



**Our Day in the Sun:
Pride '99**

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**A FAERIE RADICAL
BIRTHDAY PARTY**



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*A long time ago,
in an op/ed section
far, far away...*
QUEER WARS, PAGE 7

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VERMONT'S FORUM FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

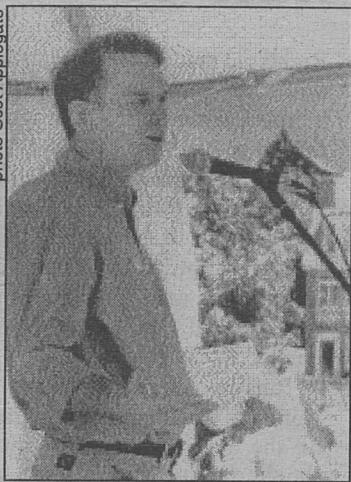
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WWW.VTPRIDE.ORG

Victory Fund Backs Flanagan in US Senate Bid

Photo Scot Applegate



Vermont State Auditor Ed Flanagan spoke at this year's Pride Rally.

In its first-ever endorsement of a US Senate candidate, the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund has announced its support of Vermont state auditor Edward Flanagan in his bid to unseat incumbent Republican Senator James Jeffords.

The organization calls Flanagan "the first truly competitive openly gay candidate for a US Senate seat."

Currently the nation's first and only openly gay statewide elected official, Flanagan would become the first such US senator in history by winning in the 2000 elections.

"By acting now, we have a truly historic opportunity to give members of the US Senate the vital experience of working with a dedicated, exemplary colleague who happens to be openly gay," said Victory Fund Executive Director Brian K. Bond. "Ed Flanagan will stand up to the special interests in Washington, speak up for the citizens of Vermont and help our country live up to the promise of equal rights under the law for all Americans."

"As a Vermonter working for Vermont's working families, I have been a voice for taxpayers and consumers whose health care and retirement security have been threatened by needless government waste," said Flanagan. "I deeply believe that fiscal responsibility and social responsibility go hand in hand. Vermonters deserve a government in Washington that knows the value of their hard-

FLANAGAN, p 18

Health Department Changes ASO Funding Rules State Restricts Money for Clients with Confidential Files

by Barbara Dozetos

Vermont's AIDS service organizations face cuts in funding unless they agree to a procedure some believe would compromise client confidentiality.

The Vermont Department of Health informed ASOs last month that new clients can no longer opt to keep their files from being reviewed during state inspections of agencies' offices.

Organizations may still allow new clients to restrict state access to their files, but will no longer be eligible for the annual \$1100 per-client administrative funding for such clients.

Some ASOs and HIV/AIDS consumer organizations oppose the change, saying that clients should have the option of restricting access to the sensitive information often contained in their files.

Many feel that allowing state employees to read their files threatens their privacy. This fear is especially prevalent in Chittenden County, where the state's reviewer is based.

This potential for breach of con-

fidentiality was raised by the Vermont People with AIDS Coalition after the DoH's September, 1998, site visits. Chuck Kletecka of PWAC acknowledged that the reviews are intended for quality assurance, but expressed concern that "people didn't know that their charts might be reviewed."

Clients of Vermont CARES, Chittenden County's primary ASO, may be those most affected by the policy change. Executive director Tim Palmer said, "Our work is very much about empowerment; our clients are very active in the community. Imagine being in a meeting with a state employee who just read your case record."

In December, 1998, the Department of Health responded to privacy concerns by allowing ASOs to ask client permission for departmental review of each file. Agencies were assured that even those denying access would be counted for funding purposes.

The new policy maintains the department's funding commitment to clients who have already denied state access. But, new clients who refuse permission

will not be counted in future corresponding funding calculations.

The change comes on the heels of a legislative battle over medical records reporting. Despite the DoH's push for names reporting in HIV/AIDS cases, the Vermont legislature recently approved a unique identifier system designed to protect clients' anonymity.

