

Out in the Mountains

VERMONT'S NEWSPAPER FOR LESBIANS, GAY MEN, AND BISEXUALS

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Federal Civil Rights Bill Gains 100th Co-Sponsor in U.S. House of Representatives

A major breakthrough in the struggle for civil rights for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals came in November of last year as the number of co-sponsors for the federal gay civil rights bill in the U.S. House of Representatives topped 100.

The House total reached 100 with the addition of Democrats Harry Johnston of Florida, Bill Richardson of New Mexico, Albert Bustamente of Texas, and Ed Pastor of Arizona. Co-sponsors in the Senate now number 14, as New Jersey gay rights lobbyists recently won over one of their Senators, Frank Lautenberg (D).

"Obtaining 114 Congressional sponsors of our civil rights bill is a major milestone," said Peri Jude Radecic, National Gay & Lesbian Task Force's (NGLTF) Legislative Director. "It happened because our community is persistent and dedicated. This achievement belongs to every activist who sent a postcard, wrote a letter, called or visited an office this year on the gay and lesbian civil rights bill."

The federal effort to enact equal protections for lesbian and gay people has been underway since 1975 when then-Representative Bella Abzug (D-NY) introduced the first federal lesbian and gay civil rights bill. The legislation has been reintroduced into every Congress since that time.

The legislation, officially known as the Civil Rights Amendments Act of 1991, is the only vehicle in Congress to provide recourse for those discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation. The bill numbers are S574 in the Senate and HR1430 in the House.

The bills amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1968 to include sexual orientation. These laws currently prohibit dis-

crimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability and sex in the areas of housing, employment, public accommodations, credit and federally-assisted programs.

For Vermonters: Representative Bernie Sanders (I) has signed on as a co-sponsor in the U.S. House; Senators Patrick Leahy and James Jeffords have not joined the list of sponsors in the Senate. In New Hampshire neither the Representatives or Senators have agreed to be co-sponsors.

Write and let your Representatives and Senators know that it is time they supported your civil rights. Also thank our sponsors, they need to hear that we appreciate their support. Contact NGLTF for constituent postcards and more information on the bill: NGLTF, 1734 14th St NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. ▼

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Governor Dean Supports Gay Rights

Governor Howard Dean, in his State of the State Address before the Vermont Legislature on January 7th, included support for the full civil rights of lesbians and gays in his agenda for the current legislative session.

"I also ask this General Assembly to continue Vermont's strong tradition of protection of civil rights by passing the gay rights bill so that no group of Vermonters suffers from bigotry and intolerance." ▼

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Years old Happy Birthday OITM!