

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



The Wisconsin Light

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LGBT Opponents In Majority at Anti-Gay Marriage Bill Hearing in Madison

By Bill Meunier

Madison— For the third time in less than a year, a State Legislative Committee held a hearing on a bill related to Gay and Lesbian relationships. And for the third time supporters of Gay Civil Rights outnumbered their opponents.

The hearing held by the State Senate Committee on Judiciary Campaign Finance Reform and Consumer Affairs, on Wednesday March 18th dealt with AB-104. The legislation which was passed by the State Assembly in May of 1997,



At The Scene - A Gay rights support at the State Senate Hearing on AB-104 listens intently. His shirt reads "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Believe It!"

would ban state recognition of Same Sex marriages even if they were legally performed elsewhere.

Same sex marriage is already prohibited under Wisconsin law. The bill's opponents have characterized it as a "mean spirited attempt to 'slap Gays and Lesbians in the face.'"

In response to an inquiry from the Wisconsin Light a Committee staff person said that 142 of those at the hearing registered opposition to the bill while only 97 registered in favor. Out of 62 speakers 32 spoke against passage while 29 spoke in favor and one took no position but provided information.

The outpouring of opposition to the bill eased the fears of activists who worried that the hearing (which was called with only one week's notice) would provide a forum for right wing Christians.

Along with the hearing on AB-104, the Committee also heard testimony on a bill
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Nelson Praises Gov. Thompson; Criticizes Mayor Norquist Over Needle Exchange



All Smiles - Doug Nelson, Micheal Youngman Northwest Mutual Life, VP of ARCW Board Of Directors, Governor Thompson and Mark Bueger, Secretary of the State Department of Administration were all smiles after the Make a Promise Dinner and Silent Auction held at Milwaukee's Pfister Hotel on Saturday, March 21. The event raised a record \$160,000 to help with the fight against AIDS.

Clinton Advisors Demand Administration Support for Needle Exchange Programs

Washington, DC— President Clinton's AIDS advisers unanimously expressed no confidence in the administration's commitment to reducing the spread of AIDS, accusing officials of playing politics with people's lives.

"The administration's current policy on needle-exchange programs threatens the public health, and directly contradicts current scientific evidence," said the resolution approved Tuesday, March 17, by the Presidential Council on HIV/AIDS.

It was the harshest criticism yet from the panel, whose members are furious that the administration has not allowed federal funding for programs giving IV drug users clean needles in exchange for dirty ones that may be contaminated with the deadly HIV virus.

"Our patience is exhausted," said the panel's chairman, Dr. Scott Hitt, who treats patients with HIV and AIDS in Los Angeles.

U.S. Supreme Court Is Set to Weigh Whether HIV Is a Disability

New York, NY— A Supreme Court case about discrimination against people who carry the virus that causes AIDS offers the justices a surprisingly blank slate on which to write an opinion with major implications not only for the law on the disease itself but for disability-rights law in general.

In a sense, the justices will simply be catching up with recent history when they hear arguments in the case later this month. In the 17 years since AIDS was first reported, the court has never decided a case about the disease or HIV. Nor have the justices yet interpreted the Americans With Disabilities Act, an 8-year-old law that in language as sweeping as it was imprecise extended federal civil-rights protection to people with disabilities.

The question before the court is whether the federal law, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of "disability" in em-

ployment, housing and public accommodations and services, applies to a person with HIV who has not developed any of the acute conditions that come under the label of AIDS.

The case was brought, and won in two lower federal courts, by a woman whose dentist refused to treat her in his office after she informed him that she carried HIV.

At first glance, the question of whether the Americans With Disabilities Act covers people with asymptomatic HIV infections appears an unlikely vehicle for this first Supreme Court test of a law more identified with the image of a public building being retrofitted for wheelchair access than of a person with no visible impairment walking without assistance into a private medical office.

Using taxpayer money to buy needles for addicts has become a politically touchy issue, with conservatives arguing that these programs send the wrong message.

One council member, Terje Anderson of
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Milwaukee—In what many observers said was the most hard-hitting and potentially controversial speech of his career, Doug Nelson, Executive Director of the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) harshly criticizes both the Clinton Administration and Milwaukee Mayor John O. Norquist for not supporting funding of needle exchange programs.

At the same time, Nelson praised Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson for being open on the issue and promised to push the legislature and governor to enact an HIV non-discrimination bill.

Nelson made his remarks to an overflow crowd at ARCW's annual Make A Promise Dinner in the Grand Ballroom of Milwaukee's Pfister Hotel held Saturday, March 21st to raise money for ARCW's work against AIDS. The audience included political leaders from state and national levels including Governor Thompson.

After renewing ARCW's pledge to do "everything humanly possible" to help relieve the suffering of those with HIV disease, Nelson went on to say that in the fight against HIV prevention, "the overwhelming preponderance of scientific evidence shows that needle exchange reduces HIV and doesn't increase drug usage."

Nelson chastised Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala for her "continuing delay" in lifting the federal ban against funding needle exchange. This delay is "appalling," Nelson said.

"It is increasingly difficult to believe," Nelson said, "that your administration (the Clinton Administration) is truly committed to ending new HIV infections."

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Miller Brewery to Sponsor Major Victory Fund Event

Milwaukee—As we go to press, word has been received of an up-coming fundraiser in Milwaukee for the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund.

The Victory Fund is the D.C.-based organization which extends financial help to viable, openly Gay and Lesbian candidates around the country. Its success record is impressive. Most agree that without its help, many of our candidates would not be able to run for office.

The fundraiser will be held on Sunday, May 17, 1998, at the Boulevard Inn beginning at 1:30 p.m. One of the confirmed guests of honor is State Rep. Tammy Baldwin who is running for Congress. Baldwin is one of the candidates to whom the Victory Fund is giving support.

Miller Brewing Company is proud to be the major sponsor for this important fundraising event.

We have been told that there are other special guests who are expected, but have not yet confirmed. These will be announced later as names become available.



Award winners - Awards were given to those who have been helping leading the fight against AIDS in Wisconsin, at ARCW's Annual Make a Promise Dinner held at the Milwaukee Pfister Hotel on Saturday, March 21. At the far left is William Godsell II presenting Max Barnett representing the Possum Queen campaign with a Red Rose award. Next is Chad Carlson from Ameritech Small Business Services receiving a Red Rose Award from Michael Youngman. Second from the right is Governor Thompson receiving the Sterling Rose Award from Ed Hashek, Chair of the ARCW Board of Directors. At the far right is Dr. Jeff Kelly PHD of the Wisconsin Medical College's CAIR program receiving a Red Rose award from Brian Buggy MD, ARCW's Medical Director.