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Supreme Court Hears Trans Medication Case

By Lisa Keen
Keen News Service

Outside the U.S. Supreme Court building Wednesday afternoon, lawyers supporting state bans on hormonal treatments for young people suffering gender dysphoria spoke more bluntly than they did in front of the justices during oral arguments.

Inside the courtroom, they said the Tennessee law that bans puberty blockers and hormonal treatment for people under 18 was all about "protecting children." They spoke of the need to prevent kids from suffering irreversible changes to their bodies — like loss of fertility, increases in heart troubles, bone loss, and other issues.

Outside the courtroom, their arguments sounded more like the culture wars of 40 to 50 years ago, when Anita Bryant's "Protect the Children" campaign was making its rounds. It echoed the cultural war over state bans 10 years ago over marriage for same-sex couples. Opponents said those bans were to protect children, too.

"The evidence shows that a large majority of [minors suffering from gender dysphoria] will grow out of it, unless they are put on these medications," said J. Matthew Rice, solicitor general for Tennessee. He defended Tennessee's SB 1 before the Supreme Court. Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall, who joined Rice at the impromptu post-argument reporter cluster, said the litigation to retain the ability to access medical treatment for minors with gender dysphoria was just an effort "to push a transgender agenda." South Carolina Attorney General, who also jumped in, said the laws of his state and 24 other states passed during the past three years are about "trying to prevent a 12-year-old from using chemical castration."

"We can tell parents when they have to keep their kids in the backseat of a car, and we can restrict kids from buying cigarettes," said SC AG Alan Wilson. These new laws, he said, were no different.

The court heard argument for well over the one hour it had allotted to the case, U.S. v. Skrmetti (Jonathan Skrmetti is the Tennessee attorney general). As so often happens with LGBTQ-related cases, the nine justices seem to be operating from two distinct camps:

The three more progressive justices asking the most questions that challenged the controversial law, and the six more conservative justices asking questions to defend it.

U.S. Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar, who spoke on behalf of the Biden administration's opposition to Tennessee's law, spelled out the government's arguments against the Tennessee ban: It violates the U.S. Constitution by discriminating on the basis of sex, in violation of the equal protection clause; because of sex discrimination, the court should scrutinize the law at a heightened level (greater than the easy requirement of simple rational basis); and the Supreme Court should send the case back to the Sixth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals with instructions to examine the ban with that heightened level of scrutiny.

ACLU attorney Chase Strangio, the first openly transgender person to advocate before the nine justices (and who Chief Justice John Roberts addressed as Mr. Strangio), said the Tennessee law (known as SB 1) had "taken away only the only medicine that has provided relief for patients."

"And do you maintain that these medicines reduce the risk of suicide?" asked Justice Samuel Alito, notoriously hostile to anything LGBTQ.

see **SCOTUS,** *page 7*

A Holiday Gift Guide to 2024's LGBTQ Middle-Grade Books

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

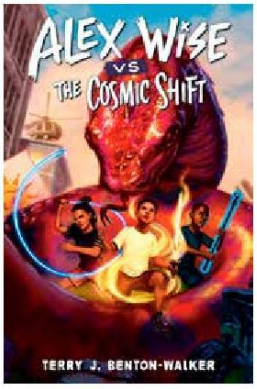
Moving tales of self-growth and finding family, epic adventures of magic and mystery, sweet stories of friendships and crushes, and combinations of the above: the LGBTQ-inclusive middle grade novels of 2024 are a wide-ranging lot. Here are some favorites.

Author, illustrator (if relevant), and publisher are listed after each title. An asterisk (*) indicates a sequel (check out the whole series!) and a carat (^) indicates a graphic novel.

