

Press Release
For Immediate Release
Florida National Organization for Women

March 14, 2007

Contact: Jessica McCaffrey, FLNOW President
1-800-299-1710
www.FLNOW.org

The Florida National Organization for Women (FLNOW) joins with other civil rights leaders in protesting the actions of the Largo City County Commission. FLNOW is outraged by the discriminatory firing of city manager, Steve Stanton. Stanton, who was fired after announcing that he is transgendered, had served as the City Manager for Largo for fourteen years. The commission voted 5 to 2 to fire Stanton in the wake of local demonstrations by a small religious group. This action is in conflict with a March 3rd poll, conducted by the St. Petersburg Times, showing that the majority of Largo and Pinellas County residents believe that the firing of Mr. Stanton was wrong. In fact, 75% of county residents and 68% of Largo residents said a public official who has a sex change has the right to stay in their job. In another shocking incident, Nadine Smith, Executive Director of Equality Florida, was arrested while distributing "Don't Discriminate" leaflets outside Largo City Hall. The actions taken by the Largo Police denied Smith her First Amendment Rights and were disproportionate with the misdemeanor for which she was charged. Smith was also charged with a higher level crime for resisting the police actions against her.

These recent events highlight the need for tolerance in our communities and the action of citizens committed to equality. FLNOW commends the actions of people across the state who have spoken out against this discrimination. Jessica McCaffrey, President of FLNOW said "Floridians will not stand for this kind of intolerance. We have shown time and time again, at the polls and at the many demonstrations throughout the state, that we are a tolerant people, and we demand justice." FLNOW demands that the city commissioners of Largo correct their actions by reinstating Steve Stanton, apologizing for the harm done, not only to Mr. Stanton but also, to the entire LGBTI community, and to work for stronger protections of all individuals.