The funding change "strikes me as a circuitous route to gain access to the names of people with HIV," says Palmer. "It is unfortunate that the state has decided that the only way a person with HIV can gain access to services is by giving up the right to privacy and confidentiality."

Hinesburg representative Bill Lippert said Vermont law is sketchy on medical records confidentiality, but felt legislature made its preference clear in the past session. "If there's any intent to use this as a way to circumvent the legislative decision, it's an outrageous breach of policy and authority," said Lippert.

Vermont state epidemiologist Peter Galbraith said it is not clients' names the department is after. "We don't require ASOs to

provide us with names of clients," he said. "ASOs have the option of blocking out names and other personal identifiers in a file."

But that's not a realistic option, say the ASOs; photocopying each file and blacking out anything that might identify a client could prove a serious drain on agency resources. "I would have to have a staff person dedicated solely to that process and still couldn't guarantee that all identifying information was removed from each file," said Palmer.

Galbraith maintains that the Department of Health's bottom line is, indeed, the bottom line. "In order to assure financial accountability in all the programs we fund, we perform audits during which we review the case load," he said.

ASOs are still hoping for a departmental change of heart. An official statement from a June 28 emergency meeting of the Vermont CARES board of directors declared they would "continue to seek to resolve this issue in a way that protects the confidentiality and privacy of people with HIV and AIDS." ▼

New England Senators Fight Discrimination

WASHINGTON — A bipartisan assembly of congressional lawmakers led by Vermont's James Jeffords, Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut and Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts reintroduced the Employment Non-Discrimination Act on the floor of the US Senate in June.

ENDA would add sexual orientation to age, disability, gender, national origin, race, and religion as categories protected from discrimination under federal law.

In the 25 years since the first civil rights bill to protect gays and lesbians from discrimination was introduced in the US Congress, ENDA is the only such bill that's ever received a floor vote in either house. It fell one vote shy of passage in the Senate in

September, 1996, around the same time as the Senate overwhelmingly passed the Defense of Marriage Act.

The bill is largely the product of the Human Rights

"For the first time we see support coming from key lawmakers in leadership positions in both parties."

Campaign. "We have seen growing support for ENDA since it was first introduced in 1994," said Winnie

Stachelberg, HRC political director. "For the first time we see support coming from key lawmakers in leadership positions in both parties."

President Clinton, who first endorsed ENDA in October 1995, said the bill is about "ensuring that Americans, regardless of their sexual orientation, can find and keep their jobs based on their ability and the quality of their work. It is designed to protect the rights of all Americans to participate in the job market without fear of unfair discrimination." Clinton reiterated his support in his 1999 State of the Union address.

Gender identity and gender expression are not included as a protected category in

ENDA, p 24

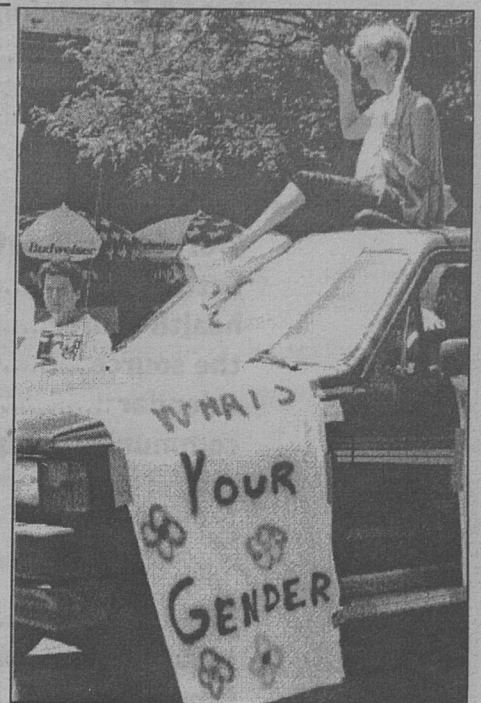


Photo Max Stroud

A record-breaking crowd turned out for Pride festivities in Burlington on June 19. The 1999 celebrations marked the 30th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York City. For more Vermont pride coverage, see page 10.