

From Idea to Law:

A Retrospective on S-131, An Act to Prohibit Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation

- 1985** Governor Madeline Kunin recognizes liaisons from lesbian and gay community: Beth Dingman and Terje Anderson.
- 1986** Members of the Vermont Coalition of Lesbians and Gay Men commit to advocating for a comprehensive anti-discrimination bill.
- Coalition subcommittee meets during the summer and drafts language amending existing non-discrimination clauses of 15 Vermont statutes to include "sexual orientation" as protected class.
- Beth Dingman steps down as liaison from lesbian community. Heather Wishik is chosen new liaison. Terje Anderson continues as liaison from men's community.
- 1987** H-237; lead sponsor K. Micque Glitman (D) Burlington and S-278; lead sponsor Harrey Carter (D) Bennington- an act prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation introduced into Vermont legislature.
- Public hearing held by House Judiciary Committee on H-237. Committee hearings follow. H-237 voted favorably out of committee. No floor debate or vote. Bill re-assigned to General and Military Affairs after determination of not enough votes for passage. No further action taken.
- Also introduced: H-239; lead sponsor K. Micque Glitman (D) Burlington, an act prohibiting discrimination on the basis of HIV antibody status. Bill acted on by House Health and Welfare Committee. Chief advocate Ben Truman (D) Burlington. Committee creates separate bill (H-460) responding to concerns from the insurance lobby. Both H-239 and H-460 voted favorably by Committee and House.
- H-237, H-460 and S-278 included in list of Governor Kunin's legislative priorities: ACLU also includes all three on its legislative agenda. ACLU legislative liaison Tim Mazur.
- Terje Anderson steps down as liaison from men's community. Keith Goslant chosen new liaison. Heather Wishik continues as liaison from lesbian community.
- 1988** Senate Judiciary Committee takes up S-278. Another public hearing is held followed by committee hearings. Judiciary Committee votes out bill with favorable recommendation. Senate passes S-278 (prohibit discrimination on basis of sexual orientation) by a 17-12 vote. However, no action taken by House Judiciary Committee so bill dies in committee as session ends.
- H-239 (HIV antibody) receives favorable recommendation from Senate Judiciary and is passed by Senate.
- H-460 receives favorable recommendation from Senate Finance Committee and is then sent to Senate Health and Welfare which also makes favorable recommendation. Full Senate passes bill.
- Governor Kunin signs H-239 and H-460 into law.**
- Heather Wishnik steps down and Holly Perdue is chosen as new liaison from lesbian community. Keith Goslant continues as liaison from men's community.
- 1989** Lead sponsor Vi Luginbuhl (R) So. Burlington introduces H-211 (anti-discrimination bill) into Vermont legislature. Sally Conrad (D) Chittenden ready as lead sponsor in Senate. Another public hearing is held followed by committee hearings. Bill is voted favorably out of committee but is defeated on House floor 85-55. Bill cannot be reconsidered by legislature until next biennium (1991).
- Also introduced, H-504, lead sponsor Ben Truman (D) Burlington, an act relating to hate crimes. Assigned to Judiciary Committee but no action taken.
- State Human Rights Commission formed. Susan Sussman hired as Director; Jim Morgan appointed Commissioner.
- Holly Perdue and Keith Goslant continue as liaisons.
- 1990** House Judiciary considers H-504. Chief advocate in committee Robert Paolini (D) Waterbury. Judiciary votes bill onto floor with favorable recommendation. House passes H-504. Bill assigned to Senate Judiciary which holds public hearing.
- Chief advocate in committee David Wolk (D) Rutland. Bill voted favorably out of committee and passed by Senate 26-4.
- H-504 (Hate Crimes) signed into law by Governor Kunin.**
- 1991** H-162 lead sponsor Vi Luginbuhl (R) So. Burlington and S-131 lead sponsor David Wolk (D) Rutland, an act prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation introduced into Vermont legislature. No action taken in either chamber.
- Tim Mazur resigns from ACLU. Ben Truman hired as new legislative liaison at ACLU.
- 1992** Governor Howard Dean includes passage of H-162/S-131 as priorities in his State of the State address.
- Senate Judiciary takes up S-131. Chief advocate in committee David Wolk. Judiciary holds another public hearing (4th on this bill), followed by committee hearings. Bill voted favorably out of committee.
- 3/31/92 Senate passes 2nd reading 20-9. 4/1/92 final Senate passage on voice vote.
- House Judiciary hold committee hearings and votes favorable recommendation.
- 4/10/92 House passes 2nd reading 71-58.
4/13/92 House passes 3rd reading 74-67
4/14/92 Robert Starr (D) N. Troy moves for reconsideration. Motion fails 80-67 and bill is sent to Senate Judiciary to concur with House amendments.
4/15/92 Senate moves to concur with House 23-5.
- 4/23/92 Governor Howard Dean signs S-131 into law.**
- 7/1/92 S-131 An Act to Prohibit Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation takes effect. ▼