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com contributing writer

As a queer person and a Jew, the past few weeks have been very scary for me. The massacre at a synagogue in Pittsburgh, motivated by anti-Semitism and anti-immigrant hate; news that the Trump administration is considering wiping out recognition and protections of transgender people under federal law by rigidly defining gender—these are only the latest in a litany of hateful and harmful events in our country.

This is not a time to despair, however, even though despair may be trying to peek in our windows. This is a time for action—and the best action we can take right now is to vote and enable others to vote as well.

Here’s a parent-focused list of ways to make this election season work for us.

1. Look up your polling place, its hours, and what you need to bring—and have your kids do so for you if they’re old enough. It’s a good way to involve them in the process. Vote.org is a good one-stop shop for voting information across the U.S., or you can do an online search for “voting [state name]” for more details about your specific state of residence.

2. Make sure you’re registered. Even if you think you are, there have been lots of news stories about voters being purged from the voting rolls without notice, so it never hurts to check. You can do this at Vote.org, too.

3. Look up your ballot questions. Ballotpedia.org has information on the ballot measures in every state, or you can go to your state-specific site as above. Write yourself a cheat sheet, if needed, indicating how you intend to vote on each one.

4. Vote early. Many states, including Massachusetts, allow early voting, making it easier to fit voting in to a busy schedule. I’ve also always found the lines are shorter on early voting day (in Massachusetts, it’s four days), so make sure to look up the schedule at vote.org/early-voting-calender.

5. Alternatively, get an absentee ballot if you are worried about your kids’ basketball practice or other activity running over or otherwise not being needed, indicating how you intend to vote right now. Write yourself a cheat sheet, if needed, indicating how you intend to vote on each one.

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5. Alternatively, get an absentee ballot if you are worried about your kids’ basketball practice or other activity running over or otherwise not being
able to make it to the polls on Election Day. Make sure it has the right amount of postage before sending—some require extra.

6. Regardless of how you cast your ballot, double check your selections. If your state uses paper ballots, make sure to check both sides of the paper.

7. If any of your children are over 18, make sure they do the above, too. Be the annoying parent they’ve always said you are and remind them.

8. If you are voting on Election Day:

9. Decide what time you will vote, preferably well before the polls close. Put it on your calendar or task list. Set a reminder if you use an electronic calendar. If you’re feeling adventurous, put it on your kids’ calendars as well, and ask them to remind you. Offer a prize for the most creative reminder. (“VOTE” spelled out in breakfast cereal on the table? An American flag costume on your pet?) Note that rideshare services Lyft and Uber are both offering discounted rides on Election Day. Do an online search for “rideshare polls” and you’ll find links to the details.

10. If there’s a chance you won’t be able to go at your preferred time (e.g., if there could be a crisis at work or your kid misses the bus or you get stuck in traffic), pick a backup time so you won’t have to re-strategize at the last minute.

11. If you are turned away at the polls for any reason (e.g., not being registered or not having ID, if needed), know that you have the right to ask for a provisional ballot. Request a receipt so that you may follow up to see if it was counted.

12. If you are bringing your kids—because it’s always good to teach them what a participatory democracy is all about—make sure to bring things to entertain them while you wait in line. One suggestion for younger children: Peaceful Fights for Equal Rights, a new picture book by Rob Sanders, with illustrations by Jared Andrew Schorr, that takes readers on an alphabetically-themed journey through actions and concepts (including voting) for making a difference in the world. The queer-inclusive images show a multi-racial, multicultural, multi-gender, varied-ability, all-ages world of people mobilizing in their homes and communities.

13. Ask friends when they plan to vote. Offer to share a ride or walk together if it’s convenient. If you have already voted, offer to drive friends or neighbors who may need help getting to the polls. The motivation of going with someone else may help you both get there—and if they have kids, too, the kids can entertain each other in line or the older ones can watch the younger.

