



ALERT!

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Date: May 14, 2009

To: To all BCGEU members

May 17 is International Day Against Homophobia

A message from:

Lorene Oikawa, BCGEU Vice-President and Chair of the Equity + Human Rights Committee

Forty years ago, homosexuality was decriminalized in Canada through a bill which made major changes to the Criminal Code of Canada. Bill C-150 was introduced in 1967 and passed in 1969. It is shocking to think that in 2009, there are 77 countries which still make it a criminal offense to be gay. Around the world, men, women and children face harassment, violence and sometimes even death because of their sexuality.

On this *International Day Against Homophobia*, BCGEU stands in solidarity with our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members and with LGBT communities around the world.

Unfortunately, discrimination isn't limited to other countries. We know that our members and LGBT communities in BC are sometimes faced with threats, harassment and physical harm. It is also not acceptable when anyone makes hateful homophobic comments. We cannot stay silent when we hear or read these comments - whether it's in the media or in a political campaign, from a colleague or family member, at a school or in the community. Denial of human rights to one is denial to all.

BCGEU continues to work with our members, community organizations, government and others so that we can create safe environments free of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. We will continue to speak out and take action against homophobia. We urge everyone to take an active role so that we ensure inclusivity in our union, workplaces, schools and communities.

The union has participated in many Pride events such as parades, picnics and rallies. We would like to participate in more activities with our members across BC. For more information, please contact BCGEU's Equity + Human Rights Officer Holly Page at 604-291-9611 or 1-800-663-1674.

For more information on the International Day Against Homophobia please visit the website:
www.homophobiaday.org

Also, check out our website **www.bcgeu.ca** for more information on equity and human rights.