

MLGPA NEWS

A publication for the members of the Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance

MEDICAID WAIVER REINSTATED FOR PEOPLE WITH HIV/AIDS

Funding comes after scare that budget shortfalls would jeopardize program

By Tony Giampetruzzi

People in Maine living with HIV/AIDS received good news in March when state officials announced that money would indeed be made available to implement an HIV Medicaid Waiver.

The program, which had been approved and planned 3 years ago was stalled due to budgetary matters and was stricken altogether from the state budget in January. Pressure from activists and those living with HIV forced officials to take a second look at the matter, said Maine Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance Rick Galena.

"We're obviously delighted. It was the work of activists and those

on the forefront of HIV prevention that kept this at the forefront of the legislators' agenda," said Galena.

The program, when implemented, will grant a Medicaid waiver to those with HIV who wish to work without compromising their ability to receive drug assistance from the federal government. Originally, the HIV/AIDS Medicaid waiver would allow people living with HIV to earn up to 300 percent of the poverty level, approximately \$25,000, and still be eligible to have Medicaid pay for life-saving protease inhibitors. The revised appropriation announced in March lowers the poverty level to 250

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SENATE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS ENDA TO FULL SENATE

HRC Applauds Historic Vote, Says It Bodes Well

WASHINGTON — The Human Rights Campaign recently praised members of a Senate committee for a voice vote recommending that the entire Senate consider the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. If passed, ENDA would prohibit workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation. Specifically, it would bar employers from using a person's sexual orientation as the basis for employment decisions, including hiring, firing, promotion or compensation.

"This historic bipartisan voice vote is a momentous step towards a day when all Americans are treated equally in the workplace regardless of sexual orientation," said HRC Executive Director Elizabeth Birch. "We believe that today's events put ENDA on the



fast-track for passage in the Senate. We thank members of the committee who voted in favor of ENDA, particularly Senator Kennedy, for his phenomenal leadership and steadfast support."

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, chaired by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., considered

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WESTBROOK CONSIDERS CIVIL RIGHTS ORDINANCE

Effort would make city 13th in Maine to extend protections to gays and lesbians

By Tony Giampetruzzi

Westbrook city officials held their first public forum in March to discuss the possibility of a citywide equal rights ordinance. The measure, introduced by Susan Gilpin, a pastor at the Pride's Corner Congregational Church, would prohibit discrimination based upon sexual orientation in housing, employment, credit and public accommodation.

According to Rick Galena, the Executive Director of the Maine Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance, the meeting, which prohibited non-Westbrook residents from speaking

for or against the measure, was "typical."

"It was pretty equally divided, although I think that more people

"Civil rights is about our family, friends and co-workers. It's about our neighbors. "Civil rights unite us."

Rev. Susan Gilpin

spoke in favor of it than against it," said Galena. "In fact, the entire meeting was very civilized and those in support presented a very good argument for approving a gay rights measure." Galena said that

the crowd was equally split between those for and against the proposal and most everyone was wearing stickers that showed which side they were on. The Portland Press Herald estimated that as many as 60 people stayed for the 2 ½ hour discussion.

"Civil rights is about our family, friends and co-workers. It's about our neighbors," Gilpin said according to the Press Herald. "Civil rights unite us."

Galena said the proponents of the measure, including Gilpin, focused on "all the right themes."

"There were those who said

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

It is with mixed feelings of sadness and excitement that I write my last words to you as Executive Director of MLGPA. As of the end of July, I will be stepping down from my position to pursue other professional opportunities.

But even as this door closes, others are opening. I have enjoyed my time at MLGPA greatly. During the last year and a half, I have met many wonderful people, and together we have accomplished so many amazing things.

When I first came to MLGPA, I had four goals:

- To reach out and strengthen MLGPA's ties with other advocacy organizations.
- To grow MLGPA's membership and build a strong team of activists
- To further MLGPA's legislative agenda
- And to keep the fight for LGBT equality moving forward.

I am extremely pleased to report that together, we have accomplished all this and more.

But MLGPA is at a critical time in its history. Never before have more people been involved or have

more challenges demanded our resources and attention. If we are to continue to build on our successes of the past, we must remain strong and plan for the future.

As a community we are growing stronger and more resolute in our collective goal of full equality. I am proud to have been a part of the most amazing social movement of our time. I hope that I have served each of you well during my tenure at MLGPA.

As my final act as E.D., I encourage each of you to redouble your support and commitment to MLGPA. We need you now more than ever. Many important chal-

lenges await us and this year's elections will certainly prove to be the most critical in over a decade. Please do your part and get involved.

So while I won't be lobbying in the halls of the State House, or advocating for civil rights ordinances in City Halls across Maine, please know my heart will always be with MLGPA.

Best wishes to all of you.

Toward Justice and Equality,

Rick Galena
Executive Director

SPEAKOUT LAUNCHES NEW PRO-GAY AD CAMPAIGN

The Maine SpeakOut Project is ramping up efforts to make Mainers more aware of the state's gay and lesbian community and recently previewed eight public service announcements that will be shown on television stations throughout the state.

Produced by Surprise Advertising, whose past work includes campaigns for charitable organizations and human rights advocacy groups. The spots are intimate looks at the real lives of fathers, mothers, children, the clergy and friends. All the spots call for better understanding and the need to eliminate bigotry and homophobia in society.

According to SpeakOut, the purpose of the spots is to give a human face and story to the gay and lesbian experience here in Maine. All spots feature personal experiences that will help the public better understand the realities of being lesbian and gay in our communities.

"The focus is to tell the stories of a number of people who have been involved in gay and lesbian lives," said Scott Robbe, the new executive director of the Maine SpeakOut Project. "Clergy people, sons, daughters, parents...they are all represented."

The spots, which are all close-up face shots of individuals telling their stories include a mother who speaks of having to come to terms that her son isn't heterosexual. She shows a

photograph of her son as a baby. Another shows a father speaking about his daughter. He says that he knows she is gay, but that he really should call her up and talk to her directly about it.

