

Cover Story

Hawaii, Connecticut Pass Gay Rights Bills (from page one)

Maine has been trying to pass gay rights legislation since 1977. The environment for re-introducing the measure looked good this year, especially as the Catholic Church in Maine modified its previous opposition to the bill and stated that it would not stand against anti-homosexual discrimination.

Even so, the bill drew fire from the Director of the Christian Civic League of Maine, Jasper Wyman, who led a massive campaign to defeat the measure. Drawing on fundamentalist factions within the state, Wyman targeted those legislators whose votes were known to be undecided on the issue.

The Maine bill was not without its supporters, however. A number of state groups, including the Maine Council of Churches, the Maine Teachers' Association, and the Maine Psychological Association, all endorsed the legislation.

In Connecticut, expected opposition to the bill from the Catholic Church was allayed by the addition of an amendment which stated that the bill did not "endorse or promote a homosexual lifestyle as normative," according to the Rev. Thomas Barry, spokesperson for Archbishop John Whealon. Since this addition focused more on what the bill wasn't and not what it was, the inclusion didn't upset the bill's lobbyists and supporters.

The Connecticut Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights has struggled for this legislation since 1973. In the 18 years between then and now, the bill has gone through nine reworkings. In 1975, the state was the first to have a gay rights bill pass in either legislative branch. It now becomes the fourth to approve such legislation.

Dykes to Watch Out For *by Alison Bechdel*



National AIDS Lobby Days May 24-June 3

In the first nationwide effort of its kind, a grass roots army of citizen lobbyists from around the country will meet with U.S. Senators and Representatives at home and in their district offices from May 24 to June 3 to press for a more compassionate federal response to the AIDS crisis.

Among the lobbyists' goals are increased funding for prevention, care, and research programs, and for replenishment of the Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act (Ryan White CARE bill).

National AIDS Lobby Days also occur at a noteworthy time in the AIDS epidemic, as June 5th marks the tenth anniversary of the first AIDS cases reported by the federal Centers for Disease Control.

Joining ACT UP/DC in endorsing and promoting the effort is a coalition of groups that includes the AIDS Action Council, Gay Men's Health Crisis, Human Rights Campaign Fund, Iowa Dignity and Equality Task Force, National Association of People with AIDS, National Coming Out Day, Project Inform, and ACT UP chapters throughout the country.