



PRESS RELEASE

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**ACLU SUES OVER EXCLUSION OF GAY GROUPS
FROM PARADE SPONSORED BY CITY AND RELIGIOUS GROUP**

Honolulu – The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai‘i today filed suit against City and County of Honolulu officials and the Hawai‘i Christian Coalition for conspiring to exclude gay groups from the Family Day Parade scheduled for July 5.

“Exclusion of gay individuals from the Family Day Parade, because of our views and who we are, violates our First Amendment rights,” said Michael Golojuch, Jr., of Parents Family Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) of O‘ahu. “We wish to join the parade in celebration of gay and lesbian families, just as other families are allowed to join the parade.”

The suit was filed in U. S. District Court on behalf of PFLAG of O‘ahu, The Center and Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender Family Network.

“The facts show that the Family Day Parade is co-sponsored and a joint venture between the City and the Hawai‘i Christian Coalition. The City also advertised the Parade as open to the entire community and invited everyone to join. However, as soon as our clients sought to participate, the City changed its mind. This is called discrimination and it is not allowed under the Constitution,” said Brent White, Legal Director of the ACLU of Hawai‘i and attorney for the plaintiffs.

The lawsuit names as defendants Mayor Jeremy Harris, Deputy Managing Director Malcolm Tom, Deputy Director of Facility Maintenance Alvin Au, Family Day Parade Committee Chair Paulette Williams, Family Day Executive Committee Chair Garrett Hashimoto and the Hawai‘i Christian Coalition.

According to the complaint, the City and the Hawai‘i Christian Coalition have widely promoted the event as a co-sponsored one. The City extensively advertised the Family Day Festival using taxpayer funds through flyers, radio commercials, the City website and posters in City buildings and City buses. According to these advertisements, the event will include a parade, entertainment, displays, food, fireworks and a movie.

The parade is scheduled to include a variety of participants, ranging from local and mainland bands, floats, and clowns to a string of City vehicles, marching groups, and "classic" cars. Information on the City and Hawai'i Christian Coalition websites and a flyer sent by the City to The Center invited public participation and stated: "Everyone is welcome to join this parade."

There are also planning committees comprised of City employees and religious members. The City has provided numerous services -- at no expense -- to the Hawai'i Christian Coalition such as informing the public of the event, taking calls from the public about joining the parade, providing clean-up of the parade route and staging area, and for taking care of all logistical needs including but not limited to arranging for trolleys to transport participants and water wagons to accompany the parade. City employees are also scheduled to work the event that day.

The gay groups repeatedly followed the requirements to participate in the parade. For weeks, City and Coalition members sought to discourage them from joining the parade through a variety of means including failing to fax parade applications as promised, lying about the application deadline, refusing to accept the applications, excluding plaintiffs from parade organizational meetings and general verbal harassment and hostility.

When the gay groups persisted, the City and Hawai'i Christian Coalition changed their tactics and now contend that the Parade, previously advertised as co-sponsored, is actually privately sponsored by the Hawai'i Christian Coalition. Defendant Hashimoto, state chair of the Hawai'i Christian Coalition, in signed letters to the plaintiffs stated the reason for denying their parade application was the Coalition's religious belief that homosexuality is immoral.

The ACLU lawsuit asks the court to order the inclusion of the gay groups into the parade.

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Note: Lawsuit and press release can be emailed upon request.