In another spot, a minister affirms that sexuality is not a choice and that people need to learn to go beyond mere toleration and rather accept and celebrate the differences of others. All the spots were previewed at the

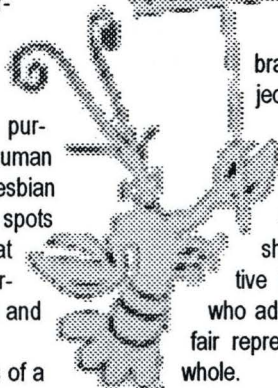
Charlie Howard Memorial Library at the Maine SpeakOut Projects' Portland office.

According to Robbe, participants in the project were chosen from a list of active members of SpeakOut. "All, in some way, shape, or form are known to be active in the organization," said Robbe who added that the goal was to amass a fair representation of the population as a whole.

The Maine Speakout Project was organized in April 1995 to promote respect and understanding among persons of differing sexual orientations. To accomplish its mission, SpeakOut trains and empowers volunteers to share their personal experiences and perspectives with individuals and community groups.

www.mainespeakout.org

**MAINE
SPEAK OUT!
PROJECT**



MLGPA RECEIVES GRANT FOR NEW WEB SITE PROJECT

The MLGPA Foundation, MLGPA's charitable and educational foundation, recently received a \$3000 Equity Fund grant by the Maine Community Foundation to support a new capital web site project and on-going communications programs.

"This grant will allow us to expand our contact with the LGBT community and involve more activists in our work," said Rick Galena, Executive Director of MDA. "There is tremendous opportunity available to us through the web and with this grant, we will finally be able to realize that potential."

The Maine Community Foundation works in partnership with charitably minded individuals to strengthen Maine's communities. For more information, visit the foundation's website at www.maineccf.org or call toll-free 1-877-700-6800



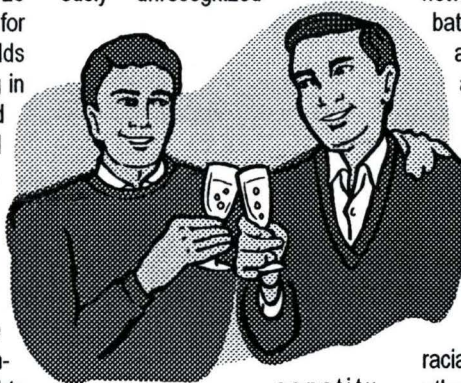
PORTLAND: GAY MECCA?

City ranks 3rd in nation for per capita gay and lesbian couples

It seems that more and more gay and lesbian couples are calling Portland, ME home these days. According to the new Census figures released earlier this year, Portland ranks third of the top 25 metropolitan statistical areas for percentage of coupled households that are gay or lesbian. Coming in behind San Francisco, CA and Santa Fe, NM, Portland gay and lesbian couples account for 1.95 percent of the households within the city.

"It's delightful," says Rick Galena, Executive Director of MLGPA. "It doesn't surprise me at all. Portland was the first community in Maine to offer civil rights protections to gays and lesbians and ever since then has set a high standard for supporting and nurturing human diversity. It's no wonder that more and more of us consider Portland a welcoming place to call home."

The 2000 U.S. Census Bureau figures for same-sex unmarried partner households provide researchers and policy makers with a wealth of information about a previously unrecognized



constitu-
ency. These numbers provide policy makers at every level of government compelling arguments for why the need to take care of the policy needs of gay and lesbian families.

Galena predicts the new statis-

tics will help advance the debate over LGBT families in Maine. "These figures will change the debate for many Mainers—from an abstract controversy read about in newspapers or seen in noisy debates on television to a discussion about real families, real people and real lives"

"To date, the U.S. Census Bureau has only released counts of gay and lesbian coupled households, but as more information is released, we will be able to determine the number of children living in these households, income, racial profile, home ownership and other important demographics. These facts will help us dispel stereotypes and present a fuller, more accurate picture of the gay and lesbian family in Maine," says Galena.

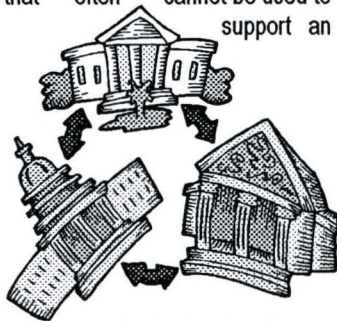
MLGPA AWARDED \$5000 EQUALITY GRANT

Grant will help lobbying efforts to move legislation and policy initiatives forward

The Human Rights Campaign recently announced the release of its Equality Fund grant recipients for the 2002 fiscal year. The Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance was among the recipients, with a \$5000 grant. The grants help provide financial support for statewide gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered advocacy groups to help advance basic equality for all Americans, says HRC.

"Partnerships between national and state organizations are essential in the struggle for equality," said HRC national Field Director Seth Kilbourn. "With the Equality Fund grants and other support we are responding in a more comprehensive way to the needs of LGBT statewide groups and working to strengthen those partnerships."

The Equality Fund grants provide financial support to statewide LGBT organizations to assist them in undertaking legislative and regulatory policy initiatives. Unlike other funding that often cannot be used to support an



organization's political work, the Equality Fund grants are unrestricted and can be used specifically for lobbying and issue advocacy. "The activists and organizations working at the state

level are doing an amazing job advancing legislation and fighting back anti-gay legislation," said Kilbourn. "They are leading the way for the LGBT community in their states and we are proud to support that work."

MLGPA Executive Director, Rick Galena, says that the grant money from HRC will be used to continue the organizations lobbying efforts in the upcoming session as well as sponsor a semi-annual LGBT Expo at the State House. MLGPA also plans to use a portion of the money to publish its first-ever legislative scorecard, ranking all 186 members of the Maine Legislature on their positions and voting record on a variety of LGBT-related issues.

MLGPA

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Executive Director

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**MLGPA News is a
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Story ideas, comments, and questions are always welcome and can be directed to Rick Galena at (207) 761-3732, fax (207) 761-8484 or email MLGPA@rcn.com

HRC BACKS MAINE REPUBLICAN SENATOR OVER PRO-GAY DEMOCRAT

Susan Collins earns support of Human Rights Campaign, and many gays and lesbians are not happy about it.

