

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



The Wisconsin Light

Resolution Urges End to Anti-Gay Military Policy

[Washington, DC.]—On November 6, 1991, a congressional resolution calling for an end to the policy barring Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Americans from military service was introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Barbara Boxer (D-CA). The resolution is the first of its kind regarding Gay people in the military, and is the first such Congressional initiative to use the words "Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual" in its text.

Joining Boxer as original sponsors were Reps. Barney Frank, Gerry Studds (D-MA) and Ted Weiss (D-NY).

"It is time we put a stop to this legacy of unfair and malignant discrimination in the armed services," said Rep. Boxer at a Capitol Hill press conference announcing the resolution. "Too many men and women in our armed forces who have served their country with distinction in both peace and wartime have been punished and discharged from the military simply because of their known or suspected sexual orientation."

The resolution, House Resolution 271, urges President Bush to rescind "Department of Defense Directive 1332.14, Section H.1 so that all Americans, regardless of sexual orientation, currently serving their country in the Armed Forces, and those who want to serve, will not be prevented from, or punished for doing so." A resolution is being used because Bush can rescind the policy without specific legislation being passed by Congress.

In announcing his support, Studds said he joined Boxer and Weiss in "strongly urging the President to reverse a military policy that has proven costly, wasteful, damaging and counterproductive. It is nonsense to perpetuate the myth that Gays and Lesbians have not already served with distinction. We must put this discrimination to a complete stop now."

The resolution is the result of months of behind-the-scenes work by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and the Military Freedom Project, a coalition of groups working to end the discriminatory policy. NGLTF proposed the resolution earlier this year and kicked off a nationwide campaign to secure co-sponsors at its 1991 Creating Change Conference, held on Veterans Day weekend in Alexandria, Virginia.

Karen Stupski, co-chair of the Hampton Roads, VA Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA) said: "Every member of our organization has been directly affected by the military's anti-Gay policy." Stupski is a former lieutenant in the Navy. While assigned to the U.S.S. Sylvania, Stupski attempted to hide her sexual orientation while she completed her tour of duty, but was discharged after confiding in a commanding officer.

"As I become more comfortable with the idea of being a Lesbian, my fear turned to anger and frustration at the discrimination that Gays and Lesbians face in our society, particularly in the military," said Stupski.

Alan Stephens, president of the Gay and Lesbian Veterans of Maryland, former Army captain and a teacher of learning-disabled teenagers in Baltimore, outlined the reasons the Pentagon has used to justify its policy, including the so-called "foxhole" theory.

The theory, he said, "is based on the assumption that as bullets are flying on some obscure battlefield, in some unknown war, deep inside a muddy foxhole occupied by a homosexual and a heterosexual, the military mission is going to be compromised by the raging hormones of the homosexual."

Stephens added, "I assure you, my hormone level is the same as yours. The inference that homosexuals would rather look at someone's butt than guard the rear is insulting and ridiculous."

Besides NGLTF, GLBVA and the Human Rights Campaign Fund, the Military Freedom Project includes the National organization for Women, the ACLU and Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.

School Board Battle Rages As 'Christians' Pack Meeting

By Jamakaya

[Milwaukee]—Hundreds of self-identified "Christians" packed the hearing room at the Milwaukee Public Schools' (MPS) Administration Building November 13 to express their opposition to a proposal for support services for Gay and Lesbian teens in the city's high schools. Many had responded to appeals broadcast over Christian radio and TV stations operated by Rev. Vic Eliason.

After three and a half hours of

passionate, sometimes angry testimony (detailed below), the Instruction and Community Relations Committee of the School Board, with just one "Aye" vote, sent to the full Board for its consideration the school administration's response to recommendations of the Task Force Regarding Gay and Lesbian Teens.

The recommendations drawing the most criticism from those in attendance concerned: 1) the integration of non-judgemental information on sexual

orientation into existing curricular areas; and 2) the development of materials about sexual orientation for the human growth and development curriculum.

Some speakers were particularly incensed at a phrase in the Task Force Report which says that young people of all sexual orientations should be taught that "homosexuality is normal and healthy."

Testimony

Rev. Randy Bonie of the Park Lawn Assembly of God said "Homosexuality is not normal or healthy," and Jeff Wert declared: "Homosexuality is wrong. It goes against the values and morals of our community. It's against natural law."

Keith Jago said the City of Milwaukee was sinking into a "moral quagmire," while Bobby Stokes said he didn't want the public schools to teach his children anything about sex.

One speaker said the proposals were "unconstitutional and a waste of taxpayer's money." Another worried how anyone could be sure "the people teaching these classes won't be soliciting these children?"

Glen Alioto said he was "appalled and outraged" that MPS would even consider such proposals. "We're fed up! This shall not be tolerated!" declared Gail Ramsey.

Ronnie Lattimore scoffed at the concept of Gay rights. He said: "A Gay's right is to 'get right' and keep their sexual

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Gay Issues and Candidates Fared Well in November Elections

By Jamakaya

With a few exceptions, candidates and issues of concern to Gays and Lesbians fared well in November's elections.

Attempts to repeal Gay rights and domestic partnership ordinances in St. Paul and San Francisco, respectively, were soundly defeated. A liberal Democrat, Harris Wofford, beat Richard Thornburgh in the Pennsylvania Senate race. And a number of Gay and Lesbian candidates were elected and re-elected to office, including the nation's first openly Lesbian Black official.

Referenda

In a referendum closely monitored by the mainstream media and Gay activists nationwide, residents of St. Paul, Minnesota, defeated by a margin of 54.3% to 45.7% an attempt to repeal part of the city's human rights ordinance which gives protections to Gays and Lesbians.

Cynthia Scott, editor of *Equal Time*, the Twin Cities' Gay newspaper, outlined for the *Light* several factors in the victory.

