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**New Hampshire
Civil Rights Bill Sent into Study**

CONCORD, NH - By a vote of 293-35, the New Hampshire Legislature voted to send House Bill 1294, which will add "sexual orientation" to the state's existing Civil Rights law, into extended study. A subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee will be formed to study the bill and to issue a report by November, 1996. If their report is favorable, then HB1294 will be heard by the entire legislature in the spring of 1997.

Governor Steven Merrill has claimed that legislation like HB 1294 is not necessary, since all citizen's rights are protected under current legislation. Two current court cases, both of which test the need for this type of legislation, are the primary reasons for sending the bill into extended study.

In one case, NYNEX faces a lawsuit over their domestic partnership policy, which does not at this time include unmarried heterosexual couples.

In the other case, a couple from Hollis has sued their real estate agent, claiming that the agent did not make an active effort to sell their home once she discovered they were gay. The Real Estate board advised the couple that they were not protected under New Hampshire law.

On January 18, the Judiciary Committee of the New Hampshire Legislature heard overwhelming testimony in favor of House Bill 1294. Witnesses described cases of discrimination that they had faced in housing, employment, and public accommodation; parents from PFLAG explained why their children could not live in New Hampshire; and clergy and lawyers testified in favor of this legislation. The Committee's vote was nine in favor of extended study, seven in favor of immediate passage, and no votes opposed.

The New Hampshire Coalition to End Discrimination (CED), which has been spearheading the effort to pass this legislation, is pleased that the legislature has voted to give this bill further study. Brendan Denehy, spokesperson for CED, notes, "We believe that further study of this bill will make it even clearer that this type of legislation is needed in New Hampshire. People should not have to live in fear of losing their jobs or housing, or of being refused service, just because of their sexuality. CED will continue to work to educate the citizens of New Hampshire, and to make sure that the extended study subcommittee gets all the information they need to make an informed decision on this matter." ▼

Pride '96 Plans Underway

BURLINGTON - Organizers of this year's Pride celebration have been working in a fast-paced "crisis mode" due to a late start on planning, but feel confident that the June event will be "one in which every member of our community can participate."

Heralding "fresh faces, new ideas, and positive attitudes," the group has been meeting every other week to put together a day-long program of various events, including the traditional Pride Rally and Parade. This year's theme, shared with Pride Celebrations around the world, will be "Pride Without Borders." With the date set for Saturday, June 15, committee members are now seeking to complete all the necessary permit applications and resource allocations.

"We're making an effort to make it different," said Bob Bolyard, one of the Outreach Coordinators for Pride '96. "We want to put the fun back in it, and hope to have groups from all over the state come and be visible, to show who they are and to be a part of it."

Both Bolyard and Co-Coordinator Craig Stevens are well aware of the controversies which surrounded last year's Pride event, which drew criticism for its "Queers Fight the Right" motif and received mainstream attention when Lieutenant Governor Barbara Snelling was "disinvited" from speaking at the Rally. This year, they plan to involve as many diverse elements of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered communities as possible.

As such, they have already made efforts to contact a variety of groups, from the Radical Faeries to the Log Cabin Republicans. "We need to be welcoming within our own community before we can step forward and show our pride to the general Vermont community," said Stevens.

Bolyard hopes that the groups can "come together as one" and assist in the various projects needed to make Pride a success, from fund-raising to float-building. Toward that end, letters have been sent out to most of the major groups in the state asking for input and energy.

Money has already established itself as a top priority, particularly given the group's late start. Fund-raising events will take place around the state beginning in early April. Anyone interested in making a personal or corporate contribution is encouraged to send a check payable to "Pride '96" to Pride Outreach, Box 218, Burlington VT 05402.

For more information about upcoming Pride meetings or to offer assistance in any way, contact Bob Bolyard at 865-3734 or Craig Stevens at 658-1602. ▼

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Transgendered Issues

**Transgendered Launch
New Publication**

BURLINGTON - Transgendered individuals and their supporters in Vermont have come together to form Trans, the Transgender, Radical Action, Networking and Support group.

The group has established a list of goals including the publication of a newsletter, development of non-violent direct actions targeting discrimination and harassment, the organization of an effective lobbying movement within the state, and the creation of coalitions with similarly marginalized or oppressed groups. Trans has also begun holding weekly support meetings.

The first issue of the newsletter *Trans* appeared on newsstands in February and includes, to quote Jess Bell, one of its Editors, "news, views, and political spews." In addition to poetry, artwork, and a review of the top trans-related stories of the past year, the editors also published an up-to-the-minute analysis of the Sean O'Neil trial.

O'Neil, born as Sharon Clark, has a "fluid approach to gender and lives primarily as a man." He was charged with the sexual assault of four girls while in his teens, even though sexual encounters were all mutually consensual.

Though faced with a possible prison term of 32 years, O'Neil was finally sentenced to 90 days in the county jail, with specific instructions not to be placed in a cell with either women or men. Bell writes of the verdict: "This decision is in some ways revolutionary. The judge recognized and acknowledged O'Neil as a third gender, not man/not woman. Trans activists are very pleased with the outcome."

Trans promises to provide yet another important voice to ongoing discussions of gender and sexuality in Vermont. As its mission statement proudly proclaims, "Transgendered lives in Transgendered hands, NOW!"

For more information about *Trans*, or to contribute material to upcoming issues, write to TRANS, PO Box 5687, Burlington VT 05402. ▼

**Transsexual
Transplant Finds
Marriage Law
Loophole**

Missouri- A Missouri transsexual concerned about possible complications on IRS tax forms found a loophole in the state's marriage laws along the way.

"With the obvious changes going on in my life, I decided to contact the IRS to find out just what my filing status should be, seeing as how I changed name and sex on the 29th of December, 1995," said the man-now-woman. "They decided that I must file as Jessica, female. They also decided that, depending on how the State of Missouri handles it, I must also file jointly with my wife, Eva."

Jessica called a number of agencies in the State of Missouri and finally ended up speaking with the Attorney General's office. After some research into current state law, they determined the following:

That Jessica (while male) and Eva had been legally married in 1992 in Germany and received an International Marriage License; that Missouri finds same-sex marriages illegal and would dissolve marriages in the event of change of sex of one partner in the marriage; that Missouri, however, is unable to dissolve marriages based on International Marriage Licenses; and that therefore, according to the clerk investigating the records, Jessica and Eva have the only legal same-sex marriage in the State of Missouri.

"I never realized that this would be this much fun," said Jessica on learning of the loophole. If only those fighting the legal battles over same-sex marriages in Hawai'i could say the same thing... ▼



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