As 2016 so clearly showed, election results are never guaranteed—but that’s all the more reason to vote. Every election is critical, but this year feels more so than ever. Don’t miss your chance to help make a difference. Vote for yourself. Vote for your children and the rest of your family, however you define them. Vote for all families. Vote for our country, which still has much good in it. Vote so the good has a chance to shine.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-nominated blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.
Matthew Shepard laid to rest in DC

By JULIET LINDERMANN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP)—After 20 years without a permanent resting place, the remains of Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old college student whose brutal murder in 1998 has come to symbolize the plight of the LGBTQ community in America, were interred at the Washington National Cathedral on Friday.

More than 2,000 people gathered at the Episcopal cathedral, the second-largest cathedral in the country, to celebrate Shepard’s life, mourn his death and honor his memory.

The service offered a measure of closure for Shepard’s parents who, until now, hadn’t found a spot that seemed suitable or safe enough to rest their child’s remains. It also provided a moment of unity and collective grieving for those in the LGBTQ community, for whom Shepard’s death has for decades represented the pain and discrimination many had experienced themselves.

And the setting inside the same sprawling cathedral in the nation’s capital where U.S. presidents are memorialized lent to the weight of the moment as hymns, speeches, chorals and prayers for love, tolerance and equality bounced off the towering columns and sweeping arches, echoing across the nave.

Shepard was an acolyte in his local Episcopalian church, and when Bishop V. Gene Robinson, the first openly gay bishop consecrated in the Episcopal church suggested the National Cathed-ral as a fitting resting place for Matthew’s ashes, his family agreed.

“Matt loved the church,” said Dennis Shepard, Matthew’s father. “Matt was blind, just like this beautiful house of worship. He did not see this color. He did not see religion. He did not see sexual orientation. All he saw was a chance to have another friend. Just like this beautiful home we have here.

“It is so important we now have a home for Matt,” he said. “A home that others can visit. A home that is safe from haters.”

Shepard was found badly beaten and barely breathing, tied to a split-rail fence on a dirt road near Laramie, Wyoming. He’d spent 18 hours there in the near-freezing cold before a cyclist discovered him, at first mistaking him for a scarecrow. He died five days later. Police said his attackers targeted him because he was gay.

Shepard’s death prompted a national reckoning—inspiring marches and protests, vigils and new laws. In October of 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, expanding the federal law to include crimes based on a victim’s sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

But Friday’s interment comes at a fraught moment for the LGBTQ community in America. The Trump Administration has taken steps to restrict protections, including trying to reinstate a ban on transgender individuals in the military and rescinding guidance for schools receiving federal funding on how to treat transgender students. Trump has also installed dozens of conservative judges and his administration, according to an article in the New York Times this week, is drafting language that would limit the definition of gender to only male or female at birth, stripping the transgender community of protection under civil rights law.

Robinson delivered the homily, at times overcome with emotion.

“I have three things I want to say to Matt,” he said through tears. “Gently rest in this place. You are safe now. And Matt, welcome home.”

The undercurrent of his address was political: He implored the audience to “go vote,” and told them simply honoring Shepard’s memory isn’t enough.

He spoke of James Byrd, the African American man who was dragged to death behind a pickup truck by three white supremacists and whose name is on the same hate-crime law as Shepard’s.

“Violence comes in many different forms,” Robinson said, “and right now, the transgender community is the target. There are forces about who would erase them from America, deny them the right they have to define themselves. And they need us to stand for them. That’s the kind of transformation today makes possible: that we see the bigger picture.”

Some attendees wiped away tears. Some held hands and comforted each other.

Nicole Murray Ramirez, an LGBTQ activist, traveled from San Diego for the service. Seeing Shepard put to rest in such a historic space felt cathartic, he said.

“How wonderful in such a historic cathedral, that has been a place of so many memorial celebra-tions and funerals, that Matthew, a young gay man, deserved and earned that honor and respect from the nation.”

But Ramirez said the fight is far from over, and he worries about the tenor of the national con-sversation surrounding the LGBTQ community.

