The Wind Is At Our Backs

February 6, 2009 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

After the many setbacks to LGBT civil rights we've witnessed these last few months, I found myself in a tiny pity party with a colleague at work. When she and I had our fill, I said: "The wind is at our backs." I believe we're on the right side of history?and I just ran across a story that supports my belief.

Fred Phelps, the infamously anti-LGBT preacher, and his followers picketed a soldier's funeral in a Kansas town on the afternoon of February 5. They regularly picket military funerals to attribute those deaths as God's punishment of the United States for tolerating homosexuality.

Phelps and his followers have been showing up with picket signs at the funerals of LGBT people for years. They were at Matthew Shepard's funeral, but thankfully friends dressed as angels shielded the mourners from having to see signs saying "AIDS Kills Fags Dead" and "God Hates Fags."

Hundreds of adults and students from the local high school showed up to protest Phelps. I guess Phelps didn't do his homework?the school has a gay and straight alliance and students elected an openly gay homecoming king in 2007.

This photo from The Kansas City Star bears witness to my optimism. Signs saying "Donate for AIDS Research" and "God Loves Everyone" have replaced those hateful signs from Matthew Shepard's funeral. The younger generations across the country (even in more traditionally conservative states like Kansas) understand LGBT people are entitled to our civil rights. Amen.

Tip of the hat to the LGBT blog Towleroad for this story!

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.