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[Print Page](#) [Email page](#)

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News & Issues

[Week In Review](#)
[Columnists](#)
[Your Weather](#)
[Business News](#)
[History](#)

Entertainment

[Movie Reviews](#)
[Video Reviews](#)
[Celebrities](#)
[Television](#)
[Music](#)
[Gossip](#)
[Books](#)
[Special Features](#)

Health

[Fitness & Sports](#)
[Gay Men's Health](#)
[Lesbian Health](#)
[HIV/AIDS](#)
[Queer Science](#)

Style

[Homestyle](#)
[Food & Wine](#)
[Officer Judy](#)
[Duane Wells](#)
[Computing](#)
[Cars](#)

Your Money

[Features & Ticker](#)
[Find Gay Jobs](#)

Travel

[Feature Articles](#)
[Book GLBT Holidays](#)
[Local Guides](#)
[Pride Events](#)

People

[Personals](#)
[Hey Uncle](#)
[Love Files](#)
[Dreamboats](#)
[Ask Angelo](#)

Opinion

[Michelangelo Signorile](#)
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[Rex Wockner](#)
[Libby Post](#)
[Jack Nichols](#)
[OpEd](#)
[In Their Words](#)

Just For Fun



Texas Lawman Suspended Over Gay Kiss

by *The Associated Press*

Posted: December 11, 2004 12:01 am ET

(Austin, Texas) A Texas Department of Public Safety trooper has been placed on probation for telling two gay men who were kissing at the state Capitol that "homosexual conduct" was illegal in Texas.

Trooper Michael Carlson was placed on job probation for six months and given a written reprimand, DPS spokeswoman Tela Mange said Friday. Carlson, who has been a DPS trooper for three years, also has been ordered to have more training on Texas laws.

Texas law does not prohibit gays from kissing. Also, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the state's anti-sodomy law in June 2003.

"I'm very pleased," said John Corvino, a former University of Texas at Austin graduate student who was one of the men involved. "As someone charged with enforcing the law, he ought to be better informed."

Corvino, who now teaches at Wayne State University in Detroit, said in a complaint filed with DPS shortly after the Sept. 16 incident the trooper approached him and his male companion while they sat a park bench.

The men responded that they were "just hanging out" when Carlson asked what they were doing, the complaint said. Corvino said he tried to tell Carlson that they were not breaking the law, but he said the trooper told them again that "homosexual conduct is against the law."

"We won't have you doing this on Capitol grounds," Carlson told the men, according to the complaint.

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Randall Ellis, executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, said he has followed the case since learning about it several months ago.

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The DPS "made sure they didn't ignore this issue," he said. "I'm very satisfied with the outcome."

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