“These are difficult times,” he said, “I fear more Matthew Shepards.”

Rosendall

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oil, we have so-called conversion therapy.

Garrard Conley’s parents bought that false cure from their minister because they were taught that homosexuality was scary and sinful, and wanted to help their son. Instead, he was subjected to practices that Just the Facts Coalition says can cause “depression, anxiety and self-destructive behavior.”

Conley’s book on his experiences, Boy Erased, is now a film by Joel Edgerton starring Lucas Hedges as the boy and Nicole Kidman and Russell Crowe as his parents.

Inspired by Conley’s story, the Mattachine Society of Washington, DC (MSDC, of which I am secretary) has released a white paper, “The Prejudice Myth of Conversion Therapy: How Love in Action Perpetuated a Fraud on America.” Prepared by a team of attorneys at McDermott Will & Emery, it marshals a wealth of archival evidence to show how pseudoscience fueled by animus was used to destroy respectability on anti-gay abuse.

St. Elizabeths Hospital in southeast DC was established by act of Congress in 1855. As described in a May 2018 article in Washington City Paper about MSDC’s research, after World War II it was the “headwater” of pseudoscientific theories about LGBTQ people that combined the psychoanalytic teachings of Sigmund Freud with American homophobia.

This was during the “Lavender Scare” period when President Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450 declaring homosexuals a threat to national security and unfit for federal employ-ment, thus implementing FBI director J. Edgar Hoover’s Sex Deviate program.

St. Elizabeths’ “coercive federal psychiatry,” as MSDC President Charles Francis calls it, included electroshock treatments, transorbital lobotomies, and aversion therapy. One uncovered story among many is that of Thomas H. Tat-terwall, committed to St. Elizabeths from 1955 to 1960. He was subjected to insulin shock therapy, “a barbaric series of massive injections of insulin to induce comas over weeks.”

The late Frank Kameny, founder of the origi-nal MSDC, played a key role in persuading the American Psychiatric Association to declassify homosexuality as a disorder in 1973. (He would be thrilled by the archival rescue work of Fran-cis and MSDC director and officer Pate Felts.)

More recently, “ex-gay” charlatanry was recast as religious ministry, which is how Love In Action (LIA) got hold of Conley.

LIA’s “cure” consisted of cherry-picked Bible passages, fire and brimstone prayer sessions, and twelve-step programs premised on sexual brokenness. Assisted by Alliance Defense Fund (ADF, now Alliance Defending Freedom), LIA fought regulatory efforts by Tennessee authori-ties concerned that it was conducting therapy without a license.

With LIA (renamed Restoration Path in 2012) baselessly treating same-sex love as an ad-diction, and with ADF defending conversion therapy as a matter of parental rights, several states banned its use on minors. DC’s ban became law in 2015. The increasing resort to “reli-gious freedom” as a back door to mistreatment, including the anti-gay and anti-trans Nashville Statement signed in 2017 by evangelical leaders, shows the need for a nationwide policy against these cruel practices.

The use of bogus science to buttress bigotry continues with the Trump administration’s pro-posed Title IX change, which would ignore gender science and define transgender people out of existence by assigning gender according to external genitalia as recorded on original birth certificates. Trans people who have obtained a revised birth certificate and REAL ID reflecting their true gender identity could face invalidation of IDs and passports.

If Lyndon Johnson brought the Great Society, Donald Trump has brought the Great Erasure, where science is discredited and journalism is discredited in favor of propaganda serving the Glorious Leader.

Pathologizing gay and trans people does not make it so, any more than denying climate change will keep sea levels from rising. We fight erasure, as MSDC and McDermott are doing, by telling our stories and preserving our history — forcing those who would launch a post-fac-tual age to confront the fact of us.

Richard J. Rosendall is a writer and activist who can be reached at rosendall@me.com.

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Study finds LGBTQ characters on network TV hit a record high

By LYNN ELBER
AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A record-high percentage of LGBTQ characters are part of the new TV season’s prime-time network series, according to the media advocacy group GLAAD.

