Blood Drive

January 8, 2010 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

There was a blood drive recently in the building where the *POZ* office is located. As I walked by it, I couldn't help but notice that no one was actually donating blood. The medical workers were just standing around, looking bored.

I would've happily donated blood, but HIV obviously prevents me from doing so. Even if I wasn't HIV positive, the fact that I'm gay would've prevented me anyway. The gay blood ban is outdated, to say the least.

Not being able to donate blood is only one of the many small reminders of my HIV status that repeatedly taps me on the shoulder. It also reminds me of a time before I was HIV positive.

I donated blood only once, in high school, well before I tested HIV positive. I realize now that the gay blood ban was in effect back then, but at the time I didn't even know it existed.

I contemplated donating blood again in college, but by then I did know about the gay blood ban. That was one reason I didn't do it, but there was another more compelling reason: I was scared to find out my HIV status as a result of donating blood.

As it turns out, I had a legitimate reason to be concerned back then. As it also turns out, there is no legitimate reason for the continued ban on gay blood donation now.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/blood-drive