Many tales embrace the supernatural. "Benji Zeb Is a Ravenous Werewolf" (Deke Moulton, Tundra) is a smart, layered tale about a gay, Jewish werewolf and his family. Vampires feature in "Blood City Rollers"^ (V. P. Anderson, Tatiana Hill, Labyrinth Road), about a paranormal roller derby team; and "The Vanquishers: Rise of the Wrecking Crew"* (Kalynn Bayron, Bloomsbury), where lines of good and evil blur. For ghosts and monsters, try "Jasmine is Haunted" (Mark Oshiro, Starscape), with many queer characters; "The Ghostkeeper"^ (Johanna Taylor, G. P. Putnam), with a two-man romance; "Wishbone" (Justine Pucella Winans, Bloomsbury), with a transgender demiboy protagonist; "The School for Invisible Boys" Shaun David Hutchinson, Labyrinth Road), with a gay protagonist; "Camp Twisted Pine" (Ciera Burch, Margaret K. McElderry), a mystery with a first (two-girl) crush, and "Hart & Souls" (Lisa Schmid, Carolina Vazquez, Andrews McMeel), which weaves LGBTQ history into its mystery.

Mysterious buildings feature in "Scrimshaw: A Deephaven Novel,"* (Ethan M. Aldridge, Quill Tree), about a nonbinary student at an exclusive boarding school; "Puzzleheart" (Jenn Reese, Henry Holt), with a nonbinary protagonist and a

see **MOMBIAN,** *page 3*



Why HIV/AIDS persists In Black America

by Rev. Irene Monroe
contributing writer

Dec. 1 was World AIDS Day. The international theme for 2024 was "Take the Rights Path: My Health, My Right!" The World Health Organization (WHO) wants health professionals to address the social determinants of health to combat AIDS. Specific populations continue to be hard-hit in the ongoing struggle to battle HIV/AIDS.

For African Americans, the disparities within the healthcare system contribute disproportionately to the high number of HIV/AIDS, directly affecting the quality of life and its spread.

According to an almost two decades old report by the Black AIDS Institute's August 2008 report, "Left Behind," the number of people living with HIV in black America exceeds the HIV population in seven of the 15 focus countries in the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) initiative, an initiative helping to save the lives of those who have HIV/AIDS around the world in countries like Haiti, Dominican Republic, India, South Africa, to name a few. In other words, if black America were its own country, standing on its own like Haiti or Nigeria, black Americans would rank 16th in the world.

The epidemic is heavily concentrated in urban enclaves like Detroit, New York, Newark, and Washington, D.C. Sadly, much of this is still present today. Also, with the South's propensity

see **MONROE,** *page 4*

"If Canada can't survive the tariffs, then maybe Canada should become the 51st state and Trudeau can become its governor."

— President-elect Donald Trump's response to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's complaint that tariffs would "kill the Canadian economy". Geez, now we're gonna have to replace all the flags—to say nothing of learning French!

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

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Mombian

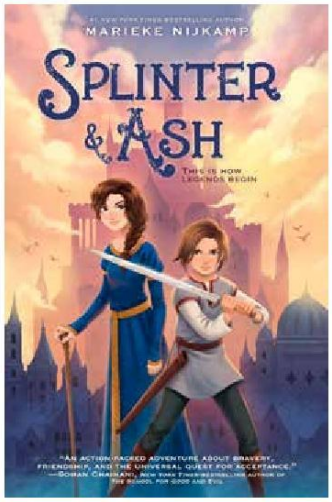
Continued from page 1

house full of deadly puzzles; "The Curse of Eelgrass Bog" (Mary Averling, Razorbill), a twisty tale starring a queer girl; "The House on Yeet Street" (Preston Norton, Union Square Kids), which blends a contemporary gay coming out story with a historical mystery; and "Night of the Living Zed"* (Basil and Kevin Sylvester, HarperCollins), with a flamboyant nonbinary protagonist.