The annual study by media advocacy group GLAAD out Thursday also found an increase in the characters’ ethnic diversity, with slightly more LGBTQ people of color than white for the first time.

While the percentage of regularly seen LGBTQ characters on scripted broadcast series rose from last year’s 6.4 percent to hit an all-time high of 8.8 percent, or 75 characters out of a total 857, GLAAD said the TV industry is still falling short.

The organization called on networks to reach 10 percent inclusion for LGBTQ characters in prime-time in the next two years to ensure “entertainment reflects the world in which it is created,” GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis said in a statement. The culture has changed for LGBTQ people but America is the midst of extraordinary turndown, she said.

“Telling what happens on our television screens is now more important than ever before,” Ellis said. Stories that explore the lives and identities of characters once invisible on screen remain “critical to accelerating acceptance for LGBTQ people.”

Meanwhile, Nielsen announced it will begin reporting on what same-sex couples and their households are watching. The company, which already analyzes audiences by ethnicity, income and other demographics, said the new ratings data will help programmers and marketers “better understand the compelling opportu-

see TV, page 11

UVM students walk out in support of transgender people

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP)—Hundreds of students at the University of Vermont walked out of class to show solidarity and support for transgender people.

UVM’s Queer Student Union says it organized the Monday walkout in response to reports that the Trump administration is seeking to narrowly define gender in a way that would deny civil rights protections to transgender Americans. WCAX-TV reports the demonstrators say they were confident the walkout would make a difference in both the college community and for transgender people nationwide.

Rally attendee Jamie Gay says the government shouldn’t be conflating gender and sex, saying “it is erasing the lives and experiences of thousands and thousands of Americans.”

UMass: We’ll keep transgender policy even if law repealed

BOSTON (AP)—Leaders of the state’s public university system are pledging to continue their policy of allowing transgender students, faculty, staff members and guests to use restrooms and locker rooms consistent with their gender identity even if Massachusetts voters opt to repeal a 2016 transgender rights law.

University of Massachusetts President Marty Meehan and the chancellors of the five UMass campuses said in a statement Monday that they plan to keep the university system’s existing policy “regardless of the outcome of the election, and to the extent permitted by law.”

A “no” vote on Question 3 would repeal the law. Supporters of the repeal effort say they want to protect women from being harassed or assaulted by male criminals falsely claiming to identify as female to enter women’s restrooms or locker rooms.

Pappas T-Shirt becomes hot topic at congressional debate

By MICHAEL CASEY
Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP)—Eddie Edwards and his congressional opponent Chris Pappas spent much of a debate Wednesday talking about the economy, but the most heated exchange revolved around a T-shirt.

Pappas T-shirt becomes hot topic at congressional debate

By MICHAEL CASEY
Associated Press

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The study singled out two series as history-making: the FX drama “Pose,” which featured the largest number of transgender series regulars ever on a U.S. series, and CW’s “Supergirl,” with TV’s first transgender superhero, Nia Nal, played by Nicole Maines, appearing this season.

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Greetings from the Big Easy—which is aptly named. Not to be indiscreet, but the boys in New Orleans for Halloween go down as easily as I down beignets—often simultaneously. Don’t ask me to rank them in order of preference. I’m only human. Hot guys come and go, but beignets are forever.

The big story last week was about Megyn Kelly and blackface—two things I never thought would go together. Megyn Kelly and a lobotomy, yes. Megyn Kelly and peroxide poisoning, yes. Megyn Kelly and Botox mishap, yes. But blackface? If you don’t know, Meg tackled the issue of using blackface for Halloween by saying it was OK to dress up as a specific person of a different ethnicity. And that leads us, inevitably, to “Designing Women”. Now, I know my audience—you all saw this coming a mile away. In the famous episode, the ladies were in a talent show lip-synching to “The Supremes”. There were many problems with this scenario. First off, there were only three Supremes, while there were four “DW”. Second, they performed “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough”, which was a hit for Diane after she left The Supremes (although here’s a fun fact—The Supremes and Temptations recorded a cover of the Tammi Terrell/Marvin Gaye version of this song in 1968). Third, and the issue germane to this situation, The Supremes were black women, while the ladies on “DW” were white. Suzanne had her beautician whip up skin bronzing makeup. Julia balked, saying it was insulting to black women. Come showtime, the three girls are onstage au naturel when Suzanne walks out with tinted skin—looking stunning, I might add.

