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VERMONT'S FORUM FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES

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Flanagan First Openly Gay Nominee For Senate

HRC breaks tradition to endorse both candidates in one race

By BARBARA DOZETOS

For the first time in United States history, there is an openly gay major party nominee for United States Senate.

Vermont's state auditor of accounts, Ed Flanagan, was the first, and remains the only, openly gay statewide elected official in the country. With his defeat of state senator Jan Backus in the Sept. 12 primary, he moves on to another first. He faces incumbent James Jeffords in the November 7 general election.

In yet another first, the Human Rights Campaign, the largest national lesbian and gay political organization in the country, announced a dual endorsement in the race. The

bipartisan HRC has a history of supporting incumbents who have been supportive of issues the organization sees as important to the lesbian and gay community. Its support of both Jeffords and Flanagan came as a surprise to many.

Flanagan said he was elated at the HRC's break with tradition. Jeffords said he was honored by the endorsement.

Jeffords has averaged a 96 percent rating on HRC's Congressional ratings for the 101st through 105th Congresses. Flanagan, it said, expresses full support of the HRC legislative agenda, including issues of hate crimes, military, family, marriage, lesbian health, HIV/AIDS, and the Employment Non

Discrimination Act.

Key to the landmark dual endorsement decision, said HRC, was the viability of Flanagan's candidacy. The challenger has a tough race ahead of him, a report from HRC said, but he has proven his ability to win the race through successful re-election to his current office and aggressive fundraising.

The endorsements mean that HRC's political action committee will make \$5000 contributions to each campaign and will highlight the records of both candidates to HRC's membership in Vermont. There are no plans, they say, to send HRC staff to Vermont to cam-

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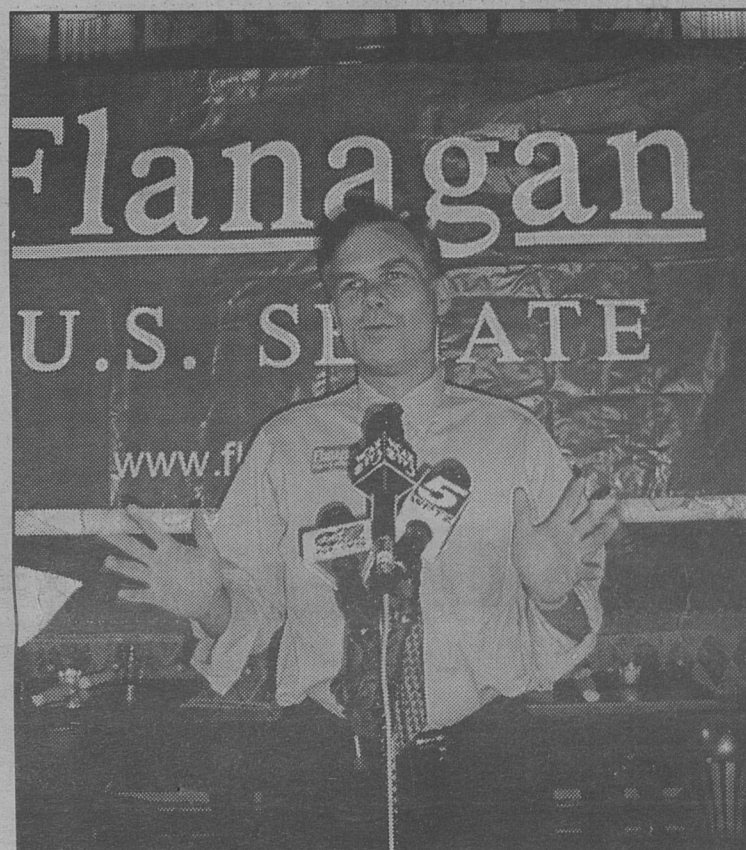


Photo: Barbara Dozetos

State auditor of accounts addressed the press and his supporters while waiting for the returns from primary voting September 12.

Frank Helps Raise Funds for VCU



Photo: Barbara Dozetos

Nearly 100 people attended a fundraiser for Vermonters for Civil Unions at the Ferrisburgh home of Richard Alther on August 30. Openly gay Congressman Barney Frank, D-Massachusetts, (left) was the guest of honor. In his address to the crowd, Frank said, "Each of you knows someone who isn't planning to vote. If they don't vote on November 7, shame on you!" He stressed the importance of the outcome of the election to people not only in Vermont, but all over the country.

The congressman is pictured here with Beth Robinson, one of the attorneys who represented the plaintiffs in *Baker v Vermont*, the case that led to the state's precedent-setting civil union law.

Vermonters for Civil Unions is a political action committee working to support and re-elect pro-civil union legislators.

CU Supporters, Opponents Defeated in Primaries

MONTPELIER — Opponents of civil unions showed during the primary elections to what lengths they'll go in defeating lawmakers who voted for the law.

Five Republicans who voted for the law granting same-sex couples marriage benefits and rights were targeted and defeated. One Democrat who opposed the law was targeted by a challenger who supports civil unions. The challenger won that race.

Chittenden County was the surprise of the primary season. Several groups, with substantial backing from outside forces, waged a nasty and inaccurate campaign against Sen. Peter Brownell and former Lt. Gov. Barbara Snelling.

The campaign, conducted through direct mail, advertising and telephone banks, was largely successful. Brownell

was defeated and Snelling, one of the state's most admired Republicans, barely survived the primary.

Much of the misinformation was distributed by a group called the Vermont Defense of Marriage Political Action Committee. Among the material it distributed were brochures suggesting that a "militant homosexual" agenda had been launched in Vermont and was being promoted by a willing media.

The brochures suggested that Brownell and Snelling were anti-family because Brownell voted for the law and Snelling said she would have if she'd been in the Senate this year.

Also targeted in the campaign were Bill Meub, a Rutland lawyer who challenged Ruth Dwyer for the Republican gubernatorial nom-