



Give the People Light and they will find their own way.

# The Wisconsin Light

## Helms Mentions Wreck Room Bar On Senate Floor

[Milwaukee]- Milwaukee's Wreck Room was mentioned on the floor of the U.S. Senate as part of the debate on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The reference was made by Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) whose speech was printed in the July 11, 1990 issue of the *Congressional Record*.

Helms was attempting to have an amendment to ADA accepted by the Senate which would have allowed food industry employers to discriminate against those with HIV infection and AIDS.

In his speech Helms maintained that "the public perception" of AIDS as an "easily communicable disease," could bring ruin to small businesses if people believed an employee was infected. He then cited five examples of which the Wreck Room was the first.

"Wisconsin: The Wreck Room, a popular Milwaukee homosexual bar, nearly failed after a manager and another employee died of AIDS. The owner reported, 'We went from being one of the most popular bars in Milwaukee to close to zero. There were times when I wasn't sure we were going to make it.'"

Helms then went on to name the other four places (all restaurants) located in Alabama, Texas, Indiana and Kentucky which, he maintained had failed or lost significant business because it came to be believed that someone employed there had HIV infection or AIDS.

Bill Kindt, owner of the Wreck Room said that Helms' statements concerning the bar were wrong. While a former owner and also the manager had succumbed to AIDS, no employee had done so.

Further, Kindt said that he had not made the statement attributed to "the owner" by Helms and had no idea where Helms had gotten it.

Helms amendment ultimately failed of passage. The Wreck Room is, as it has been, a popular bar.

## Bush To Sign AIDS Anti-Discrimination Bill Into Law

[Washington, D.C.]- In a stunning setback for Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Congressman William Dannemeyer (R-CA), the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate reversed their previous votes allowing discrimination against food-handlers with AIDS and gave final approval to landmark legislation giving full federal protection against discrimination to people with AIDS and HIV-disease. President Bush has stated that he will sign the bill shortly.

The turnaround votes in Congress followed a month-long national campaign orchestrated by the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) to overturn the previous Congressional votes. HRCF's effort which is estimated to have cost over \$25,000, "snatched victory from the jaws of defeat," according to one Washington observer.

The fate of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) had been in doubt since the House passed an amendment to the bill in May giving employers the right to reassign or dismiss employees with HIV who came into contact with food. In June, a motion introduced by Helms to instruct the Senate conferees to accept the discriminatory language was passed in the Senate.

A House and Senate Conference Committee rejected the language, however, and further floor fights over the language were expected. To insure that the discriminatory language was not reinserted in the bill, HRCF orchestrated its national campaign to lobby Congress against the food handlers language

## State Lacks Funds To Support AIDS Caseload Increase



A capacity crowd left Madison's Luther Memorial Church on July 21 after attending a memorial service for Rodney Sheel.

## Drink Up! No Boycott of Miller Beer Planned In Milwaukee

[Milwaukee]- The call for a national boycott of Miller beer, apparently begun by ACT-UP San Francisco in July, seems to have fizzled.

The reason for the boycott as explained by Bill Haskel of San Francisco ACT-UP was to put pressure on Philip Morris, the largest consumer products company in the world. Philip Morris has given large donations to Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) and owns Miller Brewery as well as Kraft/General Foods, Oscar Meyer and a number of other companies.

Thomas F. Reed, Corporate Issues Director for Miller Brewing said firmly that "You are not supporting Jesse Helms by buying Miller beer." He added, "not one cent" will wind up in Helms pocket.

backed by Helms.

HRCF contacted thousands of Gay and Lesbian businesses around the country asking them to contact their senators and representatives. Tens of thousands of "Speak Out" messages were sent to Congress. Tim McFeeley, HRCF Executive Director, lobbyist Karen Friedman and others participated in radio call-in shows throughout the country.

When the bill came before the Senate for final passage, Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) — who had supported Helms' earlier proposal — offered an alternative amendment that would allow employers to remove employees from food handling jobs only when they have infectious diseases that, unlike AIDS, are transmitted by food. Those diseases would be placed on a list each year by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Helms offered an amendment to the Hatch language requiring AIDS to be included on the list. After extensive debate, the Helms amendment was rejected 61-39.

When the bill reached the House floor, Congressman Dannemeyer moved to send the bill back to the Conference Committee with instructions to accept the Helms proposal. His motion was rejected 224-180, and the bill was approved 337-28.

