

COMMUNIQUE

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≡ CIVIL RIGHTS IN MASSACHUSETTS ≡

After 17 years, bill passes protecting lesbians & gaymen

At 1pm Wednesday, November 15, Massachusetts became the second state in the United States to guarantee basic civil rights protection to gaymen and lesbians as Governor Michael Dukakis signed the bill into law.

Victory in the Massachusetts Legislature came Monday, November 6 at 2:30pm as the Senate voted 21-9 not to reconsider its earlier vote to enact the bill. In the final debate, State Senator Edward Kirby cited an impending "end of civilization" if the bill became law.

The Massachusetts law extends equal protection to gaymen and lesbians in cases of discrimination in the areas of credit, housing, public accommodations, and employment. Amendments to the enacted bill forbid foster care placements which are "harmful to children," note that the bill does not legitimate lesbian or gay marriages, and exempts religious institutions from the law's provisions. The term "sexual orientation", as used in the bill, excludes sex with "a minor child as the sex object." The bill also states that no part of the law is intended to show "approval or endorsement of homosexuality or bisexuality."

Wisconsin, which passed a "gay rights bill" in 1982, provides legal protection in housing, public accommodations, and employment.

The Massachusetts victory is seen as a boost for efforts to pass similar legislation in Maine, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

The political right in Massachusetts, after passage of the bill, threatened a statewide referendum to nullify the law. However, their attempt to overturn the law by placing a referendum question on the 1990 ballot has been rejected by the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office. That state's chief law enforcer received a referendum petition December 7. But according to Massachusetts law, matters that relate to religion are excluded

as subjects for the referendum petition process. The religious exemption amendment to the civil rights bill constitutes a "matter related to religion" and exempts the gay/lesbian civil rights bill from going to the voters for a recall. According to Arline Isaacson, co-chair of the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, "the irony of all this is that the amendment that is causing their petition not to be certified was filed by opponents of the bill; it was an amendment we lobbied against."

(from *Gay Community News*, Boston)

≡ THE MAINE SENATE MAY BE JUST A LITTLE BIT GAYER NEXT YEAR! ≡

It's official. Ms. Dale McCormick, a founding member of the Maine Lesbian-Gay Political Alliance, Member of the Board of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, carpenter, teacher, author, and much more has announced that she is running for a seat in the Maine Senate. She will seek the seat on the Democratic ticket. Norman Weymouth, Republican from Gardiner, currently represents Senate District 18 (part of Kennebec County - Farmingdale, Gardiner, Litchfield, Manchester, Mormouth, Pittston, Randolph, Readfield, Wayne, West Gardiner, Winthrop, and the Lincoln County town of Whitefield). Weymouth's voting record for lesbian-gay civil rights has been perfect. A perfect zero for us; four times against us. Dale's victory in November will be good for the entire gay & lesbian community in Maine.

≡ VICTORY IN MANITOBA/WINNING IN NEW YORK ≡

Glen Murray is Winnipeg's first openly-gay City Councillor, and the third in Canada. He won election by a comfortable 622 vote margin. His platform focussed on urban reform, a burning issue in the densely-populated city core of Winnipeg. (from *Perceptions* magazine, Saskatoon)

Keith St. John has become the first Black openly-gay official in the United States with his November 7 election victory in Albany.

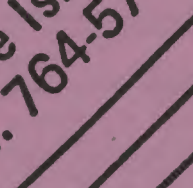
St. John won a seat on the City Council in New York's capital city. He is a legal services lawyer and member of several community groups. His campaign manager said that St. John's sexuality was publicly known, but was a "non-issue" in the campaign. He has served as a gay representative on the Albany Police Department's community relations panel. He said that he ran as "a candidate who happened to be gay," and raised issues that were of primary importance to his constituents.



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Phoneline/Telex: 207 498-2088

AROOSTOOK AREA GAY/LESBIAN AA GROUP meets
weekly in Madawaska, contact Northern Lambda Nord
for information

BANGOR AREA GAY-LESBIAN-STRAIGHT COALITION
(BAGLSC - "Eagles") c/o 87 Sunset Strip, Brewer
04412

DOWNEAST LESBIAN GAY ORGANIZATION (DELGO)
c/o Unitarian Church, 126 Union Street, Bangor 04401,
207/942-6503

DIGNITY/MAINE Catholic group, POB 8113, Portland
04104

FREDERICTON LESBIANS AND GAYS (FLAG) POB
1556, Station A, Fredericton E3B 5G2, 506 457-2156
GAIS ET LESBIENNES DE MONCTON/GAYS AND
LESBIANS OF MONCTON (GLM) CP POB 7102,
Riverview E1B 1V0, 506 858-1013

GAY/LESBIAN ALLIANCE University of Southern
Maine, 92 Bedford Street, Portland 04102, 207/780-4085
GROUPE GAI DE L'UNIVERSITE LAVAL (GGUL) CP
2500, Pavillon Larmieux, Cite Universitaire, Sainte-Foy,
Quebec G1K 7F4, 418 648-2751

HARBOR MASTERS, INC. leather-levi group, POB
4044, Portland 04104

LESBIAN/GAY COMMITTEE, MAINE CHAPTER,
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS
POB 5112, Station A, Portland 04101

MAINE BISEXUAL PEOPLE'S NETWORK POB 1792,
Portland 04104, 207/780-4085 (leave message)

MAINE LESBIAN FEMINISTS POB 125, Belfast 04915
MAINE LESBIAN/GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE POB
232, Hallowell 04347

NEW BRUNSWICK COALITION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
REFORM/LA COALITION POUR LA REFORME DES
DROITS DE LA PERSONNE DU NOUVEAU-
BRUNSWICK POB/CP 1556, Station/Succursale A,
Fredericton E3B 5G2

OUR PAPER: A Voice for Lesbians and Gaymen in
Maine published monthly, \$12 for one-year subscription,
POB 10744, Portland 04104

OUTRIGHT: Portland Alliance of Gay & Lesbian Youth
POB 5028, Station A, Portland 04101

WILDE-STEIN CLUB Memorial Union, University of
Maine, Orono 04469

WOMLAND TRUST Women Owning Maine Land Trust,
POB 55, Troy 04987

AIDS information SIDA

MAINE AIDS-line 1-800/851-AIDS (1-2437) (Portland -
775-1267), Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, Monday &
Wednesday 6-9pm, Saturday 10am-1pm

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