Scott credited the "awesome organizing effort" by the anti-repeal forces, who made 35,000 phone calls in the week before the vote. She said that the local arts community and some religious leaders were particularly helpful allies in the coalition against repeal.

Scott noted the leadership displayed by Mayor Jim Scheibel, who spoke out against the repeal as well as the misinformation purveyed by Citizens Alert, the group that initiated the repeal effort. She said that Bob Fletcher, leader of Citizens Alert, "was thoroughly discredited and exposed as the one issue homophobe he is."

Scott also credited the people of St. Paul, who, she said, "no longer want to be perceived as bigots." (In 1978, St. Paul voters successfully repealed an earlier Gay rights ordinance.)

In San Francisco, Proposition K, an attempt to repeal the city's domestic partners ordinance, was soundly defeated, 59.6% to 40.4%. (The ordinance encompasses both Gay and straight couples.)

Organizers of the "No on K" campaign were concerned about a conservative backlash. Violent protests by Gays angered over Gov. Pete Wilson's recent veto of a statewide Gay rights bill had dominated the media.

But "No on K" coordinator Stephanir Ruby Klink saw an influx of volunteers, many motivated by the Wilson veto, pour into campaign headquarters in the last few weeks. And San Francisco Supervisor Carole Migden, a Lesbian, said she was "heartened" by the many new faces and the generation of new leadership she saw emerging during the campaign.

Tim McFeeley of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, a major contributor to pro-Gay campaigns and candidates, said of the St. Paul and San Francisco decisions: "These election victories clearly show the electorate is willing to support our community when we have the resources to counter the lies our opponents spread about us."

On the negative side of the ledger, in Concord, 25 miles east of San Francisco, voters decided by a slim margin, just 106

of almost 23,000 votes cast, to repeal the section of its human rights ordinance pertaining to sexual orientation. Concord's moderate Republican Mayor, Byron Campbell, opposed the repeal, but the Traditional Values Coalition, which initiated the repeal effort, squeaked to victory.

Also in Concord, Gil Block, a transvestite better known as Sister Sadie the Rabbi Lady, lost his/her bid for a seat on the City Council. Sister Sadie was expected to be disqualified anyway because s/he failed to meet the city's residency requirement.

While Sister Sadie added much color to the campaign, organizers working against the repeal expressed concern that Sadie's

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Helms NEA Amendment Defeated; New Grants for Hughes, Miller

By Jamakaya

[Washington, DC]—After heated debate, much flip-flopping by Congress, lengthy negotiations and plenty of political machinations, the US Senate on Halloween voted 73-25 to defeat Sen. Jesse Helms' attempt to place more restrictions on grants distributed by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Wisconsin's Democratic Senator, Herb Kohl, voted against the restrictions while Republican Sen. Robert Kasten voted with Helms.

In a double rebuke for Helms (R-NC), just days after the defeat of his measure, NEA officials announced the awarding of two new \$8,000 grants to Gay performance artists Holly Hughes and Tim Miller.

Hughes and Miller, along with John Fleck and Karen Finley (the "NEA Four"), are currently fighting in federal court for reinstatement of NEA grants denied to them in 1990 because of the controversial nature of their work.

The vote on Halloween was on whether to reinstate the Helms amendment to the Interior Department's \$12 billion appropriations bill. The measure, dubbed the "Sex or Ex" amendment, would have denied NEA funds to "promote, disseminate or produce materials that depict or describe, in a patently offensive way, sexual or excretory activities or organs."

Earlier, both the House and Senate had passed the Helms amendment. But on October 17, a House-Senate conference committee deleted the amendment in exchange for dropping a measure that would have doubled grazing fees on federal lands. Rep. William Dannemeyer (R-CA) denounced the deal as a "swap of corn for porn" and Helms decried the "backroom deals and parliamentary flim-flam" that doomed his measure.

During debate on the bill, Helms had asked the "ladies" in the Senate chamber to avert their eyes as he flashed photos of allegedly obscene art funded by the NEA before the Senate cameras. He railed against "garbage" and "filth" and singled out Holly Hughes and the Gay and Lesbian film festivals in New York

and San Francisco as examples.

Sen. Tim Wirth (D-CO) responded by holding up reproductions of classic Renaissance paintings — some of them nudes — and suggested that the Helms measure would ban such art. Sen. Dale Bumpers (D-AK) warned that the first thing Adolf Hitler did after coming to power was to control art and literature. Sens. Ted Kennedy and Robert Byrd, both Democrats, also played key roles in Helms' defeat.

While advocates of artistic freedom won this year's NEA battle against Helms, lobbyists cautioned that the North Carolina Senator was likely to use the same homophobic scare tactics over the authorization bill for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Meanwhile, in announcing the grants to Hughes and Miller, NEA Chairman John Frohnmayer, who has been criticized for allowing conservative pressure to taint the grant process, went out of his way to defend the new grants.

Frohnmayer said that a peer review panel of theater experts as well as the National Council on the Arts had recommended the grants for Hughes and Miller.

The NEA chief declared: "Our birthright in America is to look at what people do rather than what they are. I hope that these two individuals would not be vilified simply because of who they are. That's not what we in America stand for. If they are obscene, there are laws to remedy that. I will not blacklist."

On his NEA application, Miller described himself as a "Gay kid from Whittier on Planet Earth" who works as a "cultural provocateur." Hughes stated that her work challenged "assumptions about identity and gender." She said her work had been misunderstood because of the movement in Congress to "equate homosexuality with obscenity."

On learning of his new grant, Miller told the *New York Times* he was pleased but that "the chilling effect is still very much there for artists." Hughes agreed: "It's good news for me, but I don't think it means that the struggle is necessarily over for the art world."