President Bush will sign ADA into law on July 26, 1990. The signing ceremony is scheduled to take place in the White House at about 9:00 a.m. Lesbian and Gay activists have been invited by the White House to attend. Among these are McFeeley and Friedman.

The money to Helms, Reed explained, was given by PhilPAC, a political action committee whose members volunteer their time and money. "Miller's profit does not go to PhilPAC," Reed said.

In a letter published in the San Francisco *Sentinel*, Reed, speaking on behalf of Miller Brewing Co. said, "We (Miller) disagree with Sen. Jesse Helms on human rights issues." The letter went on to say that "Nationally, in the last 30 months alone, Miller and Philip Morris have donated more than \$600,000 to AIDS research and AIDS-related projects throughout the country.

Miller is well-known as a strong supporter of AIDS fundraisers in Milwaukee, the Milwaukee AIDS Project and Gay and Lesbian events.

Doug Nelson, Executive Director of MAP said, "Miller has proven itself to be a friend to all of us who are fighting the AIDS epidemic. Nelson went on to say that "Miller was the first corporation to sponsor the Wisconsin AIDS Walk and has given the largest donation of \$25,000. This corporate underwriting of the Walk is essential to its success. Miller surely deserves our support."

Miller's Equal Employment Opportunity policy includes protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

As of press time, the boycott is being supported only in Dallas and by Washington, D.C.'s ACT-UP. Molly Sidhe, Editor of *Just Out* in Portland, OR, said that Portland bars are considering it. It has been reported that ACT-UP Milwaukee voted not to go along with the boycott.

## Parents, Friends Chapter Forms In Appleton

[Appleton, WI]- A new chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG) has been formed in the Fox River Valley according to George and Harriet Bruyn, the organizers of the chapter.

In a letter the Bruyn's said that "We are a fledgling organization in this area, just beginning to reach out to families in need of support and information about a Gay or Lesbian family member or friend.

The new P-FLAG chapter may be reached at P.O. Box 75, Little Chute, WI 54140 or by calling (414) 749-1629 in Appleton or, in Green Bay, (414) 499-7080. The chapter meets monthly.

[Milwaukee]- "AIDS is a time bomb that has not yet exploded," said State Representative David Clarenbach (D-Madison). Clarenbach was speaking of Wisconsin in testimony given before a public hearing of the Assembly Committee on Health.

The Committee, chaired by Rep. Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee) met Tuesday, July 24, 1990 at the Milwaukee AIDS Project (MAP). It was the first time ever for such a meeting of a legislative committee to be held in an AIDS service agency.

Clarenbach, who is the author or co-author of all AIDS legislation in Wisconsin said the state had reacted "with reason" to the epidemic, but noted the over 400 cases now and the likelihood of significant increase over the decade.

Dr. James Vergeront, Director of Wisconsin's AIDS/HIV Program told the committee that Wisconsin can expect 8,000 new cases of AIDS in the 90's and that by the end of the decade there will be 1100 new cases per year. Vergeront estimated that 10,000 Wisconsin residents are currently infected with HIV. He characterized his figures as "fairly realistic."

Doug Nelson, MAP's Executive Director, told the committee that "the pace of the epidemic is not letting up." MAP, Nelson said, expects that its caseload will double in 1990 from the present 318 cases and double again in 1991. By 1992, Nelson said, "MAP is projected to have 1,000 clients living with AIDS." Nelson estimated that 6,000 people in Milwaukee are currently infected with HIV and will eventually develop AIDS.

The committee was also told by all the witnesses that the face of AIDS is



Doug Nelson speaking at the AIDS hearing.

changing. In ever increasing numbers, babies, women, Blacks and Hispanics are being infected.

"By 1992," Vergeront said, "AIDS will be the leading cause of death in the Hispanic and Black communities."

Nelson told the committee that currently, 34 percent of MAP's caseload is African American and 12 percent is Hispanic.

The figures are chilling, but so is the fact that state money to pay for AIDS patients' medications is rapidly running out, according to Vergeront.

Clarenbach sharply questioned Vergeront as to why the committee was only just now learning of this situation when it was too late to enact new funding bills.

Vergeront answered that it costs about \$30,000 per month for drugs for those with AIDS. This is more than anticipated because of the new drugs that have been added to AZT in patient care. He also noted the increased numbers of patients

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