

**Feb. 23 Statement by Matt Foreman, Executive Director
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**

“The hatred and loathing that led to the vicious murder of Andrew Anthos only because he was gay is not innate. Instead it is being taught every day by leaders of the so-called Christian right and their political allies who use their vast resources, media networks and affiliated pulpits to blame lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people for all the ills of society. They disguise their bigotry as ‘deeply-held religious beliefs.’ They cloak themselves in ‘family values.’

“For years, Michigan has been subjected to the homophobic rants of Gary Glenn of the American Family Association of Michigan, while so many otherwise good and decent people have been silent. Just two years ago, the state endured an ugly campaign, led by Cardinal Adam Maida, to ‘protect marriage’ by writing anti-gay discrimination into its constitution. Based on that amendment, a three-judge panel of Michigan's court of appeals voted last month to terminate medical insurance coverage for families of LGBT government workers throughout the state.

“It is appalling hypocrisy for these forces to pretend that their venomous words and organizing have no connection to the plague of hate violence against gay people, including the murder of Mr. Anthos.

“Our hearts and sympathies go out to the members of Mr. Anthos’ family and to our colleagues at the Triangle Foundation who have been at his bedside and with his family for the last two weeks. As a small token of the condolences of our national community feels, we will be covering funeral costs.”