



FCAA SPRING FUNDER FORUM: BIOS

Panel 1 - FOSTA-SESTA: One Year Later

Cecilia Gentili is a private consultant and active member of the Decrim – NY coalition. Until the end of 2018 she served as the Director of Policy at GMHC, the world’s first and leading provider of HIV/AIDS prevention, care and advocacy. Originally from Argentina, Ms. Gentili started working as an intern at the LGBT Center in New York City where she found her passion for advocacy and services. She went on to run the Transgender Health Program at Apicha CHC from 2012 to 2016. She is also a contributor to Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource for the Transgender Community, and is a collaborator with Translatina Network. Cecilia is a board member of Transcend Legal, A New York City non profit organization which helps people access transgender-related health care covered under insurance, change their names, and have their gender legally recognized. For fun, Cecilia acts and loves doing storytelling events where she talks about her life experiences. She is very passionate about advocating for her community, especially transgender women with a Latino background and a history of sex work, drug use and incarceration.

Tamika Spellman is the Policy and Advocacy Associate for HIPS in Washington, D.C. Tamika is originally from Buffalo New York but has lived in Washington D.C. on and off since 1988. Tamika has worked with HIPS since June 2017. She has served as a peer educator then worked as a part of the needle exchange program. She has volunteered her time with mobile services giving new works and safer sex supplies to people throughout the District. Tamika knows first-hand what the war on drugs has done to the community. She is dedicated to helping others and working to create positive policies and laws to help those involved in sex work and drug use. She has testified on behalf of HIPS at the D.C. Council, spoken on several harm reduction panels, and is very active in both SWAC and the DC LEAD Coalition. HIPS is extremely honored to have Tamika as part of our policy and advocacy team.

Liaam Winslet is a Transfeminist, Translatina activist. Having started her activism very young, as a teenager, she loves to empower trans communities around HIV education. Her passion is to bring awareness to, create, and promote positive and affirming messaging in order to advance transgender/GNC equality. She works as a consultant at Community Healthcare Network’s Transgender Family Program and other organizations in New York City. Liaam sits on the board of the Transgender Law Center and is a member at large of the Trans Latin@ Coalition. She is also a photographer and enjoys documenting the lives of her peers. Liaam is originally from Guayaquil, Ecuador

PANEL 2 - President's FY20 Budget & New HIV Plan

William McColl is the Director of Health Policy at AIDS United. He's traveled around the world (twice). He recently ran his first marathon at age 47. He is a former U.S. Air Force (nuclear) Missile Combat Crew Member. Oh, and he's an 18-year advocate for HIV/AIDS policy, drug treatment and policy, and criminal justice reform! Bill McColl, AIDS United's AIDS United's Director of Health Policy, is a man on a mission! His interest in HIV work began while serving as Government Relations Director at NAADAC: The Association for Addiction Professionals in Washington, D.C. where he worked on syringe exchange policy and later became Executive Director. "I became very interested in the issue of how to apply public health interventions towards drug use," said McColl. "In particular, I realized that our policies banning the use of federal funding for syringe exchange were resulting in tens of thousands of unnecessary HIV infections throughout the United States." McColl went on to become political director at AIDS Action in 2004, which merged with the National AIDS Fund to become AIDS United in 2010. Since then he's provided leadership working to reauthorize the Ryan White Program twice, pass health care reform and to end the ban on both the use of federal local Washington D.C. funds for syringe exchange. Although Congress reinstated the federal ban, he's hard at work on ending the syringe exchange ban (again). "I guess it's a hard lesson that no legislative issue is ever really done," he says. He continues to work on implementing the Affordable Care Act and the next potential reauthorization of the Ryan White Program. In addition to AIDS United and NAADAC, he is a past Director of National Affairs at the Drug Policy Alliance. He is currently co-chair of the Ryan White Working Group, a Convening Group Member of the Federal AIDS Policy Partnership and co-chair of the federal issues working group of the Positive Justice Project. McColl is glad to be working in HIV at a pivotal time in the battle to end the end the epidemic. "I feel like we have an opportunity to reverse the course of the HIV epidemic in the U.S.," he said. "I want to find ways to contribute to ending the epidemic at this exciting time."

Panel 3 - Fighting Religious Exemptions and the Rise of Religious Conservatism: (Proteus Fund)

Leah Pryor-Lease is the Program Director of the Rights, Faith, and Democracy Fund at Proteus Fund, where she leads efforts to support state-based cross-movement work to build a united front for LGBTQ and reproductive justice, and their allies in the faith community. She began her professional life working for over a decade in the nonprofit and public sectors at organizations such as The Hetrick-Martin Institute, Harvard University, and the New York City Department of Education, where she oversaw a broad range of community partnership and external relationship work. After moving to Colorado, Leah served as the Strategic Partnerships Officer with the Gill Foundation, then as Program Officer with Voqal, a philanthropic fund dedicated to advancing equity for those who are the least well off politically, economically, and socially.