Other spooky adventures include "The Pale Queen"^ (Ethan Aldridge, Quill Tree), where a queer girl is drawn into a fairy bargain; "Lulu Sinagtala and the City of Noble Warriors" (Gail D. Villanueva, HarperCollins), with a bisexual protagonist and influences from Tagalog myths; "Jaden Powers and the Inheritance Magic" (Jamar J. Perry, Bloomsbury), about a queer boy at a West African-influenced magical boarding school; "The Lumbering Giants of Windy Pines" (Mo Netz, Clarion), with a gender non-conforming protagonist who uses a wheelchair; "Nightmares in Paradise"* (Aden Polydoros, Inkyard), with a gay protagonist and creatures drawn from Jewish folklore; and the Doomsday Archives series, "The Wandering Hour" and "The Heart-Stealer Mask"* (Zack Loran Clark and Nick Eliopulos, Zando), with several queer (or queer-parented) characters. Two titles are set during an apocalypse: "The Flicker" (H.E. Edgmon, Feiwel & Friends), with nonbinary, trans, and gay characters; and "Alex Wise vs. the Cosmic Shift" (Terry J. Benton-Walker, Random House), with a gay protagonist as reluctant hero.

Find sword-swinging adventure with nonbinary protagonists (and other queer and diverse representation) in "Splinter & Ash" (Marieke Nijkamp, Greenwillow); and "Sir Callie and the Witch's War"* (Esme Symes-Smith, Labyrinth Road). Magic and queerness also abound in "The Ghostwing's Lie"* (Rebecca Mix, Balzer + Bray), a return to a deeply imagined fairy world; and "House of Elephants"* (Claribel Ortega, Scholastic), continuing the Dominican-inflected Witchlings series.

For magic and silliness, try "Nell of Gumbling: My Extremely Tiny Forest Adventure"*^ (Emma Steinkellner, Labyrinth Road), set in an offbeat magical land; "PetWizards"^ (Kirk Scroggs, Union Square), about a glam-rock loving queer tween who can control (some)



animals; and "Unicorn Boy"^ (Dave Roman, First Second), about a unicorn-horned boy and his nonbinary best friend.

Other adventures include "Paige Not Found" (Jen Wilde, Scholastic), a techno-thriller with a queer, autistic protagonist; "The Swifts: A Gallery of Rogues"* (Beth Lincoln, Claire Powell, Dutton/Penguin), an art-theft mystery starring a hilariously eccentric family; and "Lunar Boy"^ (Jes and Cin Wibowo, HarperCollins), about a trans boy in a future Indonesian-based society.

Performing arts provide a backdrop in "Stand Up!"^ (Tori Sharp; Little, Brown), about two queer, neurodivergent best friends; "Upstaged"^ (Robin Easter; Little, Brown), a drama camp story with a nonbinary protagonist; and "Camp Prodigy"^ (Caroline Palmer, Simon & Schuster), about a nonbinary tween at orchestra camp.

Queer characters and friends create social change in "Jamie" (L.D. Lapinski, Little Bee), with a nonbinary protagonist; and "Not Another Banned Book"* (Dana Allison Levy, Delacorte), which includes a gay boy and another with two dads.

Foster families feature in "Gooseberry" (Robin Gow, Amulet), where a nonbinary, autistic tween finds a kindred spirit in a shelter dog; and "My So-Called Family" (Gia Gordon, Farrar, Straus and Giroux), where a gender non-con-

see **MOMBIAN,** *page 4*

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Monroe

Continued from page 1

to avoid speaking about uncomfortable subjects, unfortunately, the South has evolved into one of the HIV/AIDS hot spots in the country. And so, too, are prisons. HIV/AIDS among black male inmates is five times the rate of the general population and is transmitted primarily through male-to-male sex or tattooing.

However, when The New York Native, a now-defunct gay newspaper, in its May 18, 1981, issue first reported on a virus found in gay men then known as GRID (Gay-Related Immune Deficiency), an editorial noted that "even if the disease first became apparent in gay men, it is not just a gay disease."

Back in the day, famous HIV-positive heterosexual African Americans, like tennis great Arthur Ashe, news anchorman Max Robinson, and rapper Eazy all died of AIDS, and basketball giant Earvin "Magic" Johnson, who is still living with the virus, highlighted the fact that anyone can contract the virus. However, many still see the epidemic as a "white gay disease," suggesting being gay or having sex with someone of the same gender puts you immediately at high risk.

