

Media Notes

Pro: Burlington Free Press
 Con: Caledonian-Record

PRO...

The Burlington Free Press repeated an early endorsement of H.247 with a strongly worded editorial that appeared Wednesday, April 1, the morning the bill came before the House for further action.

Under the headline, "Foes Arguments Show Need for Rights Bill", the editorial chided several legislators, including Representative Michael Bernhardt of Londonderry, for their illogical arguments. It stated "to embrace Bernhardt's position is also to advocate the right of Vermonters to discriminate against blacks, women, Jews, Catholics or any other group that someone feels is 'something so contrary to their beliefs.'"

The editorial concluded by repeating an earlier statement that "passage of such a law by the Legislature would be but another milestone in the state's tradition of guaranteeing equal treatment under the law to all Vermont citizens."

AND CON...

It is not "Out in the Mountains" policy to print overtly homophobic material. In this case we are making an obvious exception. This is because we strongly believe that everyone needs to be aware of the opposition's depth and hatefulness in our battle for civil rights. As gays and lesbians we deal with subtle discrimination on a daily basis but, fortunately, attacks like this one are rarer. Even so, we need to remember the potential is always there.

We've chosen this particular piece to print for several reasons. One is that it appeared in a major Vermont newspaper, another is that we hope it will arouse anger

in you rather than a sense of helplessness. Let it motivate you to become involved with the lobbying effort to pass H.247.

"Last Friday, the Vermont House Judiciary Committee rather suddenly approved and reported H.247, the "Gay Rights Bill." The bill would permit homosexuals to bring anti-discrimination actions in housing, employment, credit practices and adoption.

According to the Associated Press on Saturday, "Supporters of the bill were close mouthed about committee action. Its main sponsor, Rep. Micque Glitman, D-Burlington,

Quote of the Month

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- The Caledonian-Record, editorial, Tuesday, April 7, 1987

declined comment. Some lawmakers said the bill's supporters did not want to get much press coverage on the bill in order to limit lobbying efforts by the public over the weekend." Associated Press certainly helped this strategy along by reporting the measure in the middle of a story about the 55-mph speed limit bill.

The gay rights bill has been the major legislative objective of the Vermont Gay and Lesbian Coalition, the sponsors of the "Gay and Lesbian Pride" parade in Burlington, which Governor Kunin attended last year. Since the proposed ERA failed in the last election, gays must now secure the adoption of a special statute to enable them to bring lawsuits charging discrimination. They have expended considerable effort in this direction. One legislator reported, last

Thursday, that gay advocates were "prancing all over the Statehouse trying to line up support."

The gay movement takes the position that homosexuality is not an unfortunate psychological disorder, but a positive practice every bit as moral as heterosexuality, if not more so. They believe that their particular sexual practices are commendable, and they seem to take a special interest in introducing as many people to them as possible. They believe that their sexual preferences deserve legal protection, not proscription.

In particular, they resent that some school boards are nervous about sexually predatory homosexuals as teachers, or that some landlords think gay tenants would make their apartment buildings less desirable to normal tenants, or that adoption agencies might be reluctant to allow two gay men to adopt a young male orphan, or that restaurant owners might be concerned about having gays with their high risk of carrying AIDS virus handling food in their kitchens. The point of the present bill is to enable homosexuals to put a legal gun to the head of such people.

We do not believe that homosexuals ought to be persecuted by society for their sex preferences, distasteful as they may be to the majority. But we refuse to accept the proposition that their peculiar sex preferences are worthy of civil rights protection now accorded people without regard to race, creed, color, national origin or gender.

And, we are particularly disgusted at their apparent attempt to slip their gay rights bill through the House as quickly as possible, to prevent a citizen outcry which might influence the votes of wavering legislators. This is an issue of considerable importance to society as a whole. Normal people deserve to have their voice heard, as well as the homosexuals who have been lobbying so intensively in the capitol these past weeks. We hope their voice is heard, and that the Legislature votes H.247 down.

POLITICIANS RESPOND BY ...



D. OTHER _____