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The Wisconsin Light

Gov. Thompson Decimates AIDS Programs With Multiple Vetoes

[Madison]- State Representatives David Clarenbach (D-Madison) and Timothy Carpenter (D-Milwaukee) are calling Governor Tommy Thompson's recent vetoes of funding for Wisconsin AIDS programs a serious blunder with potentially dire consequences for AIDS services in the state.

Reps. Clarenbach and Carpenter have authored virtually every substantial piece of AIDS-related legislation in Wisconsin.

Gov. Thompson's veto pen slashed State Budget funding for AIDS related programs by about \$1.5 million over the next two years, according to Rep. Clarenbach.

"It was a shockingly careless veto message to read," Clarenbach said. "The Governor simply called the vetoed programs 'unnecessary' or 'poorly conceived' and slashed away."

"Gov. Thompson decimated both new AIDS initiatives and existing AIDS programs in Wisconsin," said Rep. Carpenter. "The Governor cut Wisconsin's Clinical Trials program; he cut all funding for the DHSS [Department of Health and Social Services] AIDS Services programs, including the Health Care Safety Device Program—a unique program which would help protect health care workers who treat people with AIDS," Carpenter said.

Carpenter said Gov. Thompson's willingness to veto the program budget, \$1.2 million, from the AIDS Services budget for 1992-93 was especially alarming.

"Although a budget readjustment bill should provide additional funding for AIDS Services administered by DHSS, Gov. Thompson's shortsighted veto message makes clear that he sees little distinction between ordinary biennial appropriations for such things as resurfacing highways and the imminent escalation in HIV-positive and AIDS patients and the certain increased demand for AIDS related services in Wisconsin," according to Carpenter.

Funding to provide AIDS prevention training for counselors was also vetoed.

Ten Percent Society Threatens To Disrupt Board of Regents Meeting

[Madison]- The Ten Percent Society, the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual student organization has announced plans to disrupt the UW Board of Regents meeting on Friday, Sept. 6, 1991, unless the Board votes in the first thirty minutes of that meeting to remove the discriminatory Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) from its campus.

Students will disrupt the meeting in a novel, creative way by playing a variety of games, including "Twister," "Battleship" and the like. Their motto is "We'll stop playing games when they stop playing games." The reference is to the students' belief that the Regents are playing games with their lives.

Students are reportedly furious over the Department of Defense's policy that homosexuality is "incompatible" with military service, a policy that prevents Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals from obtaining the scholarships and job opportunities offered through the ROTC program to every other student on campus. Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney, has himself recently admitted that there is no justification for the policy.

Ten Percent Society Co-President Michael S. Dixon said, "We are going to turn the 'Open Meetings Law' into the 'Never-ending Protests Law.'" He voiced the intention of many members of the Ten Percent Society to prevent the UW Board of Regents from holding any uninterrupted meetings on the Madison campus until university policies are enforced by removing ROTC from campus.

"Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals are

Pressure Mounts On Pentagon To Drop Anti-Gay Policy

By Jamakaya

The Department of Defense finds itself suddenly besieged on all sides. The courts, the news media, members of Congress, Gay activists, veterans groups, the American Psychological Association — even some military officials — are all clamoring for an end to the Pentagon's ban on Gay and Lesbian soldiers.

A combination of dramatic events in the past two weeks appears to be bringing the issue to a potentially successful conclusion for the advocates of equal rights.

Robert Adams, legislative assistant to Rep. Gerry Studds (D-MA) who has been a leader in battling the Pentagon's policy, told the *Wisconsin Light*: "Such progress has been made that the question is no longer whether but when the regulation will be repealed. He suggested it could be as early as the end of this year.

Miriam Ben-Shalom, national chairperson of the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA), was jubilant: "It's an exciting time for Gay liberation! It's just like 1969!"

The dizzying parade of events which has caused all this optimism includes: a major court victory for a Lesbian Army captain on August 19; the "outing" of Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams as a Gay man; Defense Secretary Dick Cheney's comments distancing himself from his department's policy; soon-to-be-released government reports on the fitness of Gays as soldiers and on the costs involved in discharging them; intensified media coverage of the issue; and the sustained activism of Gays and Lesbians, especially those who are veterans.

Victory for Pruitt

On August 19, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco reinstated Captain Dusty Pruitt's lawsuit over her discharge from the Army Reserve. The court ruled unanimously that societal prejudice against Gays and Lesbians was no justification for the Pentagon's prohibition on homosexuals.

The three member panel said that past decisions upholding the ban were based on prejudice. They cited a 1984 Supreme Court ruling, which found that social prejudice against an interracial marriage could not justify the denial of child custody to the plaintiffs. The Appeals Court ruled that this precedent undercut the biased rationale behind the Pentagon's discriminatory policy.

