

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 Steven West at (802) 864-6399 or Bruce at BMH graphic design at (802) 658-1556.

From the Editor: The ENDA the road for Jeffords?

Fred Kuhr

WINOOSKI -- Take a moment and think back to a really difficult test you had to take in college or high school, maybe geometry or history. The subject was never your forte, and you had no plans to become an historian or geometer anyway, so you crammed and crammed hoping for a passing grade. Let's say you received a 78%. In theory, this meant that you knew and understood 78% of the material. This was good enough to pass the test, but probably not good enough to keep Mom and Dad from asking why you only received a C in the course.

Take another moment and imagine yourself a U.S. Senator. Imagine that your vote, along with your ninety-nine colleagues, helps to shape the direction of the nation. Pretty impressive. And a lot of people must have voted for you in order to have gotten elected. You must be pretty popular. Oooh, nice office too! And look at all those people and groups giving you money to spend on your next campaign. Must be nice.

But you must remember the down side. An awful lot of responsibility comes with the job. For example, let's say you were voting on whether or not a particular group of Americans deserves basic civil rights. And after all the votes were said and done, your grade was a 78%. This means, in theory, that this group of Americans deserves only 78% of basic civil rights. Sorry, you failed.

The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, based in Washington, D.C., handed out grades following the 103rd Congress as a record of each senator's and

representative's pro-gay votes. And guess what Republican Senator James Jeffords received - 78%.

I understand that things could be worse. Some of Jeffords' colleagues received grades of 0%. (Wouldn't they be fun at a party!) Jeffords' votes are especially good compared to other Republicans, who tend to be less pro-gay than Democrats.

Back in June, Jeffords made a move that excited many people in Vermont's lesbian and gay community - he became an original co-sponsor of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, known acronymously as ENDA. If passed, ENDA would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation all across the country.

"Like all other Americans, gays and lesbians deserve to be judged at work on the basis of their ability to do the job," Jeffords wrote recently. "The principles of equality and opportunity," he continued, "should apply to all Americans without regard to their sexual orientation." Then where are the bills and laws protecting the rights of lesbians and gays to housing, military service, education, credit, public accommodations, adoption, domestic partnership and marriage? Jeffords has failed in his past twenty years as Senator to sponsor gay rights legislation. Now he sponsors ENDA and we waive the rainbow flag.

Could this election be the end of the road for Jeffords? 78% is far from ideal. Now it is up to us. ▼

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