

prior to votes on issues of importance to the lesbian and gay community. The program, which was begun less than one year ago, has generated over 60,000 messages to Members of Congress from the lesbian and gay community, enhancing our community's lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill and improving the chances for legislative gains on AIDS and civil rights issues.

HRCF's "Speak Out" program cost participants \$2.95 per message. Most participants in the program sign up initially for 10 mailgrams to be sent to legislators in their name. For more information or to join the "Speak Out" program, call HRCF at (202) 628-4160.

Lambda Joins Suit by Texas Man Claiming Illegal Reduction of AIDS-Related Benefits by Employer

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund announced that it has joined a lawsuit brought by a Texas man with AIDS against his insurer and employer after they altered his group health insurance plan to lower the lifetime cap on AIDS-related claims from \$1,000,000 to only \$5,000.

The plaintiff, John McGann, of Houston, TX filed a complaint with the Texas Commission on Human Rights alleging that the cap placed on AIDS-related coverage violates state anti-discrimination laws. Several months later, McGann received a "right-to-sue" notice from the Commission, and he then filed a civil action in federal district court in Houston against his employer, H & H Music Co. and insurer, General American Life Insurance.

The complaint, thought to be the first in the country to challenge a cap placed on AIDS-related medical costs in a group health plan, alleges violation of the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 ("ERISA"). It also alleges violations of the Texas handicap discrimination statute, the Texas Insurance Code and Texas Deceptive Trade Practices-Consumer Protection Act. The complaint seeks reinstatement of McGann's previous benefits and actual, compensatory and punitive damages, together with court costs and attorneys' fees.

450 Activists Gather at NGLTF's Second Annual Conference

Savoring an exciting mix of political theory and grassroots organizing, 450 gay and lesbian activists from 34 states gathered on November 9-12 in Washington, DC at the second annual Creating Change conference, organized and sponsored by the

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF). The NGLTF Creating Change conference is the only national conference designed to meet the needs of gay and lesbian organizations and activists.

The conference featured several innovative programs, including a special NGLTF Award to the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus for its work to pass the state gay rights bill; a day-long Fundraising Institute specifically for gay and lesbian organizations; a demonstration at the White House to protest the government's policy of excluding and discharging lesbians and gay men from the military; three keynote addresses and 48 workshops.

NGLTF announced plans to hold the 1990 Creating Change conference in Minneapolis, MN, November 9-12, 1990. A local host committee will be headed by the Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council of Minneapolis.

Tapes of all workshops conducted at the 1989 Creating Change conference are available from Recorded Resources Corporation, (301) 621-7120.

Skinheads Convicted in Gay Beating

Two self-proclaimed Skinhead gang members were convicted by a unanimous jury for assault with intent to kill and armed robbery in the September 1988 beating of a D.C. gay man. The convictions of the Skinheads, Mark Hyder and David McCall, came after a four-day trial in D.C. Superior Court. One of the Skinheads indicted in the attack, Richard Grimes, has fled the jurisdiction and was not tried.

The beating occurred in the early morning hours of September 17, 1989, when Rodney Jackson was walking home from his job at a Georgetown restaurant. As Johnson took a shortcut through a parking lot adjacent to "P Street Beach," an area known to be frequented by gay men, he was suddenly confronted by several youths with baseball bats who appeared to be lying in wait. Several of the youths, who were later identified as Skinheads, viciously beat

Johnson while shouting, "die, faggot, die." They robbed Johnson of his money and wallet, and left him for dead.

Though Johnson was able to crawl away to find help, he suffered a concussion, collapsed lung, broken finger, and a fractured skull, ribs and shoulder in the attack.

"This conviction will send a message to all those who hate us, whether Skinheads or not, that violence against lesbians and gay men will not be tolerated and will be punished," said Paula Ettelbrick, Lambda's Legal Director and co-counsel in Johnson's civil case.

Though they were minors at the time of the beating, Hyder and McCall were tried as adults. Both will be sentenced on January 5, 1990, and will be held without bond until that time. Authorities will continue their search for Grimes.

Domestic Partners Legislation Setback

The landmark Domestic Partners legislation, signed into law in June, 1989, but later referred to the ballot, suffered a setback when San Francisco voters failed to approve it. The measure, known as Proposition S on the ballot, was defeated by an extremely narrow margin, 50.5% to 49.5%. The measure would have made San Francisco the first city in the nation to formally recognize the existence of gay and lesbian relationships, by providing domestic partnership registration by the city government.

Supervisor Harry G. Britt, President of the Board of Supervisors and author of the legislation commented:

"We have suffered a setback, but [the] defeat only temporarily postpones these important steps in recognizing non-traditional relationships. The Mayor's Task Force will immediately move forward with recommendations to the Health Services Board to provide access to health benefits to the domestic partners of city employees. We will also move quickly to realize the dreams which were jolted in [the] election aftershock.

Partners in Recovery and Growth, Therapist Erica Marks, B.A.S.A.C. & Giita Clark

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