



MEDIA RELEASE

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As Nation Absorbs Supreme Court Decision and Marriage Debate Anti-LGBT Hate Violence Rises **Data shows 24% increase in incidents since Landmark *Lawrence v. Texas* Decision**

New York – The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) reported today that anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender hate violence rose 24% in the six months following the US Supreme Court’s landmark decision in the *Lawrence v. Texas* case, which struck down sodomy laws across the nation. The Court’s decision released in late June 2003 was widely hailed as an unqualified victory by LGBT rights advocates. However, the data released today represents clear evidence of the ‘backlash’ predicted by many in the LGBT anti-violence movement even as they celebrated the *Lawrence* decision.

In six of ten regions surveyed in preparation for NCAVP’s annual report documenting hate violence against the nation’s LGBT community, there were notable increases in incidents from the beginning of June through the end of December.

“In the six months of 2003 from the Supreme Court’s *Lawrence* decision through the end of the year, NCAVP member organizations charted a 24% increase in anti-LGBTH incidents when we compared the same time period in 2002,” said Clarence Patton, NCAVP’s Acting Executive Director. This included a 120% increase in Chicago, a 133% increase in Columbus, OH, a 43% increase in New York, and a 14% increase in San Francisco. Even more significantly, in a number of these regions, significant downward trends reversed themselves *after* the *Lawrence* decision, resulting in a total increase in incidents for the full year” added Patton.

“It’s important to remember that at the same time this spike in hate violence was occurring, the nation was discussing, arguing and staking out positions on issues from sodomy to the cultural significance of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, *The L Word*, *Boy Meets Boy* and *Ellen*’s return to network television, in addition to ongoing bread and butter issues for us like marriage, civil rights, civil unions and job protections. Those working in anti-violence organizations are responding to this backlash against our community in light of all of all this heightened visibility everyday and it is essential that those communities and leaders support anti-violence organizations across the country and develop responses where there are none,” said Patton.

“At the end of the day, the fact is that those who hate us are running scared because we have made progress in this society, in the Supreme Court, in the nation’s media and culture wars, and we will successfully fight back bigoted and mean-spirited Constitutional amendments designed to codify our second-class citizenship. To dissuade us from seeking our civil rights and places as full citizens of the United States, fear compels the monsters that engage in hate violence to redouble their efforts. The message being sent is, ‘Stay in your closets; and don’t you dare ask to be treated as human beings, but that message will continue to be ignored by this community’” said Patton

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs addresses the pervasive problem of violence committed against and within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and HIV-positive communities. NCAVP is a coalition of programs that document and advocate for victims of anti-LGBT and anti-HIV/AIDS violence/harassment, domestic violence, sexual assault, police misconduct and other forms of victimization. NCAVP’s 1998 - 2002 reports on violence against LGBT People are available for download at: www.avp.org. NCAVP’s 2003 Report on Hate Violence will be released in late April 2004.