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## An Open Letter (from page 1)

The bill would provide stiffer sentencing for crimes motivated by hate toward a person on the basis of their gender, race, religion, ethnic background, handicap, age, or sexual orientation. Judge Frank Mahady testified, admitting that while of course a new law will not change individual attitudes and behavior, the government's role is to be the great teacher, and by passing or not passing the bill, they would be sending a lesson to the public about what is or is not acceptable behavior. It was a moving evening with many articulate arguments in favor of the bill and only feeble, hateful, and ignorant arguments against it, as usual.

A piece of testimony that stood out among the others is the one I mentioned at the start. A mother of a gay man sat behind the microphone and talked about how afraid she has been since her son's high school years when he confided to her that he was gay. She was afraid for him and afraid too for her own safety to speak out for him. In January her son died of AIDS. She said his death had given her courage and resolve and that she had come out that night to testify for all the parents and brothers and sisters and family and friends of gay men and lesbians who are themselves afraid to stand up and say that the beatings must stop and the harrassment must end and that people who perpetrate such crimes should be punished.

Well, of course those weren't her exact words, but it was something like that. She and many of us in the room had tears running down our faces. All the testimony about internalized slurs and hatred left me

with my usual splitting headache and a welcoming reminder about the growing handful of people who are finding the courage to stand up and be counted and, as one woman (the President of Vermont NOW) put it, "stop those bullies."

If you think about it, it is just like the playground, where those big tough white boys who somehow got the idea that it is their job to oppress everyone who is somehow different, and spend all of their time posturing and intimidating and plotting their next attack. We are all a little tired of being the victims of their neurotic insecurities. It is time to fight back. I never said the political side of me was dead, just that I have put it into perspective and realized that other things in my life are also important.

Love,  
Dot

### OITM UPDATE

The next issue of Out in the Mountains will be out on July 21 (no summer vacation this year...) Beginning with the September issue, we will once again be publishing on a monthly basis, and all year round! Thanks for bearing with us as the new OITM staff figured out how to do what needed to be done!

## CLASSIFIEDS

### Classified Information:

OITM is initiating a Classified Section featuring items for sale, housing opportunities, services offered and the like. Individuals may place ads at a rate of 50 cents per word with a \$5.00 minimum; for businesses the charge will be 75 cents per word with a \$10.00 minimum. OITM advises that you place or respond to ads at your own risk; we cannot screen each ad for legitimacy nor assume responsibility.

To be considered for publication, ads must be received by the 10th of the month. Mail to the address in the ad below. Payment must accompany your ad copy, and we **MUST** have your full name, address, and phone number (these will be kept confidential). Classifieds will begin with the next issue (August).

We are still enjoying our debates on the inclusion of personal ads and dating services and welcome your own input on the matter. Specifically speaking, what kinds of ads would you or would you not like to see in OITM? Speak now or forever hold your peace. Forewarned is forearmed. A stitch in time saves nine. Etc.

Here's a sample ad, just to give you an idea, and it's REAL:

### WANTED

Volunteers needed for reputable gay/lesbian/bisexual news magazine. Writers, photographers, and general staff. Free classified advertising available with membership. Write: OITM, Box 177, Burlington, Vermont 05402.