

Out in the Mountains
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To Submit Articles and Letters

We encourage and implore our readers to do what they can to make *OITM* a paper both for and by gay, lesbian, and bisexual Vermonters. Please assist us by typing your articles and letters double-spaced and including your name and phone number in case we have any questions. Your submission should be received by *OITM* no later than the 1st of the previous month. *Thank you* for helping out!

How to Advertise

If you would like to run an ad in *OITM*, please contact us for rates, sizes, and information. Ad copy must be received by the 1st of the month to be included in the next month's issue. Copy can be mailed to: *OITM*, P.O. Box 177, Burlington, VT 05402, or call Ellen at (802) 860-1922.

Editorial
There He Goes Again

Paul E. Olsen

"Though Dr. King was only in Vermont once that I know of, and for only a very brief time, the people of this state followed his wondrous career very closely and supported his good works. When he was struck down, I recall a great outpouring of grief and respect. The churches were peopled and the tributes were heartfelt and eloquent.

That, to me, was not surprising. This state of Vermont has a long history and deep commitment to the cause of human freedom. Of the 315,000 Vermonters living in this state in the 1860's, 34,238 answered the call of Abraham Lincoln and fought for the suppression of slavery in the Civil War. Nine of 10 who served went as volunteers. One in seven died and more than a third were wounded.

Before the war, Vermonters had been intensely active in the Underground Railroad, conveying star-guided, freedom seeking fugitives from slavery to refuge in the north.

So with such a history, it was not surprising to me that Martin Luther King found a receptive audience here in Vermont. And when he died, this state wept. It is well we recall such a history as we once again pay this great man tribute, and as we further our resolve to carry forth, here at home, his mighty legacy of freedom and justice".

Those were the eloquent words Senator James Jeffords shared with a group of Vermonters who recently came together to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Sitting in the audience, hearing Jeffords' Aide Kerena Higgins read Jeffords' letter, I couldn't help but question Jeffords' sincerity in light of his consistent refusal to co-sponsor the National Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Act. When passed, this neutral piece of civil rights legislation will simply prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation nationwide.

Jeffords rightly notes that Vermont's tradition of support for civil rights began with the Underground Railroad and continued during the Civil War. I'd suggest that this tradition is still alive in light of Vermont's passage of a state law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. By refusing to join Senator Leahy and Representative Sanders as a bill co-sponsor, Jeffords is, in his own way, bringing a premature death to, as Jeffords describes, Vermont's "long history and deep commitment to the cause of human freedom". Senator Jeffords gives new meaning to the word fraud when his words claim to resolve to carry forth Dr. King's "mighty legacy of freedom and justice" and his actions indicate otherwise.

Jeffords' refusal to co-sponsor a bill that would continue Vermont's long tradition of support for civil rights and the principles of justice espoused by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is unacceptable. When it came to civil rights, Dr. King left no room for compromise and, in my estimation, he would be ashamed of Senator James Jeffords. ▼

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