And that brings us to the question—if you are dressing up as someone famous of a different color, how far do you go? And before you answer, I’m not talking about minstrel makeup with exaggerated lips; I’m talking natural coloring. In theatre, this is commonplace. When an opera singer plays “Aida”, she must look Ethiopian. When someone sings or acts “Othello”, he must look like a Moor (although the Met recently stopped doing this). When Whoopi Goldberg hosted the 1999 Academy Awards, she came out as Queen Elizabeth I—complete with the Virgin Queen’s heavily powdered white face. For all those reasons—and believe me, I am no fan—I think Megyn got a raw deal when NBC fired her. Methinks they were just looking for an excuse to dump her.

People have been asking me for months if I knew why Mark Steines was fired from “Home and Family” on the Hallmark Channel. I recently reported that opera singer David Daniels and his husband William Fraser were being harassed by Fraser. There have been numerous claims of sexual harassment against the show’s creator, Woody Fraser. The most recent accusation came from chef Shanti Hinojos, who said that although she was officially fired for “subpar job performance”, she was really dumped after reporting the inappropriate behavior of Fraser. And what advances they were! She details all the predictable inappropriate advances, touching, and lewd comments, but here’s a new one—Fraser allegedly said that once his cancer-stricken wife died, Shanti was “going to be my next wife.” I did note that this Woody Fraser is not much of a looker and not all that young. Let’s put it this way—he previously worked on “The Mike Douglas Show”. How does Steines fit into all of this? Turns out that Shanti’s story completely backs up Mark’s assertion that he was fired after standing up for women who were being harassed by Fraser.

I’ve previously expressed my admiration for Max Ehrich, an actor who previously appeared on “Under the Dome” and “The Young and the Restless”, and is rumored to have played an active role in the private life of Chris Colfer—speculation, of course, but circumstantial evidence points in that direction. Young Max recently posted the following on Twitter: “I am currently being stalked. I am putting this out there so that this person (ppl involved) are aware that the police are now involved. Please leave me alone. I wish I could say that this is all over, but I’m continuing to get my safety threatened even with a security team. I have to step away from social media at this time. Love you guys.” He then posted a photo of a burly gent sitting on his hotel bed with the word “SECURITY” printed on the back of his T-shirt (note to self—never hire a security guard who wears a T-shirt that says “SECURITY”). Max then said, “Just wanted to update you guys that I am safe & secure. I appreciate the messages. Don’t take your safety for granted. There really are some sick people out there. Stay safe x”. He later told TMZ that a realtor became infatuated with him, sexually aggressive, and at one point brandished a gun! That fills in some of the blanks, but not all of it. Sources say that this wasn’t so much a business relationship that went south as an online hookup that went wrong. Not to victim blame, of course, but let this be a cautionary tale (or tail).

People have been asking me for months if I knew why Mark Steines was fired from “Home and Family” on the Hallmark Channel. It’s all slowly starting to come together. see MASTERS, page 11
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House Democrats promise action on LGBTQ rights bill

By JULIET LINDERMANN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP)—Just days ahead of a midterm election they hope will deliver them a majority, House Democrats are promising to prioritize anti-discrimination legislation that would for the first time establish widespread equal rights protections for LGBTQ individuals.

Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi recently said she would introduce the Equality Act as one of her first orders of business if Democrats retake the House in November. Pelosi made the announcement at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, telling the crowd the issue of equal rights for the LGBTQ community is "personal."

