

Out in the Mountains

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It Passed!

Deborah Lashman

After a long wait and much hard work, the civil rights bill is on its way to becoming law. Vermont is poised to become the sixth state in the U.S., joining Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Hawaii, and New Jersey, in providing civil rights protections for its lesbian and gay citizens.

Final House approval came April 13th, on a vote of 73 to 67 with 9 members voting absent. Initially approved the previous Friday, by a vote of 71 to 58 with 20 members voting absent, the bill survived weekend efforts to derail it.

A last minute attempt to kill the bill, engineered by Rep. Nancy Sheltra, R-Derby, failed Tuesday afternoon when the House defeated by a vote of 80 to 67 a motion by Robert Starr, D-Troy to reconsider Monday's vote. The Senate Judiciary Committee has concurred with language changes in the House version, so all that remains at press time is an expected full concurrence by the Senate on April 16th and signature by Governor Dean, a staunch supporter of the bill.

A wide margin of success (20-9) in passing the bill in the Senate earlier in April gave supporters encouragement for the fight in the House. Keith Goslant, Co-Liaison to the Governor, Statewide Coalition for Lesbians and Gay Men, said he was surprised that the bill was approved by such a margin. "It shows change is really happening. This gives me every indication this bill is going to pass this session." Senate approval came after an hour of debate, during which Senator David Wolk, chief sponsor of the bill, remarked, "It is incumbent on us together to establish the highest standards and common expectations in Vermont that we will not tolerate prejudice."

Ron Squires, Vermont's only openly gay representative spoke near the end of the debate in the House on Friday, "This bill is not about special privileges or rights. It's about giving gay men and lesbians the same rights that you all have. I cannot tell you how I felt as this body debated whether or

not I had the same privileges as the other 149 members of this House and 30 members of the body across the hall." Opponents attacked either ignored or downplayed the need for civil rights protections, instead attacking the bill on "moral" grounds. Rep. Merrill Perley, R-Enosburg said, "It's a moral issue. To pass this bill, it would be against my Christian beliefs."

Supporters were relieved and jubilant at the outcome. Susan Sussman, Executive Director of the State Office of Human Rights, said, "It's so spectacular. A couple of months ago we needed to turn around 30 votes. It was only a week or two ago that it really began to look possible." Keith Goslant said, "This is the first time in my 38 years I feel like a real citizen." "It's in the long Vermont tradition of people protecting people's rights to privacy and their civil rights," said Governor Dean. Speaker of the House, Ralph Wright remarked, "It sends a signal to all people that the state of Vermont will not tolerate discrimination wherever it is found."

Yes:

Thomas R. Alderman, D-Middlebury; Linda L. Almy, D-Underhill; Alice Cook Bassett, D-Burlington; Terrill G. Bounicius, PC-Burlington; Lovina D. Bright, D-South Burlington; Francis K. Brooks, D-Montpelier; Orland Campbell, R-Manchester; Sean P. Campbell, D-Rockingham; Lucille M. Casavant, D-Winooski; Nancy I. Chard, D-Brattleboro; Nancy W. Chioffi, D-Burlington; Andy H. Christensen, D-E. Montpelier; David M. Clarkson, D-Newfane; Wendell L. Coleman, R-Londonderry; John Daley, D-Rutland; Hamilton E. Davis, D-Burlington; David L. Deen, D-Westminster; Judith L. DiMario, D-Fayson; Alice M. Emmons, D-Springfield; Sally G. Fox, D-Essex; John S. Freidin, D-New Haven; Sara M. Gear, R-Burlington; Barbara L. Grimes, D-Burlington; Paul C. Harrington, R-Middlesex; Robert J. Harris, D-Windsor; Don Hooper, D-Brookfield; Rooger V. Kayhart, R-Waltham; Kathleen C. Keanean, D-St. Albans; Wayne G. Kenyon, D-Bradford; Robert E. Kinsey, R-Craftsbury; Karen S. Kitzmiller, D-Montpelier; Ronald R. Knapp, R-Bennington; Jerry D. Kreitzer, D-Rutland; David C. Larsen, D-Wilmington; Doris Linglebach, D-Thetford; Thomas A. Little, R-Shelburne; Vi L. Luginbuhl, R-South Burlington; Mark A. MacDonald, D-Williamstown; Peter T. Mallary, D-Newbury; Margaret F. Martin, D-Middlebury; Curt McCormack, D-Rutland; Kenneth D. McEwan, R-Mendon; Virginia A. Milkey, D-Brattleboro; John F. Murphy, D-Windsor; Michael Obuchowski, D-Bellows Falls; Lisa M. O'Neil, R-Hartford; Edward J. Paquin, Jr., D-Fairfax; Mary-Ann Parizo, D-Essex Junction; Jane B. Potvin, D-South Hero; Carl D. Powden, D-Johnson; Megan Price, R-Fair Haven; Helen S. Riehle, D-Hinesburg; Inge C. Schaefer, R-Colchester; Ann Seibert, D-Norwich; James S. Shea, D-Shaftsburg; Peter Shumlin, D-Putney; Tom O. Smith, PC-Burlington; Ronald M. Squires, D-Guilford; Robert A. Starr, D-Troy; Ruth S. Stokes, R-Williston; William G. Stowe, R-St. Johnsbury; Mary M. Sullivan, D-Burlington; William B. Talbot, D-Monkton; Merritt Thomas, R-Rutland; Val D. Vincent, D-Waterbury; Harold D. Weidman, R-Wallingford; William C. Wisell, D-Bristol; Barbara C. Wood, R-Bethel; Carolyn A. Yamell, D-Colchester; Peter D. Youngbaer, D-Plainfield.