By Tony Giampetruzzi

Few people were stunned recently when the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the nation's largest gay and lesbian lobbying group, announced that they had endorsed incumbent U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine). After all, the Washington, D.C.-based group hinted that they were likely to do so and they tend to favor incumbents, especially those who support HRC's agenda in Congress.

More important, say some observers, is that Collins is favored among pollsters, and that an endorsement from HRC is likely to court necessary favor from the candidate when and if she is re-elected. HRC makes no bones about the fact that they are a single-tracked organization – their aim is to get candidates elected and then to educate them and assist them in pushing pro-gay legislation through the Capitol. And, while they didn't necessarily back Collins in 1996, HRC now says that she isn't so bad on gay issues – after all, she recently threw her hat into the ring in favor of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA).

What's more, the Portland Press Herald reports this week that HRC featured Collins in the "Pride and Prejudice" section of its most recent quarterly report as one of four members of Congress to be listed in the "pride" section for her support of the ENDA.

But Maine activists are crying foul. From the very beginning, rumors of a possible endorsement of Collins by HRC sent a ripple through the gay and lesbian establishment. Ever since Collins refused an award from the Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance (MLGPA) at a banquet in 1995, she has flip-flopped all over gay and lesbian issues. Moreover, says David Garrity, former president of MLGPA and Pingree supporter, Collins has consistently shifted to the Right since landing in D.C. Garrity points out that she refused to support any of a series of attempts at passing a gay rights law in Maine during the past 5 years while her colleagues, including Republican Sen. Olympia Snowe, strongly supported the efforts.

"The truth is that the version of ENDA that Susan Collins supports, won't cover housing or credit or public accommodation the way every single one of our bills in Maine have. It's worthless to the people in Maine because it leaves out most of the state's employers," said Garrity. "I know that ENDA isn't what I want. What I want are family rights, the same legal rights for same-sex couples as marriage. I don't foresee Susan Collins supporting us one bit on any of those issues."



U.S. Senator Susan Collins (Republican)

So why did HRC throw their endorsement to Collins? According to HRC political director Winnie Stachelberg, Collins earned the endorsement by "...consistently standing up for equality and supporting our issues. We hope our support will help lead to victory so they can help make Capitol Hill a more fair-minded place."



Senator Chellie Pingree (Democrat)

called moderate republican like Collins to support their agenda, there is a chance that they can also convince her to provide leadership within the Senate and to more aggressively lobby the support of her colleagues on gay issues. But that's where Galena suggests that their might be a disconnect, where HRC is putting all their eggs in one basket, so to speak.

"That's the message that I seem to be getting from what they say, but I don't know if that will be the case with Susan Collins. I guess the proof will be in the pudding, but she hasn't done one single thing on Capitol Hill that leads me to believe that she will be a voice for gays and lesbians." Galena points out that, just last week, federal Hate Crimes legislation was on the cusp of being approved until a contingent of republican Senators blocked the vote. Collins supported the legislation but she did nothing to prod it along. "And that's my major issue with her. She has occasionally done the right thing, but she has yet to prove that she is a leader. Where was her influence? Show me a leader and I'll understand the endorsement a little better."

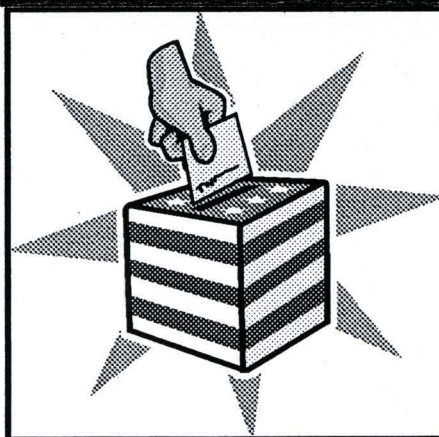
Galena says that Maine showed HRC a leader, Collins' challenger Chellie Pingree, a fiercely pro-gay state senator, but HRC failed to take note.

Now, Maine lawmakers and activists are taking things into their hands as they did last week when a group of them came together in Portland for a press conference and rally to discuss Pingree's commitment to the gay community and how her record outshines that of Collins.

"The more you hear about her. The more you learn about her and the more you get a chance to work with her side by side, you will understand what true political leadership is. Chellie Pingree," said openly gay Portland mayor, Karen Gerghty. "And we can't wait any longer to have true political leadership in the U.S. Senate. We need Chellie

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CAMPAIGN 2002



Rick Galena, the executive director of MLGPA says that he believes that HRC's endorsement of Collins may have been a savvy political move if Collins is truly concerned with making Capitol Hill more gay-friendly. "I think that the HRC is doing the right thing from their perspective and based on their criteria for endorsing candidates. HRC is a national organization that focuses on a national agenda and they are bi-partisan. They have a set of criteria and, from my conversation with them, it was very clear that they value strong, bi-partisan support on their issues."

So, in other words, if HRC can convince a so-

(Continued from page 4)

HRC ENDORSEMENT

Pingree."

Geraghty was just one of nearly ten speakers who extolled Pingree's virtues for dozens of on-lookers. Steven Wessler, a former Maine assistant attorney general and the founder of the University of Southern Maine Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence spoke about Pingree's dedication to diversity.

"Developing the capacity for communities both to respond to and prevent hate crimes does not happen by itself. Developing that capacity requires strong laws and it requires sufficient resources to provide the community organizations and non profits to do the work to make people think, and Chellie Pingree has been fighting for these laws, fighting for these resources not just this year, not just last year, but year after year," Wessler said. "And that kind of support takes courage, that kind of support takes perseverance. And that kind of support is not just important, it is absolutely critical if we are going to create a state and we are going to create a nation where everybody, regardless of their gender, their sexual orientation, their race or their religion, is safe and respected walking through the streets of their community. And electing Chellie Pingree next November in the Senate will serve all of us and will bring us much, much closer to that goal."