Over time, we got to see that some "heterosexual" African-American men were not honest about their sexuality, and the virus showed up in the women they slept with. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, a sex scare hit the African-American heterosexual women's population due to black men living life "on the down low" or "(on the DL."). As an underground subculture of African-American men who have sex with other men (MSM), they don't identify as gay, bisexual or queer.

The feminization of this disease made many of us AIDS activists and scholars wonder if the same amount of money, concern, communication, and moral outrage that was put into white gay men with the disease would be put into curbing its spread among black women. It wasn't!

There are still many persistent social and economic factors contributing to the high rates of the epidemic — racism, poverty, healthcare disparity, and violence, to name just a few. While we know that the epidemic moves along the fault lines of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation and that HIV transmission is tied to specific high-risk behaviors that are not exclusive to any one sexual orientation, the significant barriers to ending the AIDS epidemic still today are lack of information, health disparities and access to health care, which overrides homophobia. As a matter of fact, homophobia heightens because of a lack of information, health disparities, and access to health care.

As we enter the season of Advent in the Christian calendar, my prayer is one of health equity. I pray for health professionals to heal not only those suffering from the disease but also address the social determinants of health that surround it, causing more lives to be lost.

Mombian

Continued from page 3

forming girl seeks safety and belonging.

Numerous titles explore other aspects of family, friendships, and sometimes crushes:

One centering queer girls include "Winnie Nash Is Not Your Sunshine" (Nicole Melleby, Algonquin); "Mallory in Full Color" (Elisa Stone Leahy, HarperCollins); "Noah Frye Gets Crushed" (Maggie Horne, Clarion); "Emma and the Love Spell" (Meredith Ireland, Bloomsbury); "Crushing It" (Erin Becker, Penguin Workshop); "The House on Sunrise Lagoon: Halfway to Harbor"* (Nicole Melleby, Algonquin); "Falling Hard"* and "Perfect Revenge"* from the Saddlehill Academy series; "How It All Ends"^ (Emma Hunsinger, Greenwillow); "Turning Twelve"*^ (Kathryn Ormsbee, Molly Brooks, Random House); and "Crush"*^ (Tegan and Sara Quin, Tillie Walden; Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

Ones centering queer boys include "The Truth About Triangles" (Michael Leali, Sunbird); and "Sink or Swim"*^ (Veronica Agarwal, Lee Durfey-Lavoie, Random House).

For nonbinary protagonists, try "Just Shy of Ordinary," (A.J. Sass; Little, Brown); "Asking for a Friend" (Ronnie Riley, Scholastic); and the novel in verse "Murray Out of Water" (Taylor Tracy, Quill Tree).

Additionally, "Linus and Etta Could Use a Win" (Caroline Huntoon, Feiwel & Friends) stars a trans boy and a goth girl; "A for Effort"* (Jarad Greene, HarperCollins), has an asexual boy protagonist; and "The Ribbon Skirt"^ (Cameron Mukwa, Scholastic), stars a two-spirit Anishinaabe youth.

For full reviews, further details on representation, plus nonfiction titles and more, visit my Mombian Database of LGBTQ Family Books (mombian.com/database).

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a two-time GLAAD Media Award-winning blog plus a searchable database of 1,700+ LGBTQ family books.