No:

Leon F. Babbie, D-Swanton; Ralph D. Baker, R-Randolph; Benoit U. Blais, D-Derby; Alphonse J. Bourassa, R-Clarendon; Gordon J. Booth, R-Barre Town; James G. Brouillete, D-St. Albans; David K. Brown, R-Stafford; Roland A. Burroughs, R-Underhill; Nancy A. Christopher, D-Albany; William J. Cimonetti, R-South Burlington; Joan A. Conat, R-Colchester; Timothy Corcoran, D-Bennington; Howard T. Crawford, R-Burke; George M. Crosby, R-St. Johnsbury; Don P. Davis, R-Cavendish; Michael A. DeBonnis, D-Poultney; Robert R.J. Edmond, D-Brattleboro; Domenic Falzarano, R-Northfield; Elmer L. Faris, R-Barnet; Aili R. Farrar, D-Chester; Betty M. Ferraro, R-Rutland; William A. Fyfe, R-Newport; Leon C. Graves, D-Fairfield; Kenneth A. Harvey, R-Hyde Park; Madeline Harwood, R-Manchester; Kittredge Haven, R-Panton; Wesley J. Hrydziusko, R-Windsor; Cola H. Hudson, R-Lyndonville; Carroll G. Hull, R-Richford; Robert J. Johnston, R-Ira; Matt Krauss, R-Barre; Theodore F. Lindgren, D-Springfield; Sydney Mander, R-Morristown; Patrick H. Mangan, R-Woodstock; Elisa Martin, R-Barre; Peter C. Martin, D-St. Albans; Thomas J. McCormick, R-Winooski; Jane A. Mendicino, R-Essex Junction; Herbert J. O'Brien; R-Stowe; Robert G. Oliver, R-Leicester; Thomas A. O'Neil, D-Richmond; Charles R. Palmer, R-Pownal; Janice L. Peaslee, R-Guildhall; James M. Pedley, R-Northfield; Richard C. Pembroke Sr., D-Bennington; Merril E. Perley, R-Enosburg; Harry J. Pickering, D-Arlington; Hazel W. Prindle, R-Charlottesville; Walter M. Pyle, R-Shoreham; Kermit W. Richardson, R-Orange; Marion M. Rogenski, D-Hartford; Wallace C. Russell, R-Barton; Nancy J. Sheltra, R-Derby; Richard J. Smith, R-Danville; Ruth R. Smith, R-Barre Town; Gordon N. Stafford, R-Brighton; Robert A. Stafford, R-Rutland; Karen K. Steele, R-Waterbury; Gene G. Sweetser, R-Essex Junction; Carroll E. Towne, R-Milton; Ruth H. Towne, R-Berlin; Oreste Valsangiacomo Sr., D-Barre; Patricia L. Welch, R-Springfield; Perry A. Westman, R-Cambridge; Robert H. Wood Jr., R-Brandon.

Absent:

Carmel A. Babcock, D-Burlington; Hyacinthe Beaulieu, R-Higgate; J. Russell Carpenter, D-Bennington; Elaine M. Charboneau, D-Burlington; Paul A. Cillo, D-Hardwick; Maud-Ann Durgin, R-Newport; Raymond W. Giddings, R-Pittsford; Edward C. Lucas, R-Bridgewater; Mary P. Simpers, R-Colchester.

Senate vote:

Yes:

Jan Backus, D-Windham; Mary Ann Carlson, D-Bennington; John M. Carroll, R-Windsor; Sally Y. Conrad, D-Chittenden; J. Dennis Delaney, R-Chittenden; William T. Doyle, R-Washington; John R. Finn, D-Franklin; Robert Gannett, R-Windham; Edwin Granai, D-Chittenden; Althea Kroger, D-Chittenden; George E. Little, R-Chittenden; Thomas G. Macauley, R-Rutland; Richard T. Mazza, D-Chittenden/Grand Isle; Richard McCormack, D-Windsor; Michael W. Metcalf, R-Essex/Orleans; Elizabeth M. Ready, D-Addison; Cheryl P. Rivers, D-Windsor; Mary Just Skinner, D-Washington; Jeb Spaulding, D-Washington; David S. Wolk, D-Rutland.

No:

Thomas E. Bahre, R-Addison; John H. Bloomer, R-Rutland; John Farmer, R-Lamoille; D. Francis Howrigan, D-Franklin; Vincent Illuzzi, D-Essex/Orleans; John McClaughry, R-Caledonia; John C. Page, R-Bennington; Joseph M. Sherman, R-Caledonia; Stephen W. Webster, R-Orange.

The June issue of *OITM* will have complete coverage of the final outcome, along with information on what the bill means and what it will take to implement. ▼