

# Letters to the Editor

Dear *OITM*,

How sad for us that we have reached 1992 and are still forced to hide who we are - forced to hide out of fear - fear of losing our jobs, children, homes and perhaps our very lives.

Who are we? We are men and women that most of the population sees as different, abnormal, but we are simply people trying to make our way in this life. We are men and women who work hard at our jobs, we have families to look after, we do the things that will enrich our lives, we care deeply about others. We are people that only want what is our due - our rights - our right to be fully human - without fear.

I am grateful for the men and women in our community who have stood their ground and gained for us the rights we now have, but the time has come for all of us to take a stand and support each other. Think of the force we would be if we all came out and said I'm here - therefore I am.

Pride Day is coming up in June, let's take that day, set aside our fear, stand tall, support each other and march down the streets of Montpelier and let everyone know that : We Are Here - Therefore We Are. With what we gain on that day let us carry it forth even more.

Sandy Corron  
Burlington

Dear Folks at *OITM*,

Commissioner Carney's response. I will disseminate her factual report on the pending legislation when it comes to the House floor. Good luck.

Best wishes,

Representative Megan D. Price

Note: Representative Price asked the Commissioner of Public Health to review a brochure being distributed by opponents of the civil rights bill entitled "Education for Vermonters on the Homosexual Agenda." Excerpts from Commissioner Carney's response appear below.

Much of the brochure deals with perspectives on personal morality, religious beliefs, political ideology, and similar issues to which I cannot respond, as they are well beyond the scope of public health concerns.

Dear Friends at *OITM*,

I wrote a "support the Gay Rights Bill" letter to Senator Elizabeth M. Ready - Addison County and got a positive response from her. I also wrote to Representative John Freidin in Middlebury and received a positive response also. Both were not in office during the last vote, so now I feel good that at least two more positive votes are on our side at this time.

I thank you for being a leader in our effort. We shall overcome! Veeshlarvak,

Larry Pouliot  
Middlebury

Dear Larry,

Thank you for your note on S-131. I thoroughly support this bill to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. I'll do all I can to see that it passes. Sincerely,

Senator Elizabeth Ready

Dear Mr. Pouliot,

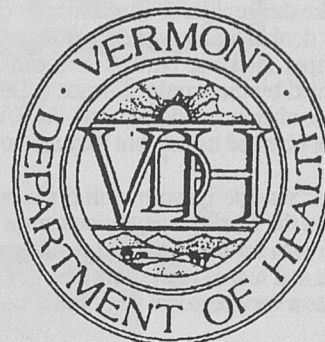
Thanks for your note. You can count on my support for H-162.

Sincerely,  
John Freidin

The data the brochure presents on sexually transmitted diseases is, however, significantly at odds with our experience in Vermont. Many of the statistics presented are without attribution and represent dated studies from other parts of the country. In contrast to the data presented in the brochure, homosexual transmission represents only a small portion of the sexually transmitted disease incidence in Vermont.

In Vermont, as in most other parts of the country, AIDS and HIV have disproportionately impacted homosexual men. Many studies have shown that homosexual men have made considerable changes in sexual behaviors in response to the threat of AIDS, resulting in significant decline in the rate of new HIV infections and dramatic drops in other sexually transmitted diseases among gay men.

## For confidential AIDS Information



Call  
**1-800-882-AIDS**

## Submitting a Letter

*OITM* welcomes letters to the Editor and will withhold your name or use your initials or first name only on request. However, we must have your full name and address for our files if we are to print your letter. Letters may be edited for length or clarity. ▼

The brochure also makes reference to "gay bowel syndrome" involving amebiasis, shigellosis, giardias, and hepatitis A. There is no evidence of an "epidemic" of these enteric infections among homosexual men (or women) in Vermont. These infections are far more likely to be associated with transmission in day care centers, drinking from contaminated water supplies, and foreign travel.

It is important to remember that this bill would prevent discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and related areas. There is no evidence that passage of this legislation would increase the incidence of sexually transmitted infections in Vermont. In no way would any person with HIV, gonorrhea, syphilis, hepatitis B, or similar sexually transmitted diseases pose a risk to others in those settings. ▼