

## No Campaign for Dan



**Plattsburgh – Voters recently defeated a referendum to overturn Plattsburgh's term limit law, but that had no impact on two-term Mayor Dan Stewart's plans.**

**"When it comes to the term limit issue, I felt I had to let the public know before the vote that no matter the outcome, I would not be seeking another term as mayor," Stewart said. So what is in the mayor's future?**

**"Stay tuned," Stewart replied. "I am a believer that when one door closes another opens and that you make that choice when it occurs. I see myself staying active in politics if possible, but I would not rule out a move to the private sector."**

**In December Stewart denied rumors that he would run for state Assembly. The openly gay politician had not at press time announced any other plans. ▼**

## NAPWA E.D. Returns to Vermont

WASHINGTON, DC – Terje Anderson, once a Burlington resident and AIDS activist, is leaving the National Association of People With AIDS as of January 1 after nearly six years as executive director.

Anderson said in an interview that there was no crisis, it was just time to relax and work on the bigger picture, without the day-to-day concerns of managing a multi-million-dollar agency. "I've been working on AIDS for about 20 years," he remarked, including a stint as director of Vermont CARES. "It's time to slow down."

He has had a few health concerns this year, he added.

Anderson admitted that he

sometimes felt "ineffective" in the capital, "given the political realities here right now." He hopes to have time to write and do some public speaking on the cause he is still passionate about.

"I have never had, and will probably never again have, a better job than this. Working at NAPWA I have had the opportunity to play a leadership role on the issues that matter most to me as a person living with HIV/AIDS," Anderson wrote in the official announcement of his departure.

"In the AIDS community, we often talk about the need to make way for new, fresh leadership. I hope my departure helps that happen here at NAPWA and in the entire AIDS community," he wrote.

Anderson is moving back to Vermont with his dog Rosa this month. He will be living in Fairfax, in Franklin County. ▼

## Repeating Trans 101

MONTPELIER – The Vermont legislature got an incomplete for a grade on its efforts toward equality at the end of the first session of the biennium: H.478, the gender identity and expression nondiscrimination bill, remained on the wall of the House Judiciary Committee meeting room. TransAction, an ad hoc coalition of community members and organizations that supports passage of the bill, hopes to change that this year.

H.478 is the third bill introduced in the last 6 years to add gender identity and expression to the list of protected categories in five areas of state law: employment, public accommodation, banking and credit, housing, and education. Vermont currently includes gender identity and expression only in its hate crimes law.

Advocates and transgender activists have been frustrated that the bill sat in committee, even though a majority of the committee's members are cosponsors of the bill and despite one hearing, at which transman and Vermont State Employees Association lawyer Jes Kraus testified, along with supporters from R.U.1.2? Queer Community Center and

Outright Vermont.

"Anytime a bill that's important to its supporters doesn't pass, there's bound to be some frustration," Kraus said in an interview. "We don't believe there's been any concerted effort by [House Judiciary Committee Chairman] Bill [Lippert, D-Hinesburg] to put it off or delay it." He said he recognized that Lippert's committee had been hit with an "unexpected" number of "big-ticket items."

Lippert, in a separate interview, said he was "pleased with the way [H.478 is] moving forward." He said the bill had strong support "generally among advocates and grassroots folks I'm in touch with."

Asked whether the rumored introduction of a marriage equality bill might overshadow the gender identity bill, Lippert said, "My most important priority for the LGBT community is the gender identity bill. If a marriage bill is introduced, it won't shift my priority. I am committed to pursuing its passage actively and effectively before shifting significant energy to any other issue, including marriage."

Lippert also noted that "key

people" active in advocating marriage equality are also actively supporting the gender identity nondiscrimination bill, H.478.

Kraus echoed that observation and denied there would be any tension over the introduction of a same-sex marriage bill in the legislature this session. "We are natural allies," he said. "It's the same principles in both bills. No matter whether it's about race, marriage, or gender identity; all the same protections should be in place."

Kraus will likely be among those testifying for the bill, as he did last session. He considers himself lucky – and atypical – in having support at his workplace for his gender change.

Kraus said that the support of business owners would also carry weight with legislators. He anticipated that any opposition might surface on behalf of business owners and employers, opposition along the lines of "Does this mean guys can come to work in dresses?"

Kraus said that it will be important for community members to show support for the bill by contacting legislators as soon as testimony is scheduled. "It's particularly important for people outside Chittenden and Washington counties to contact their legislators," he said. "We'd also like to have a show of support on the floor of the House on the day of the first vote." ▼

## Looking Back on Victories

WASHINGTON – Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) Americans scored big wins in 2005, according to a new report from the Human Rights Campaign. The report – *Equality from State to State: GLBT Americans and State Legislation 2005* – details record-setting and historic state legislation affecting the GLBT community over the past year.

"The road has potholes but equality is on the horizon," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "This report proves that as the national conversation over equality continues, Americans come down on the side of fairness. When the fog of divisive politics recedes, the real stories emerge of hard-working GLBT Americans seeking equality wins."

According to the report, more state anti-discrimination bills passed in 2005 than in any other year. Eleven bills were passed in state legislatures that established or strengthened statewide anti-discrimination protections for the GLBT community.

In 2004, 13 states amended their constitutions to ban same sex couples from gaining access to the protections and responsibilities of marriage. In 2005, 15 states defeated similar attempts to write discrimination into their state constitutions. Two additional states were seen as likely to

defeat marriage amendments before the year ended.

California became the first state ever to pass a bill to extend the freedom to marry to same-sex couples this year. Unfortunately Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed this important legislation. Another historic milestone occurred in Connecticut, where the legislature instituted civil unions to provide state-level rights and responsibilities to same-sex couples. That bill was signed by the state's Republican Governor Jodi Rell.

Maryland and Colorado became the ninth and tenth states to include gender identity and expression, and the 30th and 31st states to include sexual orientation in their hate crime laws. Again, both bills became law under the states' Republican governors.

"The tremendous progress we've seen crosses party lines and proves fairness need not have partisan boundaries," declared Solmonese.

"Until every state treats its gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender citizens with dignity, respect and equality under the law, our work as a community will not be done," added Solmonese.

The full report is available online at [www.hrc.org/StateLegReport](http://www.hrc.org/StateLegReport). ▼