Ironically, while the fact that HRC has favored Collins may actually prove to be a boon for Pingree. It seems that one of Maine's powerful right wing lobbies is hopping mad that Collins has been kow-towing to the gay community. It seems that the Maine Christian Civic League has been flooded with letter, emails and phone calls from Collins supporters who are concerned that the League is hurting her campaign by writing about her so-called pro-gay and pro-abortion stances.

"(Pingree) sure isn't worse (than Collins) on important social issues, that's for sure," replied League director Michael Heath. "When a Republican politician can earn the endorsement of the Human Rights Campaign we're looking at a Republican that is way out there on homosexual political issues."

GAY CANDIDATES LOSE TWO MAJOR ELECTIONS IN PRIMARIES*State Rep. Michael Quint loses bid for state Senate, state Sen. Susan Longley loses congressional race***By Tony Giampetruzzi**

The votes are in and gay candidates are out when it comes to November elections in Maine.

In fact, Portland voters overwhelmingly rejected state Senate democratic nominee Michael Quint while voters in Maine's second congressional district narrowly defeated openly gay state Sen. Susan Longley in her bid for the U.S. House.

Meanwhile, winners include Quint's opponent Ethan Strimling, who is a long-timer supporter of the gay community and one-time executive board member of Maine Won't Discriminate.

Strimling, 34, has not held any elected political office but he will be favored over openly gay republican opponent Robin Lambert in November. The Portland state senate seat is regarded as one of the most powerful in Maine and, in the case of Strimling, is likely to be a stepping-stone to greater office.

"Strimling can be assured that he will be called upon to be a very strong leader for the gay community and I hope that we can look forward to his support," commented Rick Galena, executive director of the Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance. Galena would not speculate on Quint's political future. "But he ran a stellar campaign, one of the most impressive that I have seen."

Strimling's campaign is also rumored to be responsible for the sleuthing into the financial and educational inadequacies that inevitably led to the failure of Quint's bid for the seat. For six year, Quint had held onto a legislative seat representing Portland's Parkside district despite frequent inquiries into his legislative voting record and campaign finance foibles. Recent allegations proved too much for voters, though.

In the second congressional district, openly gay state senator Susan Longley (D-Liberty) was defeated at press time by a slim margin, but had yet to concede the race to fellow state Sen. And mill worker Michael Michaud of Millinocket. "The good news is that we ran a clean issues based race and we feel great about that," Longley told the Bangor Daily News. "In terms of the quality of the race, we earned an A plus. In terms of quantity, we'll have to wait and see."

Galena suggested that Michaud's overwhelming support from Maine labor factions likely influenced his win. "His campaign just totally changed the voter turn-out equation."

In other primary news, South Portland businessman Peter Cianchette won the republican nomination for governor. Cianchette, who favors gay rights for Mainers but only by referendum vote,

will face U.S. Rep. John Baldacci in November.

When it comes to Cianchette, Galena urges caution. "I have been very disturbed during the course of the primary election to watch (Cianchette's) drifting towards the right," said Galena. "It's very disturbing when a candidate feels that he or she has to placate the religious rights to get votes."

**Rep. Michael Quint**

First openly gay man to serve in the Maine House of Representatives. Represents District 33-part of Portland

**Sen. Susan Longley**

First Democrat to represent conservative district in Waldo County. First openly lesbian candidate for Maine's 2nd Congressional District

SALVATION ARMY LOSES VOTE IN PORTLAND'S DOMESTIC PARTNER INSURANCE BATTLE

Local chapter did not want to comply with ordinance requiring it to offer benefits

By Tony Giampetruzzi

PORTLAND — In a major public policy victory involving domestic partnership benefits, the Portland City Council recently voted that religious organizations, including groups like the Salvation Army, must comply with local laws that require organizations receiving public funds to offer health insurance to the domestic partners of their unmarried employees.

The vote followed a spirited two-hour discussion that included the sentiment of a fleet of angry senior citizens and the reading of hate mail received by Portland's openly gay mayor, Karen Geraghty.

"It was quite a circus," said Rick Galena, executive director of the Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance.

"The Salvation

Army actually bussed in a room full of senior citizens and it turns out that they were very misinformed with what we are trying to do. They seemed to be painting this as a gay and lesbian versus senior citizen issue and some of the councilors actually exacerbated that.

"In the end, the audience was overwhelmingly in favor of keeping the [domestic partnership] ordinance strong."

In fact, Geraghty submitted two amendments to the city's domestic partnership ordinance that strengthened the ordinance by making it more compatible with state insurance laws and by expanding the definition of domestic partner to include blood relatives.

Earlier this year, Portland's local chapter of the Salvation Army said that it would have to slash its Meals on Wheels program for seniors if forced to comply with the city's domestic partnership ordinance.

According to The Portland Press Herald, the Salvation Army received some \$60,000 from the city to supplement the \$400,000 meal program and senior center on Cumberland Avenue. The group has stated that it may have to cease operation of some or all senior programs if they are forced to comply with the local law because the national Salvation Army group has forbidden local groups from offering domestic partnership benefits. After the vote this

week, councilors said that the Meals on Wheels program can be assumed by other area agencies which comply with Maine law that mandates that all health insurance companies offer domestic partnership benefits to employers if they wish to purchase them.

"Once a group takes public funds, everyone knows that they are subject to certain restrictions," said Galena. "If they don't want to comply, they shouldn't ask for assistance."

Galena added that the issue has become contentious during the past few months; Geraghty had actually received hate mail that she

read to the audience at this week's meeting. "She was personally attacked with messages that said that she should rot in hell," said Galena.

The Salvation Army, a national

Christian-based organization, came under fire last year when it rescinded a weeks-old policy change that would have allowed regional chapters to determine whether or not to allow local chapters to offer domestic partnership benefits to its employees.

The controversy had been swirling since 1998 when the organization severed ties with San Francisco, which has a law more far-reaching than that in Portland — any business that operates in San Francisco is required to offer domestic partnership benefits.

