

## ■ Sexual Orientation Hate Crime Protection Passes the US Senate

With little fanfare and no debate, the Senate used a voice vote late last month to approve legislation adding sexual orientation, gender and disability to the categories of people protected under federal hate-crime law. Currently, the law only covers race, color, religion or national origin.

"This is the first concrete action taken by either chamber since America buried Matthew Shepard, James Byrd Jr., Billy Jack Gaither, and many transgendered people whose names and faces do not make the newspapers," said Kerry Lobel, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "It is a good first step. But we have a long way to go and we must now turn to the House and tell our representatives how critically important this legislation is. In short, we must keep up the heat."

A bipartisan group of senators led the successful move to pass the

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## ■ Vermont Human Rights Commission Offers Toll Free Access

A grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development may make it easier for Vermonters to get help with complaints of discrimination and civil rights violations.

The State of Vermont Human Rights Commission has begun toll-free service for both telephones and TTYs used by people with hearing impairments.

Because the commission serves the entire state from a single office in Montpelier, most contacts are made by phone, said Harvey Golubock, the agency's executive director. "We receive almost a thousand telephone inquiries a year and hope the toll-free number will make access to the Commission easier for everyone," he said.

The state's HRC helps Vermonters understand their protections and obligations under state civil rights law that prevent discrimination on a number of grounds, including sexual orientation. Its other free services include investigation of discrimination complaints, assistance in solving disputes, and filing lawsuits. ▼

See Source, page 20, for HRC's toll-free number and other contact information.

## Flanagan Gets Strong Fundraising Start

Vermont's openly gay US senatorial candidate is making a strong early showing in fundraising for the 2000 campaign.

According to his campaign's Federal Election Commission financial report, Vermont Auditor of Accounts Ed Flanagan had raised \$221,485.81 as of June 30, 1999.

Flanagan said \$215,353 has come from individual contributors and \$6,034 from political actions committees.

"It definitely says something that in the first few months of this campaign, Ed Flanagan has

already raised more than two-thirds of the amount garnered by the last challenger in her entire campaign," noted Brian K. Bond, executive director of the Victory Fund.

Jan Backus expects to report about \$11,000 in contributions next week. She announced her bid for the senate seat in June. She called Flanagan's financial support "impressive" in a recent *Rutland Herald* interview.

Republican incumbent James Jeffords is expected to file his campaign finance reports within the next week. Reports from the

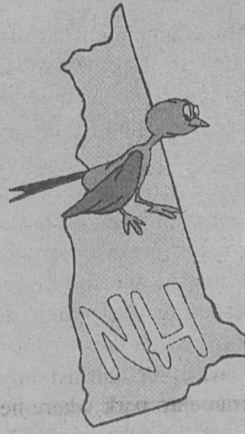
committees indicate that Jeffords has accumulated at least \$101,500 from PACs since early 1999.

Backus, Jeffords' Democratic opposition in 1994, spent \$308,069 during the entire campaign race, which saw Jeffords held to 50 percent of the vote.

"Ed Flanagan is a great candidate whose strong early financial showing is already raising more than a few eyebrows," said Bond. "Political strategists in Washington believe this will be one of the most competitive races next year for the US Senate." ▼

## NH Beefs Up Civil Rights Protections

CONCORD, NH — New legislation in New Hampshire strengthens the state's civil rights act by requiring the attorney general to enforce all civil rights violations.



The law, signed by Governor Jeanne Shaheen last month, protects people who are subject to actual or threatened physical force or violence because of their race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender, or disability.

"This is a great day for all the people of New Hampshire who live in

fear of society because they are different," said Senator Rick Trombly, one of the bill's main sponsors. "It is about time that gays and lesbians have legal recourse against hate crimes that are motivated by homophobic and ignorant people."

Penalties established for civil rights violations include fines up to \$5,000 per violation, restitution to victims, and court-issued injunctions for future protection of victims. The new law also allows restraining orders to be issued in the case of civil rights violations and establishes a criminal penalty of a class A misdemeanor for violating the order.

"This is a tremendous step forward for the gay and lesbian community," said Trombly. "Allowing gays and lesbians to get restraining orders against anyone who personally threatens them or threatens damage to their personal property because they are gay sends a clear message that New Hampshire will not tolerate hate and violence." ▼

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## MOUNTAIN PRIDE MEDIA WEB CONSULTANT & TRAINER

Mountain Pride Media seeks an individual to serve as **WEB CONSULTANT & TRAINER** for a one-year grant-funded project. The individual must be willing to volunteer approximately 150 hours over the next 12 months. A modest stipend will be provided.

The **Web Consultant & Trainer** will work as a consultant, on behalf of MPM, with three partner agencies (VT Cares, Outright Vermont, and VCLGR) that expect to improve their online presence as a result of this grant-funded effort. The Web Consultant should be interested in managing this outreach effort, helping these agencies evaluate the current status of their websites, identifying achievable goals for improving their websites, and working with their designates to reach these goals by providing tech support and training as needed. Finally, the Web Consultant will help Mountain Pride Media in the reporting process for the grant.

The ideal candidate should have some experience with web design and enjoy working with people.

If interested, please forward a letter of interest and resume to:  
Roland F. Palmer, Web Project Committee Chair  
161 Sherman Hollow Road - Hinesburg, VT 05461-3117 or  
rfpvt@hotmail.com

[www.vtpride.org](http://www.vtpride.org)