

news

Kerin continued from page one

seriously. "The media will focus not on the fact that this person is running with any sort of agenda, but on the fact that this person changed sex," he said.

Kerin, a civil engineer with a Juris Doctor from Vermont Law School, opposes government control of health-care decisions, most favored nation trading status for China, gun control, and Vermont's new civil union law, which she labels a "separate parallel to marriage."

"I resent the implication that the amputation of my male parts has caused me to think like a female, which therefore unfits me for political office," said Kerin responding to a recent news story in the Burlington Free Press that noted her "confusing sexual identity." "Sex is between the legs, gender is between the ears," she said. "There are a herd of law professors and other professionals that will tell anyone that I am not confused."

About her newly announced

opponent, Kerin said, "Is he a Democrat running as a Republican? If he is a good friend of Governor Dean, what will Republicans that support Ruth Dwyer think of him?"

Campaigning as "The People's Voice in Washington," Kerin favors increased privacy rights, restructuring of public assistance, tax simplification, campaign finance reform, and required studies in geography, history, and government in high schools. "I am an open person," said Kerin. "Many may not like what I say, but they will get the truth nonetheless."

Kerin's political experience has been serving as a delegate to the Republican National Conventions in 1984 and 1992. In 1994, she lost a Republican primary in her attempt to represent Montpelier in Vermont's House of Representatives. ▼



Gabriel Q, artist performer, and Radical Faerie brought his own garden to the Pride parade in Burlington on June 17. More photos on page 4 and on Mountain Pride Media's Web site, www.mountainpridemedia.org.

Photo: Max Stroud

Opposition continued from page one

keeping its grassroots network across the state active to help draw out votes and campaign volunteers during the September primary and the November general election.

Sheltra has been one of the most outspoken critics of gay marriage — and now of civil unions — for at least three years. She said she formed STARS, Standing Together and Reclaiming the State, because she believed lawmakers had ignored the will of the people.

"The goal of STARS is to educate the people of Vermont on how they can take back the reins of power from those who abused it by passing the civil union bill," Sheltra said. "So many people are disgusted by what happened — and this November the voters will have their say about our state legalizing homosexual marriage."

Sheltra has recruited the son of Randall Terry, the prominent anti-abortion activist who became a lightning rod when he came to Vermont over the winter to oppose gay marriage, to serve on her board.

In addition to Jamiel Terry, the board includes state Rep. Neil Randall, a Libertarian from Bradford, and Sheltra's sons, Andrew, 25, and Matt, 17.

Both Sheltra and Terry said they expected to draw salaries from the committee. Terry said he hoped to raise at least \$50,000, and Sheltra said she expected 30 legislative candidates to run under the STARS banner.

To be accepted in Sheltra's group, though, candidates will have to agree to four criteria, she said:

"They must agree to repeal civil unions.

"They must agree to impeach (Vermont Supreme

Court) justices.

"They must be pro-life.

"They must support" constitutional amendments that would define marriage as a union between one man and woman, and that would prohibit the benefits of marriages from being granted to unmarried couples.

But the political action committee isn't all that Sheltra is working on during her spare time away from the Legislature. She is one of the plaintiffs who sued seeking to overturn the law based on the betting pool.

The plaintiffs allege a House betting pool gave lawmakers a conflict of interest, and that 14 supporters should have been disqualified from voting on the measure.

"If the members engaged in the betting pools were disqualified from voting, the outcome of the vote in the House would have been different and the bill would have been defeated," the lawsuit says.

On the day of the betting pool, the bill received preliminary approval on a vote of 76-69.

The lawsuit also claims that state Rep. William Lippert had a conflict of interest and should have been disqualified from voting on the bill. The suit does not elaborate on the conflict, but it apparently refers to the fact that Lippert is the only openly gay member of

the Vermont Legislature.

The originator of the betting pool, Rep. Ann Seibert, D-Norwich, said she had made an error in judgment but called the lawsuit silly.

"Anyone who thinks that would have changed the vote really has no grasp on reality," Seibert said.

Although a Washington County judge refused to grant a preliminary injunction against the civil union law on June 26, the group has refiled, claiming harm to town clerks who face fines or imprisonment for refusing to issue civil union licenses. ▼

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One of the 30 Days of Pride events was a picnic in Middlebury on June 4, attended by more than two dozen people

Photo: Carrie Rampf

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