Discrimination Survives Despite Support

man who once promised not to hurls veto at gays

Hopes for civil rights for lesbians, gays and bisexuals in Maine this year were destroyed when Governor John McKernan vetoed LD 246, "An Act To Prevent Discrimination." The bill was passed by both houses of the legislature the first time since it was first introduced in the 108th Legislature in 1977. Activists had hoped that with passage in both houses, and ever broadening community support, McKernan might let the measure become law without his signature and avoid a veto.

In a move similar to the last legislative session, McKernan grumbled about the presence of the bill, then, in his trademark fashion, he said he would let the bill become law if significant numbers from both parties voted in favor. Next came another second-floor-fumble when the story was that he might be able to accept a Portland-style bill that would involve the courts. With knowledge of a nearly fiscally bankrupt court system and warnings from legal advisors it wouldn't work, activists dared hope for a reprieve. The story changed the next day when, chameleon-like, Governor see Discrimination, page two

A rally attracting more than 200 was held on the front steps of the Statehouse shortly after the veto. Leading off in the open-mike rally were (top photo) LD 246 prime sponsors Sen. Gerard Conley, Jr. (D-Portland) and Rep. Susan Farnsworth (D-Hallowell). Intensity is revealed in the faces of (left photo) Laurie Holt, archactivist Bee Bell, and MLGPA Director Karen Geraghty. Pictured below are a few of the dozens of homemade signs which showed up at the rally. More photos, page three. Photographs courtesy of Dawn Fortune.

Hate Crimes Bill Promising

What caused an uproar in 1987 appears to have promise this year as an important tool for law enforcement agencies in protecting the lives of minorities. The Attorney General's office has introduced LD 1334, An Act to Amend the Maine Civil Rights Act Regarding Violations of Constitutional Rights. The bill seeks to add specific protected categories to establish a right of a person to be free of violence or property damage see Hate Crimes, page two

Right Wing: Twin Threats

Just as hard as we work to gain small steps toward equality, the Religious Right Wing works to take them away from us. Lewiston's City Council voted 5-2 in January in support of protection for lesbians and gays in housing, jobs, credit and public accommodation. Extremists immediately submitted enough signatures that a referendum will now be held in November to attempt to reverse the city ordinance. see Right Wing, page four
Hate Crimes, from page one
motivated by bias. Race, color,
religion, sex, ancestry, national
origin or sexual orientation are
plugged in as the protected
categories. This mechanism
allows intervention by the Attorney
General’s Department to seek
injunctive relief.

The 1987 attempt to amend
the harassment statutes in the
113th Maine Legislature (LD
1331) was attacked as a “back
door attempt at a gay rights law.”
It really sought to give victims
of hate bias better access to the
legal system and increased
protection. This, despite being
backed by a large coalition
of groups formed from the protected
categories list. To gain passage,
the “shopping list” was removed.

In an ironic twist of fortune,
some of those who opposed
recognition of sexual minorities in
1987 are among its supporters
this year. Indeed, Jack Wyman,
Executive Director of the Christian
Civic League of Maine testified in
favor of the proposal, noting that:
“Racism, anti-semitism, religious
bigotry and homophobia all
represent the forces of hate and
they fuel the fires of social
divisions and of violence in our
state and in our nation.”

LD 1334 was reported out of
committee with an unanimous
ought-to-pass vote, with one
abstention. An amendment
attached could not be identified at
press time, but was thought to be
a non-threatening fiscal note.

Discrimination, from page 1
McKernan changed his line again, telling us
he might be able to support protection to
someone who first had been bashed. End of
April meetings in both Portland and Augusta
found activists telling the sponsors: We don’t
need more bashings. All or Nothing!

McKernan, in a letter to Sen. Conley,
said of his opposition: In the sensitive area
of civil rights, we should not extend statutory
rights to a class of persons who have not yet
established a constitutionally protected
status in our courts.

Before the legislature for the ninth time,
the bill would have amended Maine’s Human
Rights Act to add sexual orientation to the
protected categories. Lesbians, gays, and
bisexuals would then be protected against
discrimination in the areas of housing,
employment, public accommodation, and
credit. Complaints are resolved through an
administrative process of the Maine Human
Rights Commission. That remedy failing,
court proceedings are available to the
aggrieved.

Significant among the more than 60
supporting organizations (complete list on
page five) were the Maine Bankers
Association and the Maine Chamber of
Commerce and Industry. The hoped-for
influence of the business community on the
governor failed, ending in veto. Also lost on
McKernan was the solidarity of union support, weighing in with
backing from Maine AFL-CIO, the
Maine State Employees
Association, and the Maine
Teachers Association.