Pruitt's case will go back into federal court for reconsideration.

Captain Pruitt served for thirteen years in the Army and Army Reserve. She trained soldiers to defend against chemical warfare. She left full time service in 1975 to become a minister in the Metropolitan Community Church. She was discharged in 1986 after revealing her Lesbianism in a newspaper interview.

Ben-Shalom called the decision in Pruitt's case "absolutely marvelous, monumental." She told the *Light* that Pruitt's case was similar to her own. Neither soldier was charged with any form of misconduct. In fact, each of them had won numerous commendations. They were discharged for simply saying that they were Gay.

Ben-Shalom said the Pruitt decision would unquestionably add to the growing body of court decisions helping to set precedents on the military exclusion issue. She cited last year's Supreme Court ruling which ordered Perry Watkins' re-enlistment and her own victory in 1980 before Federal Judge Terence T. Evans.

(Evans ordered her reinstatement, but when her enlistment period ended, the Army refused to re-enlist her. Another federal judge ordered her reinstatement, but was overruled in federal appeals court. In February, 1990, the Supreme

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Vaguing is featured in the film "Paris Is Burning" which is now showing at Milwaukee's Oriental Theatre. (See review on page 8).

ACT UP Schedules Protest Against Treatment Of Inmates With AIDS

[Madison]- The Madison and Milwaukee chapters of the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power (ACT UP) have called a national demonstration to protest the abuse of incarcerated PWA's in Wisconsin and across the country. The demonstration will be held in Madison on Monday, Sept. 9, 1991, the first anniversary of the death of Donald Woods and will be the first of its kind on prison issues.

ACT UP/Milwaukee is providing bus transportation to Madison on the day of the demonstration.

Woods was an inmate at Waupun Correctional Institution in Wisconsin and was allegedly killed by guards because of his HIV status.

going to have to set some priorities for this Board of Regents," Dixon said. "Every voting body on this campus, from the students to the faculty to the Board of Regents itself, agrees that this kind of discrimination is evil. The time has come when we must stand up for our values and make some difficult choices. Either Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals are equal to other students and should be able to study in an atmosphere free of University-sponsored discrimination, or we should start telling the truth about our so-called 'non-discrimination policy,'" Dixon said.

Dixon called on UW Chancellor Donna Shalala to meet with students to discuss ways of ending discrimination on the Madison campus by enforcing existing policies.

"ROTC will be removed from campus; it will happen this semester and we will not allow business as usual to go on until this goal is accomplished," Dixon said in a letter from the Ten Percent Society to Shalala.

In the letter Dixon wrote, "I do not believe that the Regents are necessarily hateful, homophobic bigots, although there can be no question that their actions certainly reflect that sort of philosophy."

"Our disruption of this meeting [the Board of Regents]," Dixon told Shalala, "will be a continuing step in the escalation of our battle for equal rights and basic human dignity denied us by the military and by every administrator on this campus who works in collusion with the ROTC program by allowing them to remain.

The guards, who still work at the prison and have not been disciplined, entered Woods' cell and while transporting him to another cell, held a towel over his mouth. Woods died of asphyxiation. The guards, who were wearing full riot gear at the time, claim that they feared Woods could give them AIDS by spitting on them.

An investigation into Woods' death concluded that the guards were not at fault because their fear of HIV transmission was reasonable under the circumstances.

The Madison Public Defenders Office, the American Civil Liberties Union/Madison and ACT UP have all called for a new investigation of the case as new evidence, they say, has emerged and other flaws in the investigation have been uncovered.

The judge, Daniel Klossner, who has the power to reopen the investigation has not responded to letters from the Public Defender's Office.

In addition to calling for a reopening of the investigation, ACT UP is demanding a full enactment of the Wisconsin Governor's HIV/AIDS Technical Advisory Committee recommendations of May, 1990. Among them: distribution of condoms, dental dams and bleach to inmates; access to experimental treatments; support services for inmates living with HIV infection and educational programs for guards and prison staff.

While the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) claims to have enacted some of the minor recommendations from the committee, according to ACT UP, the DOC has opposed those listed above.

ACT UP chapters from across the country have recognized the fight in Wisconsin for full enactment of the Advisory Committee's recommendations as an important prison issues test case for the nation. The three largest chapters of ACT UP in the country, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, have joined those of Madison and Milwaukee in protest and are planning to attend the Sept. 9 demonstration.

ACT UP/L.A. has sent peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to Gov. Tommy Thompson to protest the treatment of inmate Roger Hillman. Fifty were sent out in one week.

ACT UP/New York this week, mailed over 200 letters, each containing a condom or dental dam to Wisconsin Secretary of Corrections Patrick Fiedler.

ACT UP/Chicago has mailed over 50 letters of protest to Judge Klossner.

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