The local Salvation Army was seeking an exemption from the city of Portland. One councilor, Jack Dawson, introduced an amendment that would have exempted religious organizations from the domestic partnership ordinance, but it was rejected.

"Once a group takes public funds, everyone knows that they are subject to certain restrictions. If they [Salvation Army] don't want to comply, they shouldn't ask for assistance."

**Rick Galena, Executive Director,
MLGPA**

(Continued from page 1)

ENDA

ENDA on April 24th. During the mark-up, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, announced her support of the bill.

"I have reached the decision to support ENDA because, in the final analysis, I simply do not believe it is fair to allow discrimination in the workplace against men and women solely because of their sexual orientation," said Collins in her statement.

Collins also offered two amendments that were accepted by voice vote that brought ENDA more in line with provisions in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., has committed to securing a vote on this bill before the end of the session. ENDA also has unprecedented support from the business community, with 65 companies, including 29 major corporations, having endorsed the legislation. Some of the companies that have endorsed ENDA are: AT&T, Coors, Xerox, FleetBoston, Eastman Kodak, Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft, General Mills and Shell Oil. "The Employment Non-Discrimination Act goes to the core of what this nation is all about. Giving all our citizens the fundamental right to be judged on one's own merits," said Shell Oil CEO Steve Miller, who wrote to the committee. "We encourage the Congress to move expeditiously to pass this common-sense legislation."

Currently, it is legal to fire someone in 38 states because of sexual orientation. The 12 states that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation are California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont and Wisconsin. Additionally, the District of Columbia prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.

ENDA enjoys widespread, bipartisan support. Currently, the Senate bill has 44 cosponsors and the House bill has 191 cosponsors.

MAINE ANTI-GAY GROUPS FAILS TO PUT REFERENDUM ON 2003 BALLOT

Christian Civic League fails to gather 42,000 signatures necessary to force anti-gay marriage initiative

AUGUSTA—The Secretary of State's Office confirmed this week that the Christian Civic League, which had filed a statewide referendum petition last fall, failed to collect the signatures necessary to put an anti-gay measure on the 2002 or 2003 ballot.

As many as 42,000 would have been needed to mount a challenge to state and local domestic partner benefits allowances, but Michael Heath told the Portland Press Herald that the CCL has only collected 5,000 signatures.

"In the summertime, we tried to gather signatures at agricultural fairs, and encountered a lot more resistance than we anticipated," Heath told the Press Herald, adding that events surrounding Sept. 11 slowed the group's signature

gathering efforts. A "Support Lawful Marriage" campaign launch last November by Heath apparently lacked the necessary momentum.

The Maine State Employee Health Commission approved a measure last year that extends benefits to the domestic partners of Maine state employees. Soon after, Gov. Angus King signed a law mandating that all insurance providers in Maine make domestic partnership benefits a component of group plans for any businesses that want them.

Those changes, and local actions such as the institution of a domestic partnership registry in Portland, triggered the Maine Christian Civic League to mount a signature campaign to overturn all such measures at the ballot box in

November 2002. The proposed referendum would have force a law that states, in part: "The legal rights and privileges of marriage shall be afforded only to married couples. No other consensual relationships between individuals will be given the same legal status as marriage. All state and local laws, statutes, rules, regulations, ordinances, policies, executive and administrative orders giving legal recognition to 'civil unions,' 'domestic partnerships,' or any other consensual relationship between individuals akin to marriage are declared null and void and are repealed.

Rick Galena, executive director of the Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance, called the Secretary of State's announcement welcome news.

"This isn't really surprising. It just goes to show that Mainers know that the issue of domestic partnership benefits is less a gay issue than it is an issue of equal access to health care," said Galena. "Every Maine citizen deserves health care regardless of the marital status or sexual orientation and Maine's citizens won't be hoodwinked by the League's dirty tricks this time."

Heath's group has been instrumental in mounting anti-gay referenda in the past, succeeding in 1998 by overturning a statewide anti-discrimination law. In 2000, his group was among those that successfully opposed another measure to grant civil rights protections to Maine's gays and lesbians.

ATTENTION MLGPA MEMBERS OFFICIAL NOTICE OF PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGE

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION FROM MLGPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PROPOSAL TO AMEND MLGPA BYLAWS GOVERNING CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENTS

The MLGPA Board of Directors, having met and voted on June 20, 2002, do hereby provide notice to all MLGPA members that the following change to the bylaws governing the organization's candidate endorsement process has been recommended by the Legislative and Political Action Committee, and in accordance with the current bylaws will be subject to a ratifying vote of the full membership on **July 18, 2002**:

It is the recommendation of both the Legislative/Political Action Committee, and the full Board of Directors, that

Article VIII of the MLGPA Bylaws, entitled "Candidate Support", be stricken from the governing rules of the organization and, that as a matter of policy, the criteria and process for making candidate endorsements be set by the Committee and subject to review and approval by the Board of Directors.

The current bylaws state that all candidate endorsements are to be made only by vote of the full membership at the September Annual Meeting. The new proposal will allow for both a flexible time frame and more efficient process, while preserving the opportunity for membership participation.

In accordance with the rules governing amendments of the organization's bylaws, any proposed amendments shall be made by a two-thirds affirmative vote of members present and voting at any Alliance meeting, provided that copies of the amendment are made available to all members at least

fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting.

All MLGPA members are encouraged and invited to attend the next meeting of the MLGPA Board, which is scheduled for Thursday, July 18, 2002. The meeting will be held at the Lithgow Public Library in Augusta from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Any members that have questions, concerns, or need directions should contact the MLGPA office at 800-55-MLGPA or email MLGPA@rcn.com

GAY COUPLE ATTACKED IN PORTLAND HATE CRIME

By Tony Giampetruzzi

PORTLAND — Just as Southern Maine Pride was getting underway, and only minutes after a rally in support of U.S. Senate candidate Chellie Pingree, the candidate heavily favored by Maine's gay community, two men were reportedly stalked and beaten in Portland in what is being investigated as a hate crime.

