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## Three things to do coming out of the Gwen Araujo Mistrial

June 23, 2004

### #1 Keep Pressure on the Alameda County District Attorneys Office to Re-try the Case

The DA's office put an enormous amount of resources into prosecuting Gwen's killers. They need to be congratulated for the job they have already done and encouraged to follow through with a retrial. The office has already made it clear that they want to retry the three defendants. It is important that we help make it possible for them to do it.

It's possible that newspaper editorial rooms will ask questions about the cost or utility of retrying these three men and instead encourage the DA's office to force a plea bargain. Everyone is encouraged to write letters to the editor or guest editorials for newspapers throughout the Bay Area (with a special focus on East and South Bay newspapers) over the next several months expressing how important it is that these three men be retried. Elected officials in the East Bay should also be contacted as they may raise similar concerns. While it is great if folks in SF are the ones writing letters and making phone calls, it's particularly important that editors and elected officials hear from LGBT folks and allies who live in the East Bay.

### #2 Keep educating people about transgender issues

One of the clearest lessons that we can learn from Gwen's murder and the media coverage of the case is that education is a key to stopping this kind of crime (and many others) from being committed again. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, activists, and advocates are working every day in most every California school district to make our schools safer for students who are transgender, gender non-conforming, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or questioning. Support this work through joining the California Safe Schools Coalition ([www.casafeschools.org](http://www.casafeschools.org)), donating to the Gwen Araujo Memorial Fund for Transgender Education ([www.horizonsfoundation.org](http://www.horizonsfoundation.org)), and/or supporting local efforts to improve schools in your area.

At the same time, it is important to make sure that education is happening outside of the classroom as well. Join a speaker's bureau (if you're in the Bay Area, contact Connie Champagne at [connie@cuav.org](mailto:connie@cuav.org) to find out about the next training for speakers for CUAV), write letters to the editor to keep the issue alive in the press, and/or bring in speakers to your organization, business, or association to speak about transgender issues.

### #3 Change the law

The offensive strategy of blaming Gwen for her own murder is currently allowable under California law. But it doesn't have to continue to be. As a state, we can change the Penal and/or Evidence Code to outlaw the "gay panic" and "trans panic" defenses. Over the next several months, activists will surely be talking about how to make sure that criminal defense attorneys can never again use societal bias against LGBT victims in order to reduce the culpability of their clients. As a strategy emerges for new legislation, lots of opportunities will exist for getting involved in this work. Look out for emails and announcements about such legislation as this issue develops.

In the meantime, find out how to be involved in other LGBT legislative efforts through getting involved in Equality California ([www.eqca.org](http://www.eqca.org)). EQCA is California's leading lobbyists working to ensure and promote dignity, safety and equality for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Californians.