

Out in the Mountains

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Democrats Appoint Record Numbers to Party Positions

The Democratic National Committee, meeting in Washington, D.C. October 9th, elected a record number of openly lesbian and gay Democrats to high party positions, including the first openly lesbian or gay person to serve on a major national party's executive committee.

Jean O'Leary, a prominent Los Angeles lesbian activist, was named to the party's executive council by national Chair David Wilhelm. In addition, the Committee approved the selection of two additional lesbian/gay at-large appointments to the party's national committee. Nadine Smith, a lesbian from Tampa, FL who served as co-chair of the March on Washington and who is currently heading the campaign to defeat next year's anti-gay referendum in Florida, and New York activist Fred

Hochberg, were named to join the five already serving openly gay committee members.

The party also named members of three standing committees, and gay men were named to the two most important ones. Vermonter Terje Anderson was named to the Resolutions Committee and Minnesota Democratic State Chair Rick Stafford to the Rules Committee.

"I think these appointments are just one more piece of proof that the Democratic Party is committed to lesbian and gay inclusion in the political process," said Anderson. "While the Republican National Committee has come under the control of the Christian Coalition and their far right ideas, lesbians and gay men are fully accepted as part of the Democratic Party family." ▼

Governor Meets With Democratic Party Activists

Carrie Coy

Governor Howard Dean pledged to support domestic partner benefits for state employees and oppose any legislation that prohibits same-sex couples from adopting children at a recent meeting with a group of gay and lesbian activists.

The governor met for over an hour with twelve members of the Vermont Democratic Party to discuss gay, lesbian and bisexual concerns at Party Chair Maida Townsend's home on November 7th. Addressing issues identified at a previous meeting of the group, the governor said he expected little political backlash for his position on domestic partner benefits. "I think we can make some big major leap progress as long as

I've got your support [to extend benefits to unmarried heterosexual couples]," Governor Dean said. "It irks me that health care benefits can only be gained by getting married." He encouraged the state employee's union, VSEA, to put the issue on the table in upcoming contract negotiations and said he believed benefits would in place by July 1, 1994.

The governor's support for legal recognition of same-sex relationships was less firm. "It's a political minefield," Dean said, "and I haven't given it a lot of philosophical thought. Asking what the gay community meant by "recognition", Dean said "if it's a

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Ballot Losses in Three States

Terje Anderson

Voters in three cities, including two in New England, voted against lesbian and gay equal rights in referenda held November 2nd. The defeats in Portsmouth, NH, Lewiston, Maine, and Cincinnati, Ohio raise serious concerns about next year's elections, when radical right wing groups are expected to place anti-gay initiatives on as many as 13 state ballots.

Each of this year's elections was slightly different.

In Cincinnati, a traditionally Republican city, 62% of voters supported a measure repealing civil rights Protections passed earlier by the City Council. The campaign was the most expensive and heated of any this year, as anti-gay groups modeled their strategy on previous referenda in Colorado, Oregon and Tampa, Florida. Several groups, including the American Library Association, have already announced their plans to cancel conferences scheduled for the city.

Although advocates had hoped that Lewiston would provide a victory, voters there repealed that city's civil rights measure by a 2-1 margin. Initial optimism was based on last year's referendum victory in Portland, Maine's largest city, and the active support of much of Lewiston's straight leadership. Lewiston's police chief, Laurent Gilbert, campaigned vigorously against repeal, vividly recounting the gaybashing of his nephew. Despite such support, traditionally conservative voters in this heavily Catholic and French-Canadian, declining industrial town, voted against equal rights.

After Portsmouth's City Council earlier this year refused to pass a city law prohibiting discrimination in city em-

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