

# The Gospel According to Gabbard

*Editor's note: This article is abridged here by permission of the author and first appeared in Honolulu Weekly in January of 1999. Although it is OITM's policy to publish only original material, we felt an exception was in order in light of Mike Gabbard's recent mailbox-to-mailbox campaign in Vermont.*

BY CHAD BLAIR

When Hawai'i voters decided by a two-thirds majority last November that gays and lesbians did not deserve marriage rights, the state sent a message worldwide: Hawai'i is not a paradise of tolerance.

The chief Hawai'i spokesperson in opposition to homosexual marriage has been Mike Gabbard, 51, founder and chair of the Alliance for Traditional Marriage. Gabbard's message: Homosexuality is unnatural, as well as morally and spiritually repugnant.

A devoted follower of a religious group that has received attention in years past for its members' involvement in conservative (some might say reactionary) political efforts, Gabbard has made a crusade out of his belief that Hawai'i must "Stop Promoting Homosexuality," as the organization he co-founded in 1991 is titled. He has been untiring and forceful in the articulation of this agenda, despite the attacks on him — and his business endeavors — this platform has inspired.

While Mormons, the Roman Catholic church and Christian Religious Right organizations supported the same-sex marriage ban with enormous financial resources, it was Gabbard, a devotee of Krishna — tanned and fit, wearing a floral lei and a Hawaiian print shirt — who personified the drive. Gabbard's visage graced many a television news program last fall, and his words made headlines. Even *Time* magazine quoted him.

On TV, where most people see him, Gabbard always appears confident and pleasant. Yet while he professes much "compassion" for homosexuals, this compassion is based on the belief that lesbians and gays have chosen a lifestyle that is perverse and decadent — one that could lead to the dispersion of perverse and decadent ideals throughout society.

During the election season, television commercials, many paid for by Save Traditional Marriage '98, aired suggesting that gay marriage could lead to other "unnatural" alliances — between people and animals, for example. Gabbard served on STM's steering committee. Other spots warned that legalization of gay marriage would lead school curricula to reflect pro-gay sensibilities.

Why has Mike Gabbard made a life's work out of this crusade to convince Hawai'i's people that homosexuality is wrong.

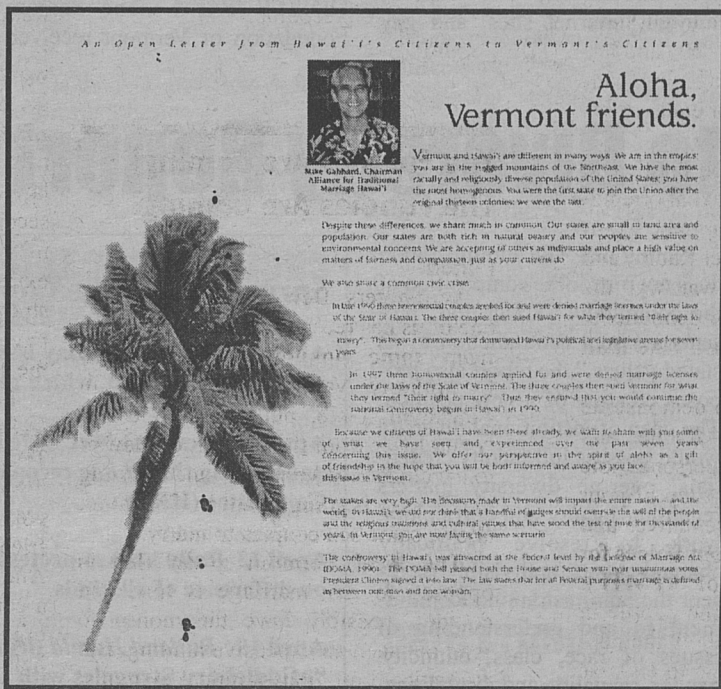
"One morning I woke up to a world in which an unnatural, unhealthy, immoral activity, which was taking thousands of lives, was being portrayed in the media as moral, natural, healthy and normal," he replied. "I believe that all of our problems — be they environmental, crime, health, economic, wars, etc. — can be traced to people holding on to and living by

[a] hedonistic and therefore selfish world view. ... This is why [homosexuality] is such an important issue to me."

Gabbard is a man of contrasts and contradictions. He openly discusses sexual practices that rarely see the light of day, yet he is secretive about his own livelihood. His views about gay lifestyles are heavily formed by mainstream Judeo-Christian teachings, yet Gabbard himself is a follower of a

*The Gay Deception* is not an ambiguous program: An opening video montage, accompanied by dramatic-sounding music, shows gays and lesbians kissing, touching and holding hands. Fear of gay adoption is implied, as is the increasing (and, by implication, unwanted) presence of gays in mainstream America.

As the montage ends, Gabbard himself comes on the screen, the Pacific Ocean crashing on the



fringe group of a minority religion in America. He believes in democratic processes, yet he also thinks government should acknowledge majority views that suppress the freedoms of a minority. Gabbard cites extensive research supporting his views on gays, yet he ignores a growing body of scientific research — biological, psychological and social — showing human sexual orientation to be innate, or, perhaps, irrelevant.

Just who is Mike Gabbard...really?

## The "Gay Deception"

Gabbard himself is hardly a foaming-at-the-mouth monster. Rather, he is soft-spoken and clear-headed, and he smiles beatifically at supporters as well as detractors.

He can be seen each Sunday on his cable-access show.

## The Deli Dispute

Born in American Samoa, Gabbard obtained a bachelor's in English from Sonoma State University in California and a master's in community college administration from Oregon State

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## Getting Active

- Contact Doug Racine at (802) 826-2226 or [dracine@state.vt.us](mailto:dracine@state.vt.us)
- Contact Michael Obuchowski at 72 Akinson St, Bellows Falls, VT 05101-1321, (802) 463-3904; or [speaker@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:speaker@leg.state.vt.us)
- Donate to Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force's education/information campaign by check or money order payable to: VFMTF to PO Box 1312, Middlebury, VT 05763.
- Sign the Marriage Resolution or get information at [www.vtfreetomarry.org](http://www.vtfreetomarry.org)
- For the contact information for your local paper or regional VFMTF representative, or for help getting started with a letter or petition, contact Sandi or Bobbi at (802) 362-2959 or [whitacre@vermontel.net](mailto:whitacre@vermontel.net).

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