Alumni/ae and Friends of HLS:

We write to you at a historic moment in the history of LGBT rights. Over the past twelve months, advocates fighting for sexual and gender identity protections have won important victories at the State, national and international level. ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ (DADT) was finally repealed. In November 2011, Massachusetts joined Connecticut as the latest two States to enact comprehensive transgender non-discrimination laws. And this month Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gave a moving speech to the UN announcing the first ever US strategy to combat the abuse of LGBT communities abroad, and the creation of a three million dollar global fund to assist activists at the local level.

It is indeed an exciting time for all of us who hope to realize full LGBT equality. Yet, despite the progress we have witnessed, much work remains to be done. The omission of transgender persons from the repeal of DADT reminds us that even with great steps forward, inequality may still persist. It is in this context that we write to ask for your continued generosity in supporting the HLSA Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Alumni/ae Committee’s Summer Public Interest Fellowship. This Fellowship supports HLS students who choose to spend their summers working for GLBT civil rights. It provides crucial gap funding for these students who, receive public interest funding from the Law School for only 8 weeks of their 10-week summer internships. Without the Summer Public Interest Fellowship, many students will be unable to spend their summers volunteering on behalf of our community.

Our innovative and stalwart GLBT non-profit organizations rely on bright and talented HLS volunteer law students to assist their legal teams, which are increasingly stretched thin. Summer Fellowship recipients provide top-notch legal support to cutting-edge GLBT rights groups at no cost to their employers.

Last summer, thanks to the generous support of our alumni community, the Committee awarded fellowships to three students. Samara Fox worked in New York City with Immigration Equality, a national organization work on behalf of LGBT and HIV-positive individuals. She assisted with a number of asylum cases, and provided invaluable research for Immigration Equality’s challenge to the spousal petition restrictions under the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). This latter work had particular meaning for Samara who, as a Canadian citizen, will be ‘personally affected’ should DOMA be struck down. Peter Dunne worked with Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) on transgender and HIV issues, and volunteered with
Massachusetts Transgender Legal Advocates (MTLA). As an LL’M student, Peter was not entitled to receive Harvard public interest funding. Writing to thank the Committee, he said that without the GLBTAC Fellowship, ‘none of this – the great opportunities, knowledge and mentorship that I received from GLAD – would have been possible’. Bobby Hodgson, a dedicated advocate who was also a GLBTAC Fellow in 2010, assisted New York Civil Liberties Union attorneys, on LGBT and Reproductive Rights advocacy. Bobby contributed to the NYCLU’s work on the New York's landmark marriage equality law, *Windsor v. United States* (a Second Circuit challenge to DOMA), and several state and federal cases dealing with the rights of LGBT employees and students.

Year after year our students make positive and lasting contributions to the fight for GLBT rights in the U.S. and abroad, and develop critical skills while doing so. We hope that you will continue the tradition of contributing to their work! Although budgets remain tight, please consider making a donation at whatever level you can afford. By working together, we can support the invaluable work of HLS students, advance causes in which we believe, and inspire the next generation of GLBT leaders to continue this important work beyond graduation. As always, your entire tax-deductible donation will be used to support the GLBTAC Fellowship program. Neither Harvard Law School nor our Committee will receive any portion of your donation. If you choose to donate through your company or firm’s matching gift program, please let us know so that we can track the gift.

Whether or not you are able to contribute to the Fellowship program this year, please take a moment to update your contact information by returning the form at the bottom of this letter, logging onto http://memdir.org/HGLC/membership.cfm, or e-mailing Sam at the address below. We encourage you to stay engaged with HLS’s fantastic community of GLBT alumni. Whether it is organizing or attending a mixer in your city, joining the GLBTAC Board, or just letting us know what you think we should prioritize, we welcome your involvement.

Thank you for continuing to make our Fellowship program a success. Much work lies ahead in the struggle for GLBT equality, and with your support, HLS students will be able to contribute to it in the summer of 2012.

Sarah Boonin ’04    Sam Tepperman-Gelfant ’05
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Contributions may be mailed to:
GLBTAC Summer Public Interest Fellowship
c/o Ted Gullikson
Harvard Law School Alumni Relations
125 Mt. Auburn Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Donor name: ____________________________  HLS Class Year: ______

If you are interested in participating in the Fellowship selection process, please provide the following information:

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Attn Alumni Records: For account: 265-317254RG — HLSA Summer Public Interest Fellowship; Comment: GLBTAC