

opinion

POLITICAL VIEWS FROM THE KINGDOM by brendan hadash



Getting Rid of Lott

Vermont's Senate race could decide the future of gay/lesbian rights in this country for years to come. As I mentioned last month, we must do anything we can to get rid of homophobic Republican Senate majority leader Trent Lott. In addition to the five open seats, eight seats are currently considered too close to call. The outcome of these races will determine which party will run the US Senate.

Looking at the eight close races, the bad news is that the senator most likely to be defeated is one of our greatest supporters. The good news is that six of these endangered senators are enemies of the gay/lesbian community.

Virginia: The Bad News: Senator Charles Robb (D) is such a strong supporter of gay/lesbian rights that he even voted against DOMA, the anti-gay marriage bill. He is losing to Gov. George Allen (R) in a recent poll 38 percent to 49 percent.

Missouri: Senator John Ashcroft (R) who always votes against us will be faced by incumbent Governor Mel Carnahan, who on July first signed Missouri's hate crimes bill — only the fourth in this country to include gender identity. If I had any extra money,

I would probably send it to support any opponent of Ashcroft.

Pennsylvania: This is one state

for us about 60 percent of the time: US Rep. David Minge and Ex-Rep. Tim Penny. In a recent poll

The good news is that six of these endangered senators are enemies of the gay/lesbian community.

where the primary may be more important for us than the general election. Two possible Democratic contenders are former US Rep. Peter Kostmeyer, who voted 100 percent in favor of gays and lesbians, and current Rep. Ron Klink who votes for us only a third of the time. Republican incumbent Rick Santorum voted a third of the time for us in the most recent congress.

Michigan: Feiger, Dr. Kevorkian's lawyer, possibly running as an independent may make it difficult for US Rep. Debbie Stabenow (D), who voted 100 percent for us, in her bid to unseat Sen. Spencer Abraham (R) who voted 17 percent for us.

Minnesota: Republican Senator Rod Grams voted for us 0 percent of the time last year. Two possible Democratic opponents have voted

Grams led Minge 43 percent to 35 percent and led Penny 41 percent to 40 percent.

Delaware: A recent poll shows Senator William Roth (R) losing to incumbent governor and former US Rep. Tom Carper (D) 38 percent to 48 percent. This is very good news for us since Roth in recent years has voted for us only about 36 percent of the time whereas Carper voted for our rights 90 percent of the time.

Washington: Senator Slade Gorton (R) votes for us slightly over half the time. I don't know much about his potential opponent US Rep Maria Cantwell other than that the HRC (a national gay/lesbian rights group) has sent her money in the past.

Vermont: Jeffords was one of two Republicans among the 25

senators whose 1997-98 records rated perfect scores from the gay Human Rights Campaign. He is the lead sponsor for ENDA, the bill to ban anti gay discrimination in employment. He is one of our biggest Republican allies. However, he has made two votes that I find it hard to forgive. He voted for DOMA and he votes for homophobic Trent Lott as senate majority leader.

Gays and lesbians have a difficult decision to make in Vermont. If Jeffords, as a Republican, can not get the Northeast Dairy Compact (which helps Vermont farmers) passed in a Republican

Bernie is 100 percent for gay and lesbian rights and voted against DOMA. If Bernie does not run, we have our own openly gay Ed Flanagan (State Auditor) who will run against Jeffords, in addition to Jan Backus who ran against him last time. There is a case to be made for having a Republican ally if the Republicans keep control of the senate. However, if the Republicans remain in charge, our civil rights are in deep trouble for years because Senator Lott would make sure that the next Supreme Court members are our foes.

It is a little too early for me to make an endorsement for Vermont's Senate race since I am not sure who Jeffords' opponent will be. I just know that I would have a hard time voting for Jeffords if there is any chance of the Democrats taking over the Senate and getting rid of Lott. ▼

Brendan Hadash is the minister of the St. Johnsbury Universalist Church.

run senate, he will show himself ineffective and I believe that Bernie Sanders will run against him.

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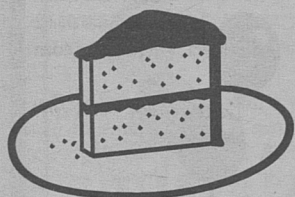
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