According to published reports, Jerry Boivin and Glenn Simmons were walking down Congress Street shortly after 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 13. The pair were headed to their apartment approximately two blocks away when a black pick-up truck drove by and its three occupants began to yell anti-gay epithets at Boivin and Simmons. The truck then stopped and two men ran after the pair.

And, while Simmons was able to get away, Boivin was knocked to the ground and punched in the face. The Portland Press Herald reported that, at that point, the driver of the vehicle then went after Boivin, saying that he would "finish the job" — he knocked Boivin to the ground a second time and began to strike him. Boivin told the paper that he believes the men were intoxicated at the time.

At press time, neither the Portland Police Department nor the Maine Attorney General's office, which is handling the case as a hate crime, would release information regarding the case saying that it is currently under investigation.

"We will find the individuals who perpetrated this crime. They will be prosecuted. You do have my word on that."
Attorney General Steven Rowe

However, community members, public safety officials and politicians rallied in support of the pair at impromptu press conferences. "We are deeply distressed and outraged by this hateful act of violence against a member of our community. Our hearts go out to this individual who was viciously attacked and beaten, apparently because he was gay, or perceived to be gay," said Rick Galena, executive director of the Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance.

"We applaud the authorities for moving so quickly to fully investigate this apparent hate

crime. We hope law enforcement will arrest and prosecute these criminals to the fullest extent of the law and send a strong message that these terrorist tactics have no place in Maine." Galena acknowledged that attacks on gays and lesbians in Maine's largest city are rare, but that this most recent incident underscores the fact that discrimination is alive and well in Maine. A heightened police force was called out for the remainder of Pride weekend.

State officials made it clear that they will use all resources to apprehend the perpetrators. "We will find the individual who perpetrated this crime," said Maine Attorney General Steve Rowe at a rally in support of the victims. "They will be prosecuted. We will bring an action under the Maine Civil Rights Act to the fullest extent of the law. You do have my word on that."

Openly gay Portland Mayor Karen Geraghty, speaking prior to Pride events, told the Press Herald: "I ask our citizens, if they feel so compelled, to come out and march or to stand on the sidelines in solidarity." And Portland's chief of police, Michael Chitwood, added, "This is a horrible thing. ... That it happened in the daylight only makes it more shocking." He called the act "cowardly and despicable."

To report a hate crime call the Attorney General's Office at 626-8800 or contact your local police department

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP STALLS HATE CRIMES BILL

WASHINGTON — Senate Republican leaders strong-armed Republican supporters of the federal hate crimes bill, known as the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, S. 625, to vote against a "cloture motion" on the bill, the Human Rights Campaign asserted on June 11, 2002.

The only way to have stopped a filibuster and allowed the Senate to debate and vote on the hate crimes bill would have been for 60 Senators to vote "yes" on the cloture motion. A cloture motion is designed to limit debate and allow a vote on a bill while preventing opponents from offering unrelated amendments. But six votes short, with a 54-43 vote, the cloture motion was defeated — with 49 Democrats, 1 independent and 4 Republicans voting in favor of the measure. Maine's two senators, Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe, voted in favor.

"We know that more than 60 senators support hate crimes legislation, yet only 54 senators voted for cloture," said HRC Executive Director

Elizabeth Birch. "While the Republican leadership talks about wanting to move the business of the nation forward, when it comes to hate crimes legislation, they went out of their way to grind the nation's business to a halt."

"We urge the bill's sponsors and the Democratic leadership to work to break the procedural logjam so we can pass this crucial bill that will give local law enforcement the tools they need to investigate and prosecute hate crimes," said Birch.

This legislation has passed the Senate twice. The first time was in 1999 when it was passed by unanimous consent as an amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State appropriations bill. The second time was in June 2000, when it passed in a bipartisan 57-42 vote. Both times it was removed in conference committee. In the 107th Congress, it was reported out of the Judiciary Committee in July 2001, with a 12-7 vote, also with bipartisan support.

The bill's lead sponsors are Sens. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., Gordon Smith, R-Ore., and Arlen Specter, R-Pa. The 33-year-old federal statute currently used to prosecute hate violence is in need of updating. It does not cover hate violence based on sexual orientation, gender or disability and has an overly restrictive element that requires that the victim be chosen because he or she was engaged in a federally protected activity. The bill before the Senate offers a sensible approach to help combat these violent crimes. It would extend basic hate crime protections to all Americans in all communities by adding real or perceived sexual orientation, gender and disability to the categories covered and by removing the federally protected activity requirement. The bill would also provide federal technical and financial assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute hate crimes.

MLGPA HONORS COMMUNITY LEADERS

On Saturday, March 30, 2002, the Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance marked its eighteenth year of education and legislative advocacy on behalf of Maine's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community with its annual gala awards banquet.

The event, co-sponsored by the MLGPA Foundation, MLGPA's charitable and education wing, celebrates individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to social justice and equality for Maine's LGBT community.

This year's sell-out crowd of 350+ guests was joined by many of Maine's most prominent elected officials. Congressman John Baldacci, State Treasurer Dale McCormick, Senate President Pro Tempore Mike Michaud, Speaker of the House Michael Saxl and Portland Mayor Karen Geraghty were just some of those to address the audience. Each spoke of the great strides that have been made for LGBT equality over the past two decades and vowed to continue to work on issues important to the community.

The evening was marked by special tributes to several fallen heroes and leaders of the LGBT community, including former Bath Iron Works President and civil rights advocate Buzz Fitzgerald and well-known AIDS activist and philanthropist Frannie Peabody. A special memorial tribute was held in honor of Senator Joel Abromson (R-Portland) who twice was the prime sponsor of civil rights legislation for gays and lesbian in the Maine Legislature. MLGPA Vice President Robin Lambert also announced MLGPA's dedication of the annual I. Joel Abromson Memorial Scholarship Fund in honor of the late Senator, proceeds from which will support two college-bound high school seniors as part of MLGPA's educational and leadership development efforts. The

fund has raised over \$4,000 so far this year.