Several activities are seen
as effective this year. Decentraliza-
tion of the workload worked
well, with committees carrying
out their functions in Portland,
Augusta, Bangor, and Aroostook
county. The writing and phoning
process was helped this year by
greater participation. Press was
generally good—our releases were
great, what became of them was
sometimes lacking. Editorially,
the Portland papers were strongly
in support. Lewiston was weak,
and while not declaring support,
the “Bangor Daily News” didn’t
look like the right-wing mirror of
old. The “News” did get suckered
by the Governor’s compromise
shuffle, finding fresh air where
there was clearly foul. Coming out of
conservative (and Republican) terri-
tery, the “Lincoln News” bravely edi-
torialized for civil rights! Was that why
Senator Michael Pearson, after years
of denial, finally relented that we didn’t
need the rancor of a referendum pro-
cess, and surprisingly voted to override
the veto?

One clear measure of cohesiv-
ness of the campaign was that candle-
light vigils were maintained in front of
the Governor’s (in need of paint) man-
sion for two hours every night for three
weeks. That, when many had projects
to complete, and took a break to march
on Washington, D.C. Vigil walkers were
greatly encouraged by ever-increasing
numbers of thumbs-up and horn
honkings from passers-by. Governor
McKernan recognized the “Well orga-
nized supporters of this bill who are in
front of my house every night,” during a
press session.

The work is done and done well.
The anger and disappointment will turn
to energy for another season. The stage
is now set for increased involvement by
lesbians and gays in the electoral pro-
cess to insure not only a supportive
governor, but larger margins of support
in both houses of the 117th Maine
Legislature.

The Veto of LD 246
Our governor the other day
Dashed hopes of lesbian and gay
To leave in peace without the fear
Of getting fired for being “queer,”
Or waking to the bigot’s rock
Tossed through their windows: Thus has Jock
Surrendered to the “Christian” Right.
You’ve him to thank next time a fight
Erupts outside your local bar
Whose patrons, vexed by who you are,
Attempt to rearrange your face;
Nobody’s safe. Lame ducks disgrace
Themselves as if there’s no tomorrow,
And veto Justice, to Maine’s sorrow.
But equal rights are not yet dead;
If Jock won’t lead, let him be led.
Two-thirds can make an override:
If swayed by thruth to Virtue’s side,
A few votes switch, Reason has won.
The People’s will, not Jock’s, be done.

Report Crime!

Help Stop Hate Crime
Report all cases of
violence, intimidation
and harassment to
The Attorney General’s
Hate-Bias Crime Log
626-8844
Lewiston Police Chief Laurent Gilbert (left photo) brings a message of encouragement to the statehouse rally. Neither Gilbert nor Lewiston Mayor James Howaniec joined a demonstration following the rally as reported in a Lewiston newspaper. Senator Dale McCormick (center photo) congratulates activists on their accomplishments. Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Steve Wessler (right photo) offers words of encouragement.

Following the rally, about a hundred marched across the street to the front of the Blaine House for an hour-and-a-half demonstration. Shouting slogans and blowing whistles, the crowd vented their anger at Governor McKernan's slight. A lone Augusta Police officer surveys the accumulating traffic back up as protesters do civil disobedience. Before reinforcements arrived, traffic had been disrupted for nearly 45 minutes. State troopers joined Augusta Police in attempting to convince demonstrators to keep to the sidewalk. Noisy, but peaceful, individuals would comply, only to be replaced by others. Police arrested one demonstrator, and finally succeeded in restoring traffic flow. Dawn Fortune Photos

MLGPA President Paula Aboud (left) addresses the gathering of more than 200 from the Statehouse steps, some of whom can be seen in the photo below.
Yes on Support No on Military

The U.S. Military found no supporters among members of the MLGPA Board of Directors during their May 9 meeting. In the face of referenda in Lewiston and statewide, working for lifting the ban on lesbians and gays in the military was not considered a priority of the organization. Members are encouraged to pursue their individual interests surrounding the ban through other organizations.

In Maine, the campaign on lifting the ban is being led by the Maine Civil Liberties Union. MCLU is organizing on behalf of a large national coalition formed around this issue. The civil libertarians point out Maine's prominence in Congress, citing Congressman Tom Andrews and Senator Bill Cohen who sit on their house's Armed Service Committees.

The Maine Rights Campaign Fund has a new campaign underway. Members interested in holding letter writing parties for groups of any size may call for a how-to video. Contact Timothy Cavanaugh of HRCF at 202-628-4160. Action is advised soon, as recommendations will be forwarded from the Pentagon to the President in a very short time. Support your brothers and sisters and lobby, write and phone.


