

# "Defense of Marriage Act" Now Law

Continued from front page

In Vermont, the Board of Directors of the state's American Civil Liberties Union has voiced its opposition to DOMA, stating that "the right to marry should not be denied by the state on the basis of race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or any similar category. Whether or not to marry should be solely a matter of personal choice. Laws forbidding marriage except between a man and a woman are no more acceptable than those forbidding marriage between people of different races or religions."

Just after ENDA was defeated, Jeffords contended that the Senate couldn't take an effective stand against prejudice unless it stood against all prejudices, including those targeting sexual orientation. When questioned on the radio about the apparent contradictions between his vote for DOMA and his subsequent statements about ENDA, Jeffords claimed that America simply wasn't yet "ready" for the idea of gay and lesbian marriages. "It'll take time," he replied.

Keith Goslant, one of the liaisons to the state government for the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights, had mixed feelings about the votes. "I thank Jim Jeffords and Patrick Leahy for saying to the Senate what Vermont already knew; if you are a good employee, if you do your job well, then 'who' or 'what' you are does not matter. However, I invite them to come home to Vermont, see our families, the commitments we have made, and then ask them to explain why they are worth less."

Senatorial delegates from California, Hawaii, Illinois, and Massachusetts all opposed DOMA while its sponsors relied heavily on God and the Bible to defend it. Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV), who co-sponsored the bill, went so far as to say that "the permanent relationship between men and women is a keystone to the stability, strength and health of human society," seemingly ignoring the fact that the heterosexual divorce rate in the United States currently wavers near the 50% mark.

Goslant responded, "It gets tiring to have to constantly explain and defend ourselves in the face of the lies, hatred and fear perpetuated by the religious right. Whether we do or do not 'marry' has no impact on their lives. It does not change or diminish the privileges they are granted. It does not threaten their families. Their lies, however, generate more anger and fear. The price of fear can be our lives."

While the passage of DOMA comes as no surprise to many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people, the defeat of ENDA merely underscores the political hypocrisy of which many accuse Republicans and Democrats alike. Current polls show that four out of five American voters favored passage of ENDA, a percentage not reflected in the Senate's vote.

Massachusetts Democrat Ted Kennedy, one of the original sponsors of ENDA, expressed optimism for the bill's future. "I'm hopeful this will be one of the first orders of business in the next Congress, and I believe we can pass it," he said. ▼

## Regular Meetings

### AA MEETINGS:

**BURLINGTON** — Sundays, 5 p.m., Christ Church Presbyterian, Redstone Campus, University of Vermont.

— Thursdays, 7 p.m., St. Paul's Cathedral, Cherry Street, Burlington. Call 658-4221.

**CONCORD (NH)** — Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., First Congregational Church, North Main and Washington Streets.

**KEENE (NH)** — Saturdays, 7-8:30 p.m. Call (603) 357-4300.

**MANCHESTER (NH)** — Sundays, 7:30 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Church, 669 Union St.

**NASHUA (NH)** — Mondays, 7:30 p.m., Nashua Unitarian Church.

### BISEXUAL NETWORK OF VERMONT

Last Friday of each month, 6:30 p.m., City Market, Burlington. Call 658-9544 or 863-3062.

Discussion group: first Sunday of each month, 4:00 p.m., Outright Vermont offices. Starting November. For more info, call 849-6638.

### COLLEGE GROUPS:

**Middlebury GLBA** — Sundays, 8:00 p.m., Chellis House.

**UVM GLBA** — Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. For location and/or more details, call 656-0699.

### GAY GUY GET-TOGETHERS

The Gay Guy Get Togethers are currently under renovation. For an update, call 254-8263.

### HIV/AIDS MEETINGS

**BRATTLEBORO AREA AIDS PROJECT** — For PLWA, friends, and families. 4th Floor, 67 Main St., Brattleboro. Wednesdays, 12:30-1:30 p.m. Call Maryann at 254-8263.

**SUPPORT GROUP FOR HIV+/AIDS WOMEN** — Mondays, 3:30-5:30 p.m., Greenfield MA. Call (413) 773-8888.

**VERMONT CARES** — Support group for gay/bi men living with HIV/AIDS, Mondays, 5:30-7 p.m. Call 863-2437.

**SUPPORT GROUP FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEN** living with HIV/AIDS — Alternate Tuesdays, Call Ayana at 863-2437 for dates, times, and locations.

**WASHINGTON COUNTY AREA SUPPORT GROUP** for people living with HIV/AIDS — Second and fourth Thursdays, 2-3:30 p.m. Call 229-4560 for location and more info. Support group for family and friends of people living with HIV/AIDS, Thursdays, 5-6:30 p.m. Call 863-8162.

**HUNTINGTON OPEN WOMEN'S LAND (HOWL)**  
Sunday brunches, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Call 864-5595.

**KEENE GAY MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP**  
Tuesdays. Unitarian Universalist Church, 69 Washington St. Keene, NH. Call Brian at (800) 639-7903.

**MYRIAD NETWORK**  
For g/l/b/t's in the Berkshires. Fridays, 7 p.m., First Congregational Church, Williamstown MA. Write Box 288, Williamstown MA 01267.

**NETWORK NORTH**  
**Cheap Movie Nights**, Tuesdays, 6:15 p.m. at Wilton Mall Food Court, Wilton NY.  
**Coffee Nights**, Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m. at Uncommon Grounds, Saratoga Springs NY.  
**Coffee Mornings**, Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. at Uncommon Grounds, Saratoga Springs NY.

**OUTRIGHT VERMONT**  
GLBQ youth groups (under 23). Fridays, 7-9 p.m. Young men's group (under 23): Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m. Call (800) GLB-CHAT.

**P-FLAG OF CENTRAL VERMONT**  
3rd Sundays, 1 p.m., 2nd Floor Chapel, Unitarian Universalist Church, Montpelier (use School Street entrance). Call Jan at 479-9246.

**SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES FOR MEN (SAM)**  
Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m. at Hotel Coolidge, White River Junction. Call (603) 543-4136.

**STRAIGHT SPOUSES OF G/L/B PARTNERS**  
Support group, every third Tuesday at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Northampton MA. Call Jane at (413) 625-6033.



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