MLGPA honored both well-known figures and unsung heroes this year, all of whom were long overdue for recognition:

The **Larry Connolly Award**, for outstanding legislative service and leadership, went to **State Representative Art Mayo (R-Bath)** for his eight years of service in the Maine House and his support on various legislative initiatives, including co-sponsorship of civil rights legislation, safe schools efforts and HIV/AIDS policies.

The **Cameron Duncan Award**, for extraordinary accomplishment, commitment and service within the AIDS community, went to **Bobby Perry**, found and Chair of **Positively Social**, a social support program for people living with HIV and AIDS.

This year's **Youth in Leadership Award** went to **Jordon Bosse**, a transgendered youth activist with Outright Lewiston/Auburn.

Two **Community Service Awards** for outstanding direct service to the LGBT community went to **Cindy Garthwaite**, youth advisor with Outright-Portland and **Jonathan Lee**, founder and former Executive Director of the Maine Speakout Project.

MLGPA also awarded its first ever **Partners in Progress Award** to the **Maine State Employees Association** in recognition of their outstanding collaborative efforts to achieve LGBT equality. MSEA was central in last fall's efforts to make Maine the ninth state in the country to extend health insurance benefits to the domestic partners of all state employees regardless of their sexual orientation.

Excerpts from this year's award winning MLGPA scholarship essays

"From this powerful experience, I learned that, when faced with discrimination, to remain silent is not an option. In order to protect others from discrimination, we must be willing to risk our own comfort and speak out by naming words and acts of hate when we witness them. Rather than noticing differences between one another, we must begin to celebrate by dancing in the rainbow of diversity."

Elizabeth Charles, Skowhegan High School

"I have learned that the best way to advocate is to be myself. I do not have to be class president or the captain of a sports team to be a leader. By being one of only two students "out" at my high school, the little that I have accomplished has had a significant impact on the acceptance in my community. In a society that routinely discriminates, I have to be myself so others are able to see that I am really no different."

Dennis Mercier, Jay High School

MLGPA ANNOUNCES 2002 SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

Each year the Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance awards two scholarships to college-bound high school seniors as part of its educational and leadership development efforts. The recipients are chosen based on their written essays addressing the question of remedying discrimination in our society.

Elizabeth Charles and **Dennis Mercier** submitted this year's award-winning essays. Each received a \$1000 scholarship to help them continue their education at a college or university of their choice. Both were chosen from among the 76 essays that were submitted this year.

Elizabeth, a graduate of Skowhegan High School, wrote about her encounter with so-called Christian demonstrators at the United Church of Christ's General Synod meeting last summer in Kansas

City. Dennis, one of only two "out" students at Jay High School, wrote about the power of self-acceptance and its link to advocacy. Both essays revealed their author's insights, personal growth, and courage. Coincidentally, both Elizabeth and Dennis ranked second in their class.

Congratulations to Elizabeth and Dennis! Thank you for your excellent essays and brave activism.

Anyone interested in making a tax-deductible contribution to MLGPA's scholarship fund may send a check payable to:

The Joel Abromson
Memorial Scholarship Fund
C/o MLGPA
PO Box 1951
Portland, ME 04104

MAINE COP SUES CITY OVER HARASSMENT

Federal lawsuit against Lewiston alleges that straight officer was taunted as 'faggot,' 'homo'

By Tony Giampetruzzi

John Parkin, the former Lewiston police officer who claims that he was harassed because fellow officers perceived him to be gay, has filed a lawsuit in federal court.

"It is about principle," Parkin told the Portland Press Herald. "It's about not letting the bully win."

While the Lewiston Police Department reports that it will fight the charge, Parkin is backed by the Maine Human Rights Commission, which unanimously voted last December that the former officer had suffered discrimination by fellow officers and Chief William Welch.

Welch was recently under investigation for allegedly harassing female officers. The city of Lewiston ultimately awarded damages to two women.

According to reports filed with the Commission, the harassment began soon after Parkin was hired by the Lewiston Police Department in 1999. At the time, a sergeant at the department allegedly chastised Parkin for waiting for back up rather than attempting to single-handedly break

up a violent brawl on a call in Lewiston.

According to the Lewiston Sun Journal, Parkin claims that the sergeant told him to change the official report of the incident because "it made him sound like a 'pussy'." The same day, a group of officers "accused him of having a sexual relationship with an openly gay dispatcher, then asked him if he was a 'faggot' and bombarded him with other lewd insults."

Parkin further alleges that fellow officers chided him for lightening his hair and tanning and they called him such derogatory names as "homo," "pretty boy," and "golden boy."

Much of the harassment allegedly originated from Welch and the report filed with the Commission said that at least one female officer corroborates that allegation when she states in her affidavit that Welch referred to Parkin as a "faggot."

"It's man slang talk," Edward Benjamin, the attorney for the Police Department, told the Sun Journal, suggesting that the type of teasing that Parkin endured is not sexual harassment as defined by Maine statute. "If someone tans and dyes his hair and gets teased about it, he is getting teased for dying his hair or going tan-

ning," and not for other reasons.

Benjamin also asserted "a police department is not like other workplaces."

Maine activists disagree.

"For too long, the attitude has prevailed that some work environments are different than others, that discrimination is okay and accepted as some but not others," said Rick Galena, executive director of the Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance. "With Parkin's case we are reminded that all discriminatory remarks in the workplace are inappropriate and harmful."

"This is also a perfect example of when we talk about how broad civil rights laws based upon sexual orientation actually are. When we say that these types of laws protect everyone, we mean it," said Galena. He added that Maine has been unable to pass a civil rights law that protects gays and lesbians in part because the public has not been convinced that the issue isn't one of special rights for gays.