If you have interest in lifting the ban on lesbians and gays in the military, you should let your leaders know. Our failure to provide feedback and support only fortifies ignorance of the issues in the city where we need well-informed people who are willing to listen. Write Rep. Andrews and thank him for his unqualified support. Sen. Cohen needs to hear that he is not supporting his lesbian and gay constituents. Sen. Mitchell is asking for money and votes. He should be reminded that they will come only after he makes an unequivocal statement on issues of interest to us. Olympia Snowe is a disappointment.

Compromises to lifting the ban are being suggested from a number of places, including early opponent Sen Sam Nunn, and out Congressman Barney Frank. Activists have rejected compromises which would require homosexuals to serve, but remain silent about their sexual orientation. HRCF executive director Tim McFeeley said: "People should not have to lie in order to serve our country. Any proposal that requires men and women to lie about their status in order to keep their careers is unacceptable."

Questions and answers about homosexuals in the military and some arguments against the most regressive positions are available. If you didn't pick up the handout at Symposium XX, we'll be happy to mail you one. Call 942-3901.

The Maine Delegation
Rep Thomas H Andrews
1724 Longworth House Ofc. Bldg.
Washington DC 20515-1901
1-800-445-4092

Rep Olympia J Snowe
2464 Rayburn Bldg.
Washington DC 20515-1902
1-800-432-1599

Sen George J Mitchell
176 Russell Senate Ofc. Bldg.
Washington DC 20510-1902
207-874-0833

Sen William S Cohen
322 Hart Senate Ofc. Bldg.
Washington DC 20510-1901
207-622-8414

Can you spare a dime?
Do you have some time?
Community support for

Equal Protection Lewiston
PO Box 7804
Lewiston 04243
784-5818

5000 cards and letters went to legislators and the governor.
Outstanding! Paula

Right Wing, from page one

All lesbians and gays and friends of civil liberties are asked to offer time and money to help defeat the radical right. Throw a fundraiser in your town for Equal Protection Lewiston (EPL) and send the check to EPL at PO Box 7804, Lewiston ME 04243. We must all come together to help Lewiston win in '93.

Another dreaded referendum campaign is rearing its ugly right wing face in the state of Maine. Language identical to Colorado's hated referendum language was submitted recently in 12 other states for a November '94 vote. Maine is one of those targeted states. Carolyn Cosby, of Portland, is the front for the national religious war that Pat Robertson and Pat Buchanan called for at the Republican National Convention last year. That war targets lesbians and gays across America! This state is in the battle for our lives in the next 18 months if Cosby can get 53 thousand signatures in the next nine months. WE MUST STOP HER!

MLGPA is mobilizing the l/g community state-wide to prepare for the vicious campaign that is expected. All of us are asked to get our lives into a stable and secure place, save your money, and begin to free yourselves up to work together, side-by-side with us to defeat the dreaded enemy to our civil rights - perhaps to our well-being.

Here is what you can do: Make community contacts with other lesbians, gays, and friends. Come to the August 7th referendum training in Augusta. Connect at every possibility with others from across Maine. Bond with your community and friends now in order to get their alliance in the long run.

Finally, send money to help us organize this state-wide effort against the right. This is a fight for our lives. Only you can make a difference. Join the cause today!
GLAD Files Case

The spring newsletter form the Boston-based Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) outlines a case involving a Bangor dentist.

GLAD AIDS Law Project Director William Garza has filed a complaint of denial of access to a place of public accommodations against the dentist who refused to provide treatment to a gay man who was HIV+. Filed in Superior Court in Bangor, the complaint, on behalf of the now deceased client, alleges that Dr. Randon Bragdon’s receptionist told the man seeking treatment that the doctor would not accept anyone “with diseases like strep throat, HIV or anything else.” In fact, the Maine Human Rights Commission ruled early this year that Dr. Bragdon’s thirteen-year-old written policy violated the complainant’s civil rights under the Maine Civil Rights Act.

Garza commented, “It’s about time that this dentist, and all other dentists in Maine and throughout the country, realized they are subject to the anti-discrimination laws of the states they practice in and to applicable federal law.”

Upon filing the case, Garza added, “Thirteen years of open, institutionalized and invidious discrimination will come to an end. No one should have to put up with the embarrassment and humiliation of being refused even the most basic dental services on the basis of their HIV status. This case may signal the beginning of the end to this kind of unacceptable behavior.”

MLGPA Annual Meeting

The election of officers and directors of the organization will be taking place this fall. The annual meeting of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance has been scheduled for 2 p.m. September 17, at the Winthrop St. Unitarian Church in Augusta.

Any member whose dues are paid may vote. To become a candidate for office, contact Rita Clifford of the nominating committee at 892-6136. Four officers and 14 directors will be elected at this meeting.

