

Vermont News

Sanders Co-sponsors Gay Rights Bill

by Larry Wolf

During the week of April 12, Representative Bernie Sanders (Independent) made good on his campaign pledge to learn more about the need to include lesbians and gays under Federal Civil Rights legislation and became a co-sponsor of the Civil Rights Amendment Act of 1991 (HR 1430/S 574).

Representative Sanders states: "I agree this is an important piece of legislation, and I am proud to be a cosponsor.

"There is little question that Americans face hostility and prejudice because of their admitted or perceived sexual orientation. In addition to the trauma which discrimination inflicts on individuals, it robs our nation of the talents of millions of its citizens.

"The US government has not fulfilled its responsibility to protect all of its citizens from discrimination. I believe HR 1430 provides important and fundamental protection to lesbians and gays.

"Further, I have recently co-signed a letter to President Bush requesting that he change the Pentagon's archaic and destructive policy of barring all gays and lesbians from the military. The letter urged him to afford our gay and lesbian troops the same well-deserved respect he has given to our other servicemen and women."

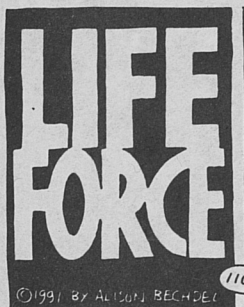
According to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, there are currently 100 cosponsors for the Civil Rights Amendment Act of 1991. This represents an all-time high for the level of support for the bill.

By becoming a cosponsor, a legislator not only goes on record as supporting the bill, but also becomes an advocate for its passage. Vermont's senators, while generally supportive of gay and lesbian issues when they come to a vote, have not signed on as co-sponsors. The NGLTF is about to start a postcard campaign to increase support for this legislation. Call them at (202) 332-6483 for more information.

The Civil Rights Amendment Act of 1991, also known as the Federal Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Act, would extend to gays and lesbians the provisions of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which bars discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion and national origin in housing, employment, federally assisted programs and public accommodations. This amendment was first introduced by Bella Abzug in 1975. It has gained increasing support in each legislative session since then.

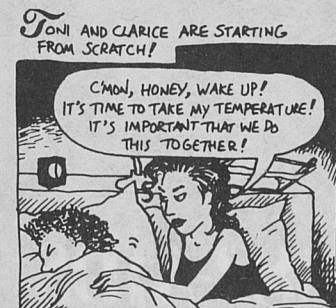
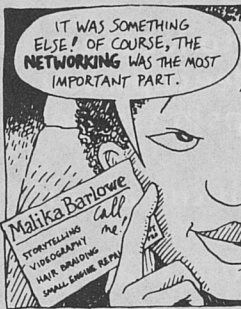
It is worth noting that one of the largest single actions taken to end racial discrimination was President Truman's executive order which created a racially integrated armed services. It would be a major step forward if George Bush took a similar step with respect to lesbians and gays in the military.

Dykes to Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



AS THE AMERICAN EMPIRE CONTINUES ITS INEXORABLE DECLINE BEHIND A FAÇADE OF YELLOW-BERIBRONED DENIAL, OUR PATIENT HEROINES CONTINUE, IN THEIR OWN INEXORABLE WAY, TO NOURISH THE VITAL SPARK.

MO AND HARRIET ARE GETTING DOWN AND DIRTY.



Special Note: As OITM's editorial staff changes, the paper will take a short break and resume publication with a July/August issue in mid-summer.