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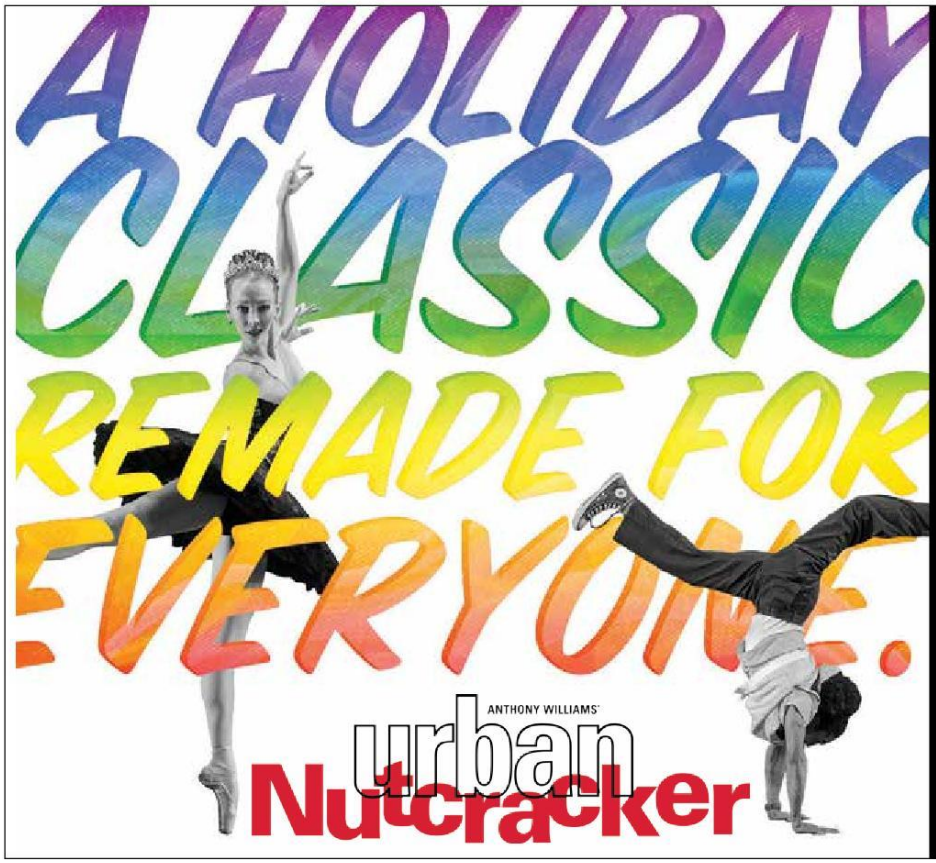

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billy masters

This week, we enter the Filth2Go Wayback Machine with the assistance of Mr. Peabody to go back to a simpler, happier, gayer time—1978. That was the year **The Village People** released their hit, "Y.M.C.A.", which boasted about a place where young men could have a good time, get yourself clean, have a good meal, and do whatever you feel. Lead singer, **Victor Willis** (the cop), claims there was nothing gay about the song. In fact, he threatened to sue "each and every news organization" that refers to the song as a "gay anthem". Then **David Hodo** (the construction worker) weighed in: "Just to be clear, there would be no 'Y.M.C.A.' song without **Jacques Morali**"—the legendary gay producer. "**Randy Jones** (the cowboy) took him to a Y.M.C.A. and introduced him to several gay porn stars who worked out there." Willis struck back. "Well, well, well, what have we here? David Hodo comes out of his hole to comment on me and my writing partner Jacques Morali. First of all David, Jacques hated you and you know it. So I wouldn't put much stock in whatever you have to say about me and Jacques. Therefore, back in your hole before I crush you again, you replacement (non-original) Village People member who has lied for years that you're an original." That sounds awfully prissy coming from someone who is straight. Yes, Willis has a wife, and we hear is a Republican. Not surprising, he also defended Trump's use of the song on the campaign trail: "Trump seems to genuinely like 'Y.M.C.A.' and we have grossed several million dollars since the President Elect's continued use of the song." This sounds more about money than about sex—not that the two can't go together!

Let's jump forward in time—to 1996, the year **JonBenét Ramsey** captivated the country. I must confess, she didn't captivate me. But I do have a friend who is convinced the brother did it because of a bowl of ice cream. It's now almost 30 years later, and the case is being re-examining on Netflix's "Cold Case". **John Ramsey** (the father) says that with DNA technology, "there's a really good chance we get it solved". The family also issued a rendering of what JonBen would look like today, and she eerily resembles a "waitress" I had at a Hooters in Dubuque, Iowa!

