

National News

R.I. Expected to Pass Gay Rights Bill

The Rhode Island Senate recently passed a statute in that state designed to provide equal rights for lesbians and gay men. Rep. Linda Kushner (D-Providence), who is the chief House sponsor of the bill, expects that it will pass in the House of Representatives this June.

If the bill is approved, Rhode Island will become the third state in the nation to provide equal rights for gay men and lesbians. Massachusetts was the most recent state to pass such a bill; Wisconsin adopted such an amendment seven years ago.

Sen. Sean Coffey (D-Providence), the chief sponsor of the bill, mentioned that in a recent local poll, 79 percent of the public supported civil rights for lesbians and gay men.

President Bush Signs Hate Crimes Law

President George Bush signed the Federal Hate Crimes Statistic Act at a public White House ceremony on April 23. The historic event marked the first time legislation that includes sexual orientation has ever been signed into law by a President, and the first time openly gay and lesbian leaders and activists have been invited to such a White House event.

The U.S. Senate passed the bill on February 8 this year by a 92 to 4 vote after defeating an attempt by Jesse Helms (R-NC) to attach an anti-gay amendment to the law. The House passed the bill last June 27 by a 368 to 47 margin. The bill takes effect this year.

Frank to Run Again

Congressman Barney Frank announced that he would run again for the U.S. House of Representatives from the 4th Congressional District of Massachusetts. Tim McFeeley, Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, called Frank "one of the best friends that lesbian and gay Americans have ever had in government, and we are delighted that his voice will continue to be heard." Frank is widely

viewed as one of the brightest and most effective members of Congress. In the last election - the first after he had publicly acknowledged that he was gay - Frank won with 70 percent of the vote. Because of his recent Ethics Committee investigation, Frank is likely to face more serious opposition this November, but he seems to retain much of the broad-base of support he has enjoyed since his first election.

New Backers for Gay Rights Bill

The Human Rights Campaign Fund has announced that three additional members of Congress have joined as co-sponsors of the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Bill. The three are Sen. Clairborne Pell (D-RI), Rep. Gerry Sikorski (D-MN), and New York's newest member, Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY).

The Results Are Out

A national survey of 1,740 lesbian and gay couples found relationships averaging nearly six years in length, even though the average respondent was only 35 years old. More than 100 couples had passed their 15th anniversary. The statistics are the first to emerge from a final analysis of research begun in 1988 by *Partners Newsletter for Gay and Lesbian Couples*.

A free summary of the results may be obtained by sending the publication a self-addressed, stamped business-size envelope. A detailed analysis will appear in the May/June issue of the magazine, which can be obtained for \$3.95. Send requests and payment to *Partners*, Box 9685, Seattle WA 98109.

Pack Your Tux'n'Toothbrush

A 15th anniversary celebration of the introduction of the Federal Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Bill will be held in Washington DC this June. The gala reception, sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), will mark the bill's progress in Congress and honor cosponsors and political allies of the legislation. Gays

and lesbians around the country are invited to attend.

The Civil Rights Bill was first introduced by former Congresswoman Bella Abzug and has garnered more support each year. Today, 79 Representatives and ten Senators support the legislation.

For more information on the gala, call Jaime Grant at (202)-332-6483.

Feeling Overlooked?

Overlooked Opinions, Inc. (OOI), the first opinion research firm dedicated to assessing the attitudes and opinions of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual communities, has formed a National Opinion Panel of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. "The response has been tremendous," says Rick Dean, Vice President of OOI. "In the panel's first month over 1,000 people have joined. Further, current members have sent in an additional 5,000 names of lesbian, gay, and bisexual friends, family, and associates. We are very excited about the response. The bigger our panel is the more accurately it represents our community!" Every lesbian, gay, and bisexual is invited to participate in OOI research by calling (312)-792-7800 or writing OOI, 3712 N. Broadway, Suite 277, Chicago IL 60613.

Protest Cardinal Law

ACT UP/Boston, the Reproductive Rights Network, and the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights are sponsoring a demonstration to protest Cardinal Law's attempt to impose his religious doctrine onto society through public policy. Cardinal Law is against AIDS education in the public schools, denies women's rights to abortion, and actively opposes the gay civil rights bill.

The demonstration will be held on the morning of June 16th at the Holy Cross Cathedral on Washington Street in Boston's South End.

To endorse this effort or for more information, please contact Michael Galvin at 354-6562 or Liz Highleyman at 253-6693, or write to ACT UP/Boston at 338 Newbury Street, Boston MA 02115.

Boycott of the Month!

This month it's time to quit smoking once and for all, especially if you puff away at Marlboros. The Philip Morris Company, which produces the cigarettes, has recently donated \$200,000 for the construction of a museum honoring Senator Jesse Helms, one of the most notorious anti-gay politicians in government today.

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