The 1964 Civil Rights Act already bars discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin. The Equality Act, if passed, would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the law and expand those protections beyond the workplace. It would outlaw gender discrimination in places like restaurants and retail stores, in seeking housing, using health care and social services, applying for a loan or participating in the jury selection process.

About 20 states and the District of Columbia currently have local gender and sex nondiscrimination laws on the books.

Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill said the legislation will be given a low bill number, meaning it would be among the first pieces of legislation to be introduced. Hammill described such a designation as "a place of honor."

The Equality Act is a far-reaching piece of legislation, decades in the works, that would safeguard the LGBTQ community against discrimination and bias. It was introduced in both chambers of Congress in 2015, where it died in committee, and reintroduced in 2017, but has not been voted on.

"This is a very simple proposition," said Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I., the lead sponsor of the bill in the House.

"We have a long history in our country of prohibiting discrimination and promoting equality. It’s the founding principle of our country, and I made a deal about my T cells in that I didn’t want to know the numbers visit to visit because I knew I would fret with every little fluctuation and I also knew that AZT was not working for my friends."

"The deal was that he would just let me know at some point when the T cell numbers meant I needed to start on medications," said Kerr. "The numbers were his job and my job was to finish my master’s thesis and get a job with insurance and try not to go crazy."

Kerr on his Facebook page wrote Rabinowitz in the fall of 1995 "gently told me" that "it was time to begin taking medications." Kerr said he still takes one of the medications Rabinowitz recommended to him.

"You saved my life," wrote Kerr.

Kerr has not responded to the Washington Blade’s request for comment, but he described Rabinowitz on his Facebook page as "one of my heroes just like the early ACT UP warriors — some of which I now call friend (sic)." José M. Zuniga, president of the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care, which is based in D.C., told the Blade on Monday that Rabinowitz treated people with HIV/AIDS through his family practice in Pittsburgh.

"It is tragic to lose any life to senseless violence, but sad for the medical profession to lose one of its own — Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz — who was dedicated to a humanist approach to medicine," said Zuniga. "We must be guided by our common humanity in these troubled times, and honor Dr. Rabinowitz’s life and legacy by advocating respect for the dignity of every human life, irrespective of religious belief or any other factor that expresses our diversity."

AIDS Free Pittsburgh, a program that operates under the Pittsburgh-based Jewish Healthcare Foundation, in a statement to the Blade echoed Zuniga.

"He was a friend of the foundation and his
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Continued from page 4

Edwards, a Republican, suggested a shirt with the word “Resist.” Pappas had been photographed wearing it, and he would go to Washington to oppose Trump’s agenda. “That’s what we have to do,” Edwards, a former police chief and former chief enforcement officer for the state Liquor Commission, and Pappas, who serves on prenticeship programs so we give individuals the skills they need to start their careers right here in the Granite state.’’

he said. Edwards credited the Republican tax cuts with spurring growth and putting more money into the pockets of Granite state residents. He said he would work to make the cuts permanent.

“I do think the tax cut was effective,’’ Edwards said, insisting more money was coming into the general fund despite the fact the tax cuts have been found to be contributing to the rising federal deficit. “The business community asked for tax cuts and they have rewarded workers, our communities. Pappas said the tax cuts were mostly helping the rich and are unnecessary at a time of strong economic growth.

Pappas talked of investing in a commuter rail line from Manchester to Boston as well as investing in programs to retain and attract young workers to the state, which has both an aging workforce and one of the country’s lowest unemployment rates.

“We are facing a demographic challenge that is really significant,’’ he said. “The way we address this is by making sure that college is more affordable and making sure we invest in job training and apprenticeship programs so we give individuals the skills they need to start their careers right here in the Granite state.’’

Edwards, a former police chief and former chief enforcement officer for the state Liquor Commission, and Pappas, who serves on the governor’s Executive Council and runs his family’s restaurant, will debate three more times before the Nov. 6 election.

Edwards grow defensive and suggested Pappas was trying to introduce his sexual orientation into the debate.