It takes a lot to get me up before noon. But I left Boston at the crack of dawn to catch a flight to LA in order to see **Marilyn Maye** at Hollywood's Catalina Jazz Club. At 96, one would expect Maye to be in diminished form. But she seems to have defied the laws of nature, time, and gravity. She never sat during her 90-minute show (to say nothing of an equally long meet-and-greet post-show). She even included new numbers that I've never heard her sing before! There was a generous helping of love that went out to the capacity crowd and was gleefully returned. By the end, she sounded like she could go on singing till the cows came home (to coin a phrase). It was not only a splendid evening of entertainment, but one that made you feel like you witnessed something truly special.

If some mad scientist wanted to create the perfect Broadway leading man in a lab (this would obviously be a gay mad scientist), he'd create **Hugh Panaro**. The talented thespian took the stage at Catalina Jazz two nights after Maye and performed his one-man show, "Man Without a Mask" (referring to his over 2000 performances of "Phantom"). Aside from his extraordinary vocal abilities and matinee idol good looks, we were treated to a great mix of material from his extensive career—cleverly assembled with his director, **Richard Jay-Alexander.** Pianist **Joseph Thalken** added to the embarrassment of riches, although nobody seemed particularly embarrassed! Until you get the chance to see them live, some clips of Hugh and Marilyn in action can be found on BillyMasters.com.

One of Panaro's last songs was a gorgeous rendition of "It Only Takes a Moment" from "Hello, Dolly". I couldn't help but think of the late **Gavin Creel**, who sang it in the 2017 revival of "Dolly" (which earned him a Tony Award). Last week, the lights of Broadway marquees were dimmed in his honor the day after a weepy audience attended his memorial service at the St. James Theatre. It ended with the cast of the 2009 revival of "Hair" joining a pre-recorded Gavin for an emotional "Let the Sunshine In". Although the memorial was streamed online, union rules dictated that it be taken down after the live viewing. So if you missed it...well, need I tell you where to look?

Every once in a while, someone asks me what **T.R. Knight** is doing. I'm glad to finally have an answer. He'll be on Broadway in "Stranger Things: The First Shadow". It's kind of a prequel to the Netflix series—which means if you're a newbie, you still can follow along. Phew! Previews kick off on March 28th at the Marquis Theatre.

I have no idea who **Betty Gilpin** is. She may be a mighty fine actress. But the idea of a woman—any woman—taking the lead in Broadway's "Oh, Mary!" when **Cole Escola** leaves the role on January 21st sounds like a death knell for the sensation. I am reminded of **Ally Sheedy** playing "Hedwig" during the initial off-Broadway run of the "Angry Inch". Nothing against Miss Sheedy, but that was a mistake (I suspect had **Sandra Bernhard** done it—as she was rumored to—it might have worked). So catch "Mary" sooner rather than later!

In other queer casting news, we hear that the latest Emcee in the West End production of "Cabaret" will be...**Billy Porter!** He joins the cast on January 28th and stays until May 24th.

Elsewhere in the West End, the **Elton John** musical "The Devil Wears Prada" opened last week. I think the opening night can be summed up in one photo—**Vanessa Willams** (who plays Miranda Priestly), a virtually unrecognizable Donatella Versace, Elton John (wearing sunglasses for obvious reasons) and **Anna Wintour** (the basis for Priestly—also in sunglasses). Would that the level of camp in that group photo be reflected in the show? After a rocky run in Chicago in 2022, Elton John revamped the show for London, and Williams was hired. The result? Critics feel it has something to offer. Alas, terms like "style not substance" and "forgettable songs" also pop up in most reviews, which is never a good sign. Would I see it? Absolutely. Would I plan a trans-Atlantic trip for it? Probably not.

Emily Blunt (from the flick) addressed rumors of a sequel. "There's rumblings, there's stuff churning around, but I don't know if I can confirm anything completely...but we would be all delighted to work together again."

