

letters

HRC & Civil Unions

Thanks so much for the continuing great work. It's thankless and much appreciated.

I wanted to respond to your recent story about Cheryl Jacques' appointment to HRC, and the question of HRC's role in the Vermont civil union struggle. I'm sorry I wasn't available to comment for your story; I'm the person who has dealt most directly with HRC over the past several years.

>> It's true that HRC's role in connection with the long-term grassroots struggle, and the lawsuit, leading to the passage of the civil union bill was limited.

They respected our request that out-of-state glbtq political groups let us do our own heavy lifting here in Vermont.

However, after the law passed, when the backlash set in, our allies at HRC were invaluable in helping to mobilize resources for the 2000 campaign. Again in 2002, HRC continued to make Vermont a priority, actually placing a political organizer on the ground here and again helping to recruit donors for VCU. HRC has twice awarded our lobbying organization, VCULDF, grants (\$5,000) from the HRC Equality Fund, designed to help fund lobbying at the state level. Along with many other organizations,

HRC has been a valuable participant in the work to establish and protect civil unions.

The main credit for the law obviously goes to the Vermont activists and donors who made countless sacrifices to make it possible. But we could not have done it alone: New England's glbtq legal advocacy organization, Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), co-counsel in the Baker case and invaluable consultants during the lobbying phase, stand out as the main organization to thank. National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) provided an exceptionally generous grant (\$40,000), as

did the Gill Foundation, to support the Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force's 2000 public education media campaign; the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) helped train a VCU representative for the 2000 campaign.

Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, the ACLU, NCLR, NOW, and various Vermont religious and professional organizations filed supportive briefs in the Baker case; the Log Cabin Republicans provided substantial support on the ground to pro-civil union Republicans in the 2000 election; and HRC assisted in the ways outlined above.

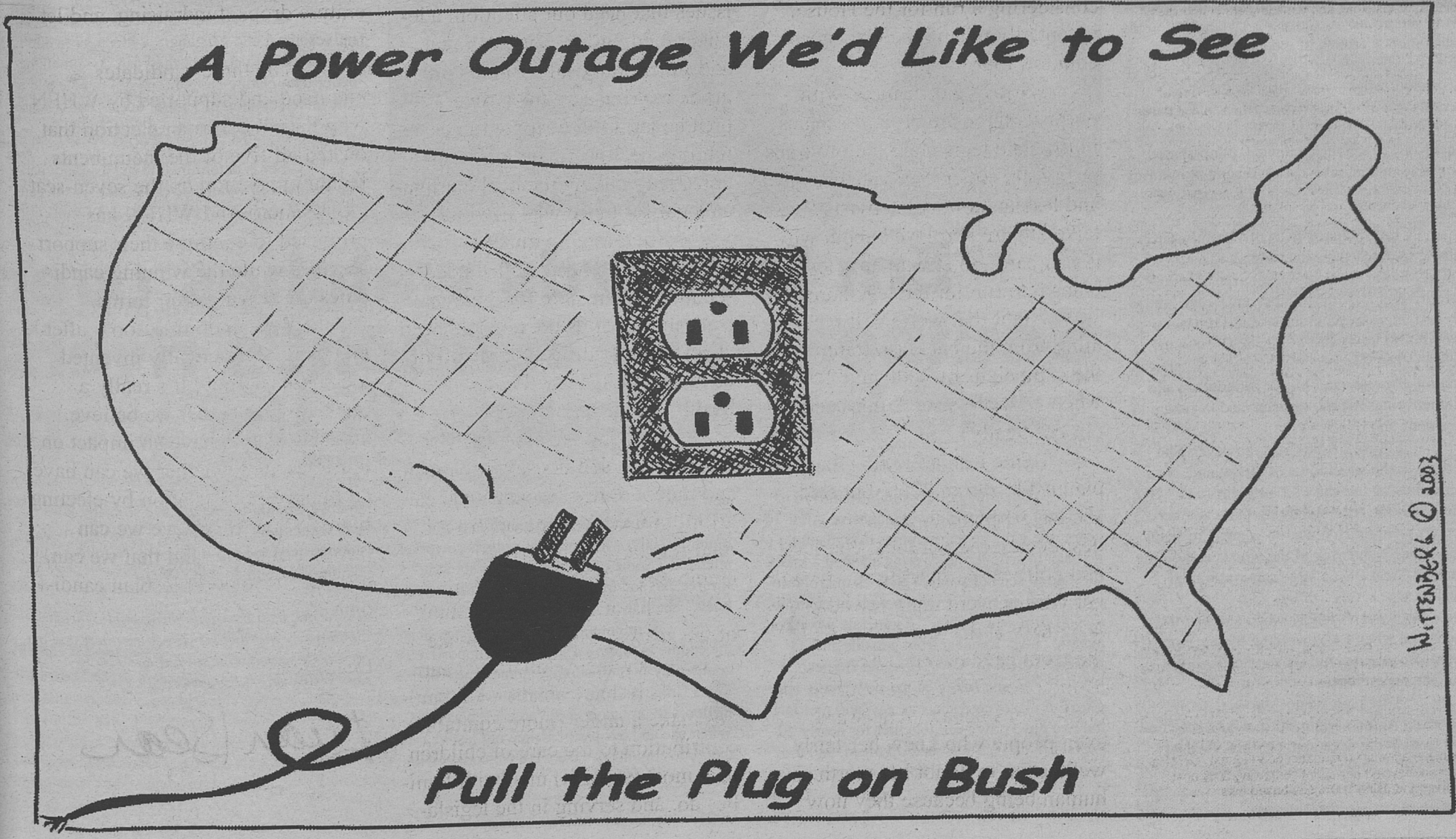
We should be proud of the work we Vermonters did in leading the nation forward and laying the foundation for the next step, but we're also grateful for the support we received from so many supporters outside of Vermont. Given an achievement of this magnitude, there's plenty of credit to go around.

Thanks!
Beth Robinson
Vermonters for Civil Unions

at witt's end

leah wittenburg

A Power Outage We'd Like to See



Pull the Plug on Bush

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