City Councilor Clarifies Record

Portland City Councilor Cheryl Leeman has gone on record as supporting the outcome of the Portland civil rights referendum. She had been absent during the ordinance’s adoption.

District IV council candidate Teresa Bachelder had noted Leeman’s absence in an MLGPA mailing. More than 200 MLGPA members in Portland were sent candidate position statements prior to the May city council elections. Candidates had been asked to make statements on any issues they felt relevant. No response had been received from Cheryl Leeman.

Leeman phoned to rectify misunderstandings immediately after the mailing had been distributed. She explained that she had sent her statement to an incorrect address. A work conflict prevented her from attending the council meeting which voted in the civil rights ordinance last year. Leeman, who directs the state office of the Head Start program, was involved in meetings in Washington, D.C.

The councilor told MLGPA: “Although I did not have the benefit of the public hearing on both sides of the issue, my position is unquestionably to support the majority decision of the voters of Portland in saying ‘no’ to discrimination. And I will continue to do volunteer work for the AIDS Project.”

Fight The Right

MLGPA has the perfect idea for the political activist who is between legislative sessions or the individual who is concerned about the right wing drive to steal your rights. We will be conducting a training session on how to defeat the anti-gay referenda being forced upon us by right wing extremists.

The session will be offered Saturday, August 7 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Winthrop St. Unitarian Church in Augusta.

Review the lessons learned from last year’s disastrous hate-filled campaigns in Oregon and Colorado. Among the topics to be covered in this session are:

△ How to expose the rhetoric of the right.
△ Rural, grass roots organizing.
△ Forming coalitions with non-gay groups.
△ Press/Media 101 and 201
△ How to mold the right message for your campaign.

Save Saturday, August 7, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
### Scholarship Challenge

Members and friends are being challenged to match $500 offered for the annual scholarship program. For the second year MLGPA has awarded two high school seniors $500 scholarships to attend post-secondary schools of their choice.

Scholarship chair Allen LaPan reports that more than two dozen entries were received following announcement of the offer at high schools statewide. Among application requirements are an essay on the topic: “in a society that routinely discriminates, what can I do to protect others from discrimination?”

Winners of this year’s scholarships were Gretchen Schaefer from Woodland High School, and Noel Sanders of Windham High School.

Those interested in helping deserving young people and in helping meet the challenge may send donations in any amount to MLGPA Scholarship Committee, 18 Summer St., Augusta, ME 04330.

### Silent Auction

Remember the Silent Auction from the Annual Dinner? It is still going on. There are a few leftover items or late offers available. Soo, send your bids on the following to Paula at PO Box 34, S China ME 04358 by July 4.

1. 1 Reiki Session by Vicki Walsh. Value $75 Min. Bid $50
2. 1 Therapeutic Massage by Deb Swanson. Value $40 Min. Bid $30
3. 1 Shampoo, cut & Styling by J Hairs. Value $50 Min. Bid $35
4. Hair services only by Hair Cut 100. Value $50 Min. Bid $35
5. 4 Hot tub & Sauna sessions. Richmond. Value $50 Min. Bid $35
6. 1 hr Polarity Session Sandy Hanson. Value $35 Min. Bid $25
8. Personal Last Will Sue Longley. Value $150 Min. Bid $100
9. 1hr pre-filing Human Rights consultation. Value $100 Min. Bid $60

Include your name, address, phone, item you are bidding on, and your bid price. Winners notified by July 10.

### Recognition Needed

Out there somewhere in your communities there are one or two people who you need to take a minute and recognize. In the past month these folks have gone the extra step on your behalf. This year for the first time ever a majority of Maine’s Legislators voted in favor of civil rights. The organization has sent a thank you note, but a friendly note from a constituent would reinforce a legislator’s bond with those they represent. Legislators work hard and deserve our thanks when they support us. Some made a big step when they supported our bill and that effort needs reinforcement.

Thanks to the governor’s veto of civil rights, we’ll be going around again. While you’re writing that note to your legislator think about the future. Make a promise—at least to yourself—to join the campaign a year from November and help that person get reelected. Our success in winning both houses is proof enough that our participation is working. Here is a list of those who voted in support of civil rights. The list is in geographic order, from north to south, and back.

#### The Maine Senate

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<td>Bar Harbor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevens, Kathleen</td>
<td>Blue Hill</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cashman, David</td>
<td>Orono</td>
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<td>Townsend, George</td>
<td>Old Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin, Hilda</td>
<td>Eastport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinette, Elizabeth</td>
<td>Van Buren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin, John</td>
<td>Fort Kent</td>
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</table>

Will whomever has it please return my copy of the gay agenda?

Harry Gordon