Someone who showed up on the "Prada" red carpet was the luscious **Luke Evans**, alongside his equally hunk beau, **Fran Tomas**. He recently talked about his insecurities—reminding us that people who seem to have it all also have demons of their own. "I still sometimes go to the gym and just feel very anxious. I look at myself in the mirror and just go, 'You don't look good enough' or 'You're letting it go.'" All that tells me is there's no hope for any of us!

And now, time for more of "Billy's Holiday Gift Giving Suggestions". One of the first things I buy every year is the annual celebrity ornament from Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. This year's diva is **Betty Buckley**, in her classic Grizabella guise. It could also be considered an homage to the homeless situation in Los Angeles—I love a socially conscious gift that also celebrates a Broadway belter! You can order it at BroadwayCares.org.

Because we're all about balance, my calendar suggestion this week comes from the hot British diver **Jack Laugher**. You thought I was gonna mention another name, but it can't all be about **Tom Daley** and his needlework! And, sure, Laugher ain't gay—but since when did that stop us from appreciating the male physique? This is Jack's third calendar (who knew?) and the photos are really quite spectacular. Check out all his wares at JackLaugher.com.

When Laugher is the best medicine, it's time for me to catch a cold and end yet another column. As always, you can get the freshest dish on www.BillyMasters.com—the site that doesn't cry over melted ice cream. We didn't have time for an "Ask Billy" question, but can always get my attention by dropping me a note. Dash it off to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Trump books The Village People to lead "Y.M.C.A." at the inauguration. Ah, if only Mike Pence were still around...he'd hang himself! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

Photo via Spotify.

The Village People

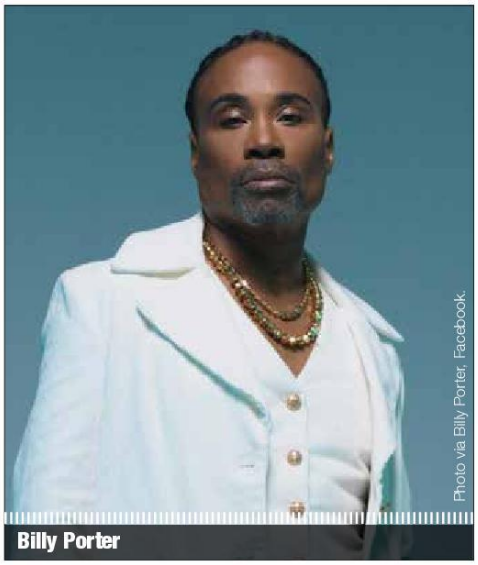
Photo via Billy Porter, Facebook.

Billy Porter

Photo by Matt Crocket

Vanessa Williams

SCOTUS

Continued from page 1

"I do," said Strangio.

Alito suggested he had not seen any evidence that the treatments for gender dysphoria had "reduced the risk of suicide."

Interestingly, in a press conference on Monday, Rick Colby, a longstanding Republican lobbyist and father of a transgender son, said his child had been "near suicide" when he was finally able to get the hormonal treatment needed.

"It's a real thing," said Colby. Today, he said, his son is thriving."

The case before the court Wednesday originated with one transgender girl and two transgender boys, whose parents filed suit after the Tennessee legislature banned medical treatment for young people diagnosed with gender dysphoria. (Gender dysphoria is defined by the medical profession as clinically significant discomfort that one's sexual identity is different than one's documented gender at birth.) A Memphis doctor, Susan Lacy, joined the lawsuit, which was successful at at the district court. The federal district court judge ruled that the bans enabled "disparate treatment on the basis of sex." But the Sixth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals disagreed. Both the transgender youth and the U.S. government appealed the Sixth Circuit decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. At least four of the nine justices agreed to hear the U.S. appeal.

