

# Politics

## Profile: Ron Squires

Ron Squires is rated by political observers as a good bet for election to the Vermont House of Representatives from Windham District 5 in the November 6 election.

Squires, who would be the first openly gay member of the legislature (perhaps sharing that honor with Howard Russell), is no newcomer to Vermont politics.

For the past five years, Squires, 39, has served as vice-chair of the state Democratic party, making him the highest-ranking openly gay Democratic party official in the country. He is one of only four openly gay members of the Democratic National Committee (joined by fellow Vermonter Terje Anderson and Californians Carole Migden and Jean O'Leary).

In Guilford, the town where Squires grew up, he serves as Justice of the Peace, Town Lister, Cemetery Commissioner, and Chair of the Town's Bicentennial Committee. He served for seven years as a member of the Brattleboro Union High School Board and chaired the Southeastern Vermont Regional Vocational Education Board.

"One of the major reasons I am running," says Squires, "is because I really know the issues that affect the district from having grown up in the area, from serving on the School Board and from serving as a town official; I want to have an impact on the issues like funding for education and property taxes that affect every citizen of Vermont."

Squires has been openly gay throughout his political career, working in the late 1970's with a local lesbian and gay coalition which formed around attacks on the Andrews Inn, a local gay bar. He helped found and worked for several years on the

*Open Closet*, a Brattleboro area lesbian and gay newsletter. He has recently served on the Vermont Department of Health AIDS Task Force and works with the Brattleboro AIDS Project.

"I look forward to going to Montpelier as an openly gay elected official. I really believe that the debate on things like the Hate Crimes Bill and the Civil Rights Bill would have been different had someone from our community been there to participate as a member of the legislature," says Squires.

"I would also very much like to be involved in decisions about health care resources and the challenges AIDS will present to Vermont over the coming year."

In 1976 Squires narrowly lost a race for this same seat against the opponent he faces this year - losing by a mere eleven votes. He is confident that this year, the results will be reversed.

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IS ELECTION DAY**



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