“No one here said anything about you wearing a gay pride shirt.” Edwards said, “I said ‘resist.’ You had a ‘resist’ shirt on. You are resisting the will of the people of this state and the will of the people of this country.”

Pappas continued to argue Edwards misconstrued the meaning of the shirt. Edwards, who is black, accused his opponent, who is white, of wanting to make the race “about ethnicity, race, sexual orientation and gender.” He said Pappas saying the shirt had to do with gay rights was “absurd.”

Pappas doubled down and said the rainbow shirt stood for inclusion.

“I believe everyone should feel welcome here,” Pappas said, as Edwards interrupted him to ask what “resist” stood for.

“We should oppose policies like we have seen at the federal level. We should oppose policies that have undermined the progress we have made for LGBT members of our communities here in New Hampshire,’’ he said. “I do believe in a future that includes everyone and that is the context I wore that shirt.”

Wednesday’s forum at the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce was the latest in a series of debates. Edwards and Pappas are competing to replace Democratic Rep. Carol Shea-Porter in the 1st Congressional District, which has swung back and forth between the two parties over the last decade. Pappas has a slight lead in the polls.

The two also sparred over the best way to help the state’s economy, and both said they would work in a bipartisan fashion to overcome partisan gridlock in Washington.

Edwards credited the Republican tax cuts with spurring growth and putting more money into the pockets of Granite state residents. He said he would work to make the cuts permanent.

“I do think the tax cut was effective,’’ Edwards said, insisting more money was coming into the general fund despite the fact the tax cuts have been found to be contributing to the rising federal deficit. “The business community asked for tax cuts and they have rewarded workers, our communities.

Pappas said the tax cuts were mostly helping the rich and are unnecessary at a time of strong economic growth.

Pappas talked of investing in a commuter rail line from Manchester to Boston as well as investing in programs to retain and attract young workers to the state, which has both an aging workforce and one of the country’s lowest unemployment rates.

“We are facing a demographic challenge that is really significant,’’ he said. “The way we address this is by making sure that college is more affordable and making sure we invest in job training and apprenticeship programs so we give individuals the skills they need to start their careers right here in the Granite state.’’

Edwards, a former police chief and former chief enforcement officer for the state Liquor Commission, and Pappas, who serves on the governor’s Executive Council and runs his family’s restaurant, will debate three more times before the Nov. 6 election.
Bill
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believe the vast majority of people in our country think discrimination is wrong. In many ways Congress has to catch up to where the American people are.”

A narrower bill to bar gender discrimination in the workplace, called the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, passed the Senate in 2013 with 64 votes, including 10 Republicans. But then-House Speaker John Boehner, a vocal opponent, opted not to bring it to a floor vote.

Even if the Equality Act were to pass a Democratic House, its future in the Senate—where 60 votes are typically needed to advance legislation—would be uncertain.

Some of the Republican senators who supported ENDA are out of office or will be come January. Five remain in Congress now: Sens. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, Rob Portman of Ohio, Dean Heller of Nevada, Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, who recently bucked her party to become the only Republican to vote against the controversial confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh.

Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., the main sponsor of the Equality Act in the Senate, said he’s optimistic that shifting public attitudes on gay rights will propel the bill forward. He noted that in 2015, two years after ENDA stalled in Congress, the Supreme Court legalized gay marriage nationwide.

“This is what we need to accomplish. It is way past time to end discrimination across the board,” Merkley said. “I find it astounding that here we are in a situation where you can now take your marriage certificate from state to state, but if you travel with your partner, in one you’re treated as a citizen with full rights, and in the next, you’re treated as a second-class citizen.”

Merkley said soon after the midterm election he’ll begin reaching out to Republican senators to discuss the legislation. But so far they’ve been hard to convince: All 47 sponsors of the Senate bill are Democrats.