The question:

The DOJ petition asked whether the Tennessee law violated the right of transgender youth to equal protection. The petition filed by the ACLU and Lambda Legal on behalf of the transgender youth asked the equal protection question, plus two others: Should the state law be given heightened scrutiny because it discriminates based on sex, and does the state law violate the "fundamental right of parents to make decisions concerning the medical care of their children guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause"?

In agreeing to hear the appeal, the justices accepted only the U.S.'s petition and defined the question without mentioning equal protection, heightened scrutiny, or parents' rights. And some might say the court's wording of the question was somewhat prejudicial:

"Whether Tennessee Senate Bill 1 (SB l), which prohibits all medical treatments intended to allow 'a minor to identify with, or live as, a purported identity inconsistent with the minor's sex' or to treat 'purported discomfort or distress from a discordance between the minor's sex and asserted identity.'"

According to Tennessee's briefs, SB 1 is needed to "protect children" from receiving medications to block the hormones of puberty and "cross-sex hormones" to enable them to develop attributes of the sex to which they are transitioning. The state says these drugs have the potential to cause infertility, bone loss, sexual dysfunction, and "unknown effects on brain development" during critical brain development years.

The state brief acknowledged that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved puberty blockers to treat young children with hormonal imbalances caused by "precocious puberty" but has not approved them for "gender dysphoria."

While states passing the bans suggest that the diagnosis of gender dysphoria is easily obtained, the official diagnostic manual of the psychiatric profession says a patient must exhibit "clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning" to warrant the diagnosis. In order for a child to obtain such a diagnosis, a doctor must determine that the child is experiencing "a marked incongruence between [their] experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender, lasting at least 6 months," and six additional criteria, including a "strong desire" to be the other sex or an "insistence that one is the other gender."

In challenging the Tennessee law, plaintiffs and the U.S. government rely on the U.S. Constitution's guarantee that each citizen has a right to equal protection of the law. Specifically, Amendment 14 states that "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

In its first brief to the court, Tennessee said the case was about whether equal protection "prohibits States from enacting laws protecting children from sex-transition medical interventions with risks of lifelong harm." Tennessee also sought to examine the rights of parents in the matter, asking "Whether the substantive component of the Due Process Clause gives a parent a right to demand crosssex medical interventions for children that a State has found to be unproven and excessively risky."

A decision is expected by next June.

Below the surface facts:

The brief for the young plaintiffs indicated there are about 1.5 million Americans who identify as transgender.

Chase Strangio, 42, came out as a transgender man while in law school at Northeastern University in Boston. With this case, he became the first transgender attorney to argue before the U.S. Supreme Court. Strangio has worked on some of the most visible legal challenges involving LGBTQ, including Obergefell v. Hodges and Bostock v. Clayton County.

Arguing on behalf of Tennessee at the oral argument in U.S. v. Skrmetti was a former clerk to Justice Clarence Thomas: J. Matthew Rice, 35, who became Tennessee's Solicitor General in March of this year.

In an online press conference two days before argument, Susan Lacy, a Memphis doctor who is part of the legal challenge against SB 1 estimated she has treated more than 800 "kids and adults," and added that treatment for minors already requires parental consent.

Two fathers of transgender youth also spoke at the press conference December 2: Brian Williams, father of lead plaintiff L.W., and Rick Colby, a life-long Republican who said the treatment save his transgender son from suicide.

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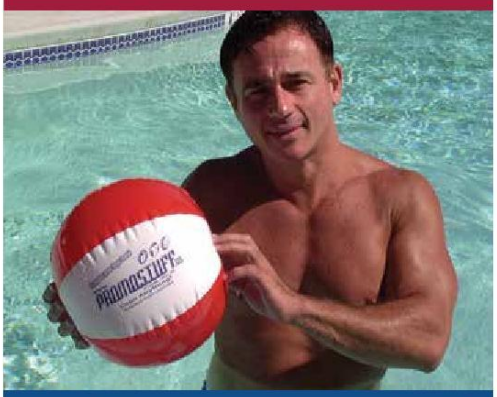

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