

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Longtime Advocate and Pioneer for LGBTQ Youth Rights Steps Down**

*Head of First National Lesbian and Gay Youth Organization Passes Torch*

**Washington, DC April 26, 2007** – Craig A. Bowman, longtime Executive Director of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC), has announced his resignation after almost seven years at the helm of the nation's only national organization advocating solely on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) young people.

Bowman's resignation was announced to the NYAC Board of Directors last year and will be effective as of the end of April. "Craig's dedication and commitment to protecting and fighting for the rights of LGBTQ young people has been truly empowering," said Board President Caeden Dempsey. "Under his dynamic leadership, we've been able to bring issues concerning LGBTQ youth out of the shadows and into the mainstream. His contributions to NYAC as an activist, advocate and visionary in shaping a safe and just environment for young people are inestimable."

Through Bowman's strategic outreach, NYAC formed significant partnerships with young people and youth-serving organizations across the country that have looked to the organization to ensure that they are provided with access to national funding streams, support, and critical, life-saving resources.

During Bowman's tenure, NYAC achieved many firsts, among them:

- First national LGBTQ organization to define itself as having a social justice mission;
- First national LGBTQ organization to be fully trans-inclusive in its work;
- First national LGBTQ organization to have young people represent at least one quarter of its board of directors;
- First national LGBTQ organization with a living wage policy and a youth compensation policy;
- First to call for LGBTQ action in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita;
- First national LGBTQ organization to speak out publicly with regard to the Congressman Mark Foley scandal.

NYAC, under Bowman's direction, also created many successful advocacy campaigns including a national model HIV testing initiative titled *You Know Different* with funding from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). *You Know Different* targets at risk youth who would not have sought HIV testing or who lacked access to testing and treatment. The program is increasing testing rates in pilot cities by upwards of 125%.

In 2006, NYAC and *You Know Different* received the prestigious Silver Anvil Award—the highest award given in the field of public relations—by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in recognition of the organization's outstanding achievement in multicultural communications and strategic public relations planning and implementation.

In the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, NYAC and Bowman responded by creating a fund for LGBTQ victims of the hurricanes and in just a few weeks raised more than \$115,000 from LGBT colleague organizations and the national LGBTQ community. These funds were distributed to non-profit organizations who made humanitarian aid available to individuals and families in the areas impacted by the hurricanes.

In 2001, under Craig's leadership, NYAC published "A Blueprint for Justice" and throughout his tenure countless other landmark publications for LGBTQ young people and the organizations that serve them.

"Craig's accomplishments in raising money for NYAC and for causes related to LGBTQ youth are truly amazing," said Aaron Chandler, Board Vice President. "In his seven years at NYAC, Craig raised more than \$7 million for our activities; and his advocacy while at the helm of NYAC has resulted in untold millions more for LGBTQ youth-serving organizations across the United States. Because of his able leadership and success in articulating the needs of LGBTQ youth and turning that into solid support, we are well-positioned to continue advocating for social justice on behalf of LGBTQ youth."

In a 2006 study by the Movement Advancement Project (MAP) which looked at 27 national LGBT organizations (between 2003-2005), Craig's leadership helped NYAC to rank 5th overall in operational efficiency, spending \$.77 of every dollar raised on programs; be the third lowest in spending on fundraising at just 8% of the budget; and keeping donor turnover at the lowest of any group reporting at just 4%.

Lara Crutsinger-Perry, who has been serving as NYAC's Director of Health Programs, will serve as Interim Executive Director at NYAC while a search is conducted for Bowman's successor. The Board chose Crutsinger-Perry for her excellent track record in managing NYAC's health programs and her leadership with the award-winning *You Know Different* campaign. In this interim role, Crutsinger-Perry has expressed a desire not to be considered for the permanent role as executive director.

"I've been extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to work in an organization that strives everyday to do more than seems possible in support of courageous, passionate and powerful young people—an organization willing to work and fight everyday to achieve social justice and an agenda that is manifest with truth, compassion, community and hope," Craig said. "I can't imagine what it will be like not being 'gay for a living!'" he added.

Before heading NYAC, Craig served as the Executive Director of SMYAL, the Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League, the only agency in the DC Metropolitan area specifically serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth. Prior to that, he had numerous leadership roles including helping to launch AmeriCorps, serving as Training Director of Public Allies, teaching graduate students as an Adjunct Professor at American University, and serving as Executive Director of the American Association of University Students. Following his departure, Craig will be expanding his role as founder and President of Common Ground Consulting LLC. Craig is a graduate of Miami University.

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**The National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC) ([www.nyacyouth.org](http://www.nyacyouth.org)) is a social justice organization fighting injustice against LGBTQ youth and advocating to ensure their physical and emotional well-being. NYAC is committed to supporting local and national public health efforts, whereby LGBTQ youth of all races, ethnicities, class backgrounds, and gender identities live to their fullest potential. It is the only national organization focused solely on improving the health and well-being of LGBTQ youth.**