Leah holds a bachelor's degree from Brandeis University. She lives in Denver with her family, where she serves on the Denver LGBTQ Commission and the boards of ProgressNow Colorado and the Movement Advancement Project.

James D. Esseks is Director of the ACLU Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender & HIV Project. He oversees the ACLU's nationwide program of litigation, legislative lobbying, policy advocacy, organizing, and public education that seeks to ensure equality and justice for LGBT people and people living with HIV. James was counsel in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the case that won the freedom to marry nationwide; in *United States v. Windsor*, which struck down the federal Defense of Marriage Act; in *Gavin Grimm v. Gloucester County School Board*, about whether a Virginia school board can bar a boy from the common restrooms because he is transgender; in *Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd. v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*, about whether a business open to the public can turn away LGBT customers based on its religious or artistic objections; and in successful challenges to bans on adoption and foster parenting by lesbians and gay men in Arkansas, Florida, and Missouri. James and the ACLU have also worked extensively to fight anti-LGBT and specifically anti-transgender bills in the states and to fight the use of religion to justify discrimination against LGBT people. James graduated from Yale College and Harvard Law School, where he was editor-in-chief of the *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*. Prior to joining the ACLU in 2001, he was a partner at Vladeck, Waldman, Elias & Engelhard, PC. James clerked for the Honorable Robert L. Carter, United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York, and the Honorable James R. Browning, United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

Louise Melling is a Deputy Legal Director at the ACLU and the Director of its Center for Liberty, which encompasses the ACLU's work on reproductive freedom, women's rights, lesbian gay bisexual and transgender rights, freedom of religion and belief, and disability rights. In this role, she leads the work of the ACLU to address the intersection of religious freedom and equal treatment, among other issues. Melling has established the ACLU as a national leader in opposing the use of religion to discriminate and in supporting state advocacy teams that have pushed back legislation that would permit discrimination in the name of religion. She has overseen groundbreaking litigation, including cases challenging Catholic hospitals that refuse to provide care consistent with medical ethics and businesses that claim a right to discriminate in the name of religion or speech. In her time as Director of the Center for Liberty, the ACLU has pursued a program of litigation, advocacy, and public education campaigns that culminated in the 2015 Supreme Court decision recognizing the fundamental right to marry for same-sex couples. Under her leadership, the Center has also challenged innumerable state laws that restrict women's access to abortion, the federal government policy barring women from serving in combat, school policies that foster sex stereotypes and deny transgender students' rights, policies and practices that discriminate against Muslims, the use and abuse of guardianship, and government promotion of religion. Melling has been with the ACLU since 1992, serving in several roles before becoming a Deputy Legal Director in 2010. In 2003, she became Director of the Reproductive Freedom Project, where she oversaw nationwide litigation, public opinion research, public education campaigns, and advocacy efforts in the state legislatures. She has appeared in federal and state courts around the country, most often to challenge laws that restrict reproductive rights. In addition, she is the author of several articles, including *Religious Refusals to Public Accommodations Laws: Four Reasons to Say No*, 38 *Harv J. of Law and Gender* (2015); *Follow the Money: Ending Discrimination against Women in Hospitals*, 15 *Georgetown Journal of Gender and the Law* 435 (2014) (co-authored with Sarah Lipton-Lubet); *Lift the Scarlet Letter from Abortion*, 35 *Cardozo Law Review* 1715 (2014); and *The Legal Education of Twenty Women*, 40 *Stan. L. Rev.* 1299 (1988) (co-authored with Catherine Weiss). She is a graduate of the Yale

Law School and Oberlin College. Prior to joining the ACLU, Melling clerked for Judge Morris Lasker of the Southern District of New York and worked for Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman.

Catherine Hanssens, Executive Director and Founder of The Center for HIV Law and Policy, has been active in HIV legal and policy issues since 1984. Previously, Hanssens was AIDS Project Director at Lambda Legal, where she led Lambda's HIV-related litigation and policy work. She also worked with the AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania, where she created and managed one of the first medical-legal partnerships in the country, with on-site HIV legal services in several hospitals and clinics. While a staff attorney at the New Jersey Department of the Public Advocate, Hanssens successfully litigated the state's first cases on involuntary HIV testing, a class action challenge to segregation and mistreatment of prisoners with HIV in the New Jersey state prison system, and the only federal appeals court case recognizing the right of incarcerated women to funded elective abortions. She also has been a visiting clinical professor at Rutgers University Law School-Newark and Director of the law school's Women and AIDS Clinic.