

National/International News

Flynn Supports Pride Committee Participation

Boston, MA - Mayor Raymond Flynn said that the Irish-American Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Pride Committee should be allowed to participate in Boston's St. Patrick's Day Parade, March 15. The South Boston Allied War Veterans Council rejected the group's request, saying a gay presence could provoke incidents that might threaten public safety. In response, committee members met with the Boston Police Department and gave written assurances that they would march peacefully and refrain from distributing pamphlets or condoms. "The mayor's attitude is that public safety concerns raised by the parade committee have been addressed by this signed document," said Flynn's spokesperson. "Therefore, he believes that this group should be allowed to march." Patrick Murphy, lawyer for the Veterans Council, said he expected the group to vote March 9th on whether to accept or reject the request to participate.

In New York, St. Patrick's Day Parade organizers went to court to bar the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization from marching in that parade. (*The Boston Globe*)

High School Military Recruitment Banned

Cambridge, MA - Cambridge, MA became the first city in the U.S. to ban military recruitment in public high schools last fall. The school committee decision notes that the military violates the Cambridge Human Rights Ordinance by discriminating against gays and lesbians. In a similar action in December, the school board in Rochester, NY also voted to pro-

hibit military recruiting in public schools. The Rochester measure also requires counselors who provide students with recruitment literature to include a copy of the Defense Department policy prohibiting lesbians and gays from serving. University of Rochester students are hoping to use the decision to force the University administration to re-evaluate its support of Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) on campus. (*Outlines*)

United Way Boycott

Washington, D.C. - The Board of Directors of the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) has endorsed a national boycott of the United Way because of the organization's financial support of the Boy Scouts of America. The Boy Scouts prohibit gay teens and adult volunteers from participating in their programs and are engaged in controversy over their discriminatory policies. "United Way funding is an endorsement of the Boy Scout's policy of discrimination. We hope to increase public awareness of the Boy Scouts misguided policy and to encourage the Scouts to accept the traditional values of tolerance and diversity," said Tim McFeeley, Executive Director of HRCF. McFeeley noted that the Girl Scouts of America, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and other national organizations serving youth do not discriminate against participants because of their sexual identity.

In the meantime, the United Way of the Bay Area, the largest single donor to scouting programs in the San Francisco area, is on the verge of withdrawing its financial support in five counties because of the discriminatory policy. The United Way is expected to give the Scouts two options; either reverse its prohibition

against gays or give scouting organizations in the region the right to "adopt a local policy that is in harmony with the social diversity, values and spirit of the Bay area." Ben Love, Chief Executive of the Scouts, called both options totally unacceptable, saying the Boy Scouts would find funds on their own rather than "destroy the program." "Our values are not for sale, other people have a right to believe what they believe, but we set our own standards. Homosexuality is not accepted as a moral thought process by the majority of people in this country." Other United Way chapters, which each set their own policy are "talking about the issue," according to a spokesperson at national headquarters in Alexandria, VA, but are awaiting "a final legal determination in the courts." United Way chapters across the U.S. donate \$87 million a year to Boy Scout programs, accounting for 20 percent of the Scout's national operating budget. (*Washington Blade, New York Times, HRCF*)

First Discrimination Complaint Filed in Connecticut

Hartford, CT - James Davis, who worked as the only male secretary for a Hartford law firm, has filed the first discrimination complaint under Connecticut's new gay rights law. The law, which took effect on October 1 last year, makes it illegal to discriminate against a person in employment, housing, credit and other areas on the basis of sexual orientation. Davis, who filed the suit in December, says that while he was working at the law firm of Hoberman and Pollack, he was called names that ridiculed his sexual orientation. He also asserts that he may have been laid off because he was a man in a job not traditionally held by men. (*The New York Times*) ▼



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