He sees one big sticking point for gaining Republican support: A provision in the bill forbids any employer or retailer from using the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, passed in 1993, to justify withholding services based on gender or sexual orientation. The law, which received bipartisan support, barred the government from interfering with the rights of religious practitioners. But more recently the law has been used to protect the rights of business owners to refuse service based on religious beliefs. In one 2014 case, the Supreme Court found that chain craft store Hobby Lobby, founded by religious evangelicals, didn’t have to provide its employees with contraception coverage for religious reasons.

The Trump administration has pursued policies in line with that law when taking steps to roll back protections for LGBTQ individuals, including rescinding guidance for schools on how to treat transgender students and attempting to bar transgender individuals from serving in the military. The administration is also considering a proposal to limit the definition of gender to include only one’s sex at birth, according to The New York Times, prompting outrage from LGBTQ advocates.

Religious and conservative organizations have been vocal in their opposition to the Equality Act. Mary Beth Waddell, senior legislative assistant of the Human Rights Campaign’s Workplace Equality Program.

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“Unlike virtually any other omnibus civil rights bill, the Equality Act had corporate support from the day of introduction,” said Deena Fidas, director of the Human Rights Campaign’s Workplace Equality Program.
Scott Walters were accused of drugging and raping a 23-year-old student singer back in 2010. Now two more men have come forward with similar accusations against the singer (but not his husband). Andrew Lipian says that he was drugged and assaulted by Daniels while he was a student at University of Michigan in March of 2017. He claims Daniels invited him to his apartment and gave him several drinks of bourbon. Later, Daniels gave Lipian what he thought was Tylenol PM, but turned out to be Ambien! Lipian says Daniels then removed his clothes, groped him, and throughout the encounter told Lipian that he’d probably get a full scholarship for the rest of his studies. Lipian also says Daniels sent him a video of the famed singer masturbating and referencing “our bourbon and Ambien night.”

As if that wasn’t bad enough, a third singer who studied with Daniels at UM claims that he too was solicited for sex. The 19-year-old claims that he received the solicitation on Grindr, which I really don’t think counts. I mean, when you’re on a hookup app, you’ve gotta expect solicitations.

Dame Judi Dench has certainly played her share of diverse roles. But, she’s stepping out on a limb for her next gig—the film version of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s “Cats”. The role? Old Deuteronomy. It should go without saying, but Dame Judi is not an actual cat—but methinks she’ll be sporting some fur and other enhancements of the feline persuasion. Didya know Judi was supposed to be the original Grizabella when “Cats” debuted in London’s West End in 1981. Her dreams were dashed when she snapped her Achilles tendon during rehearsals.

The stars of “Call Me By Your Name” are starring on network TV in 2018-19—Amazon, Hulu and Netflix original series—Across all platforms, including broadcast, cable and streaming, the number of bisexual characters on broadcast TV at 49.6 percent each—There is gender parity among LGBTQ characters and shows.

Researchers also looked at overall ethnic and gender inclusiveness and found a record percentage of black characters on network series at 22 percent compared to 18 percent last year. Latinos remained at last year’s record 8 percent, while Asian-American and Pacific Islanders rose a point to 8 percent. Women, estimated to make up 51 percent of the U.S. population, held steady at 43 percent of network characters.

The new season has a record number of regularly seen characters who have disabilities, rising to 2.1 percent from 1.8 percent last season.

Our “Ask Billy” question comes from Gary in San Francisco. “I don’t know if you watch The Good Place”—a ripped Chidi! I admit that the sight of his body really distracted me. Apparently Chidi isn’t just a dorky nerd into heavy reading—he’s also into heavy lifting! Whatever he’s doing, keep it up. Once you see the pics on BillyMasters.com, I predict you’ll do the same.

When brains also have brawn, it’s time for me to hide. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Megyn gets a job on the Hallmark Channel! Until next time, remember, my sheepskin, let me remind you to check out the pics on BillyMasters.com, I predict you’ll do it.

Whatever he’s doing, keep it up. Once you see the pics on BillyMasters.com, I predict you’ll do the same.

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