"Here we have a perfect example that is not about special rights," said Galena. "It's about a heterosexual man who was harassed and tormented because of stereotypes and bias. Parkin's is a textbook case of how one's perceived sexuality can lead to an uncomfortable,

MICHAEL BRENNAN WINS SENATE SPECIAL ELECTION

MLGPA endorses former Representative, saying he will live up to the legacy of Sen. Joel Abromson



By Tony Giampetruzzi

PORTLAND — Former State Representative Michael Brennan (D-Portland) was elected to the Maine Senate in a special election March 15th to fill the seat of recently deceased

Sen. Michael Brennan state Sen. Joel Abromson. Abromson, who died in January after a bout with cancer, was a fiercely pro-gay Republican in an important district encompassing parts of Portland and Falmouth.

But, says Rick Galena, MLGPA executive director, Brennan will serve as a welcome replacement. "Michael Brennan's record reflects a real commitment to creating a climate of social and economic justice for Maine's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered citizens," said Galena. "As a former member of the Maine House, Michael Brennan is an effective advocate with a proven record of supporting equality and justice for all Maine's citizens, regardless of their sexual

orientation. Much like Sen. Joel Abromson was, Michael will be an invaluable supporter for gay and lesbian equality in the Maine Senate."

Galena points to Brennan's strong record as a legislator as proof that he will support issues of importance to the gay and lesbian community. In 1997, Brennan was one of 39 legislators who voted against the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act" and spoke up on the floor of the House for the rights of gay and lesbian families. And, as a social worker, Brennan has worked to encourage gay and lesbian individuals to provide foster care for children and has supported the right of qualified gay and lesbian couples to adopt.

According to Galena, who has worked with Brennan in the Statehouse, Brennan has voted, repeatedly, against discriminatory HIV testing measures, including mandatory testing of prisoners and pregnant women. Galena added that Brennan has pledged to support increased funding for HIV prevention programs and for expanded access to AIDS medications for people living with HIV/AIDS.

"Joel Abromson was a leader in the fight for civil rights for Maine's gay and lesbian commu-

nity. Unfortunately, Maine has not yet lived up to its commitment of equality for all our citizens," Brennan told MLGPA. "If elected to the Maine Senate, I will continue the work of leaders like Joel and be part of the fight to win full and equal rights for all people." MLGPA's Galena said that the district is an extremely important one for the gay and lesbian community.

"Our top priority right now is ensuring that the next senator from this district is as strong a supporter of equal rights as Joel Abromson was," said Galena. "We know Michael Brennan to be such a person. With Michael Brennan in the state Senate, we will keep our fight for equal rights moving forward."

Abromson, although a Republican, was the leading sponsor for more than one pro-gay protection bill in Maine and even helped to broker a deal with the Catholic Church to ensure support of a 2000 gay civil rights referendum that ultimately failed at the polls. Abromson was honored with a presentation at the annual MLGPA Awards Banquet on March 30. Abromson was the recipient of the group's Larry Connolly Award in 2000 in recognition of Outstanding Service as a Public Official. MLGPA also announced this year that an MLGPA scholarship will be named in Abromson's honor.

(Continued from page 1)

WESTBROOK

that discrimination isn't a problem in Westbrook, but others said that whether or not discrimination appears to be widespread is not the point. Any discrimination is wrong," said Galena. "I think what I saw last night is the pride that a lot of people are taking in Westbrook. For a long time, a lot of people have looked down on Westbrook as a mill town, but I think that there are a lot of people who are seeing that it is becoming a 21st century city and they are attempting to attract home owners and businesses. They know that this is the right thing to do."

Galena added that one councilor, John O'Hare, moved to bring the question to voters in the form of a referendum, but fellow councilors tabled the motion by a 5-2 vote in favor of giving the city more time to study the issue and to bring back a recommendation about how to move forward.

"I think that what we'll see next is that people on both sides will rally their supporters," said Galena. The Press Herald reports that Maine Christian Civic League president and Westbrook resident Paul Volle was at the meeting and said that "an ordinance would unfairly silence those who disagree with homosexuality."

"That would be a violation of the state Constitution," he said.

Galena said that he heard rumors that opponents of the measure intend to mount a signature campaign to attempt to show that a majority of Westbrook residents oppose the measure.

Westbrook isn't the only Maine city currently weighing-in on the gay rights issue. Some activist residents of the working-class city of Biddeford recently sent a letter to the city's mayor, Donna Dion, asking her to consider a move to consider a gay rights ordinance. According to Galena, Dion has only responded by saying that the re-

ANTI-GAY MAINE GROUP TARGETS BANGOR'S NEW CIVIL RIGHTS LAW

Christian Civic League wants to repeal city's 8-month-old ordinance barring anti-gay discrimination



Michael Heath

**B y
Tony**

Giampetruzzi

In February, less than a month after the Maine Christian Civic League acknowledged that it had not gathered enough signatures to challenge Maine's domestic partnership provisions, the group announced that it would not rest. CCL executive director Michael Heath told a crowd in Bangor that his group will spearhead an effort to overturn a recently passed gay and lesbian civil rights ordinance in that city.

While launching a new anti-gay marriage effort — Marriage Rules — aimed at reaching a youthful, more hip audience, Heath announced on Valentine's Day that he would be circulating a Marriage Rules petition that would authorize a referendum to amend the city charter to eliminate the four-

month-old law. "We want to offer visible support for marriage," said Heath from his office in Augusta last week. "What better day to do this than Valentines Day."

Heath added, "The ministry picked the youthful sounding theme ... because young people are especially vulnerable to pressures from radical forces in the society that are promoting non-marriage alternatives in romantic and sexual relationships."

As for the effort to stomp out the new Bangor law, The Bangor Daily News reports that anti-gay activists will need to gather more than 1,800 signatures, a number Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance executive director Rick Galena says won't be much of a challenge. "Keep in mind, Bangor has more right-wing, evangelical churches than any other city or town in Maine," Galena notes.

Galena is confident that Bangor voters will ultimately reject an effort to overturn the law. "I think that [the Christian Civic League] has bitten off more than they can chew. Bangor has a strong tradition of voting the right way. They overwhelmingly supported statewide pro-gay efforts at the polls in 1995, 1998 and 2000," said Galena. "And it's also important to note that the Civic League has

failed at other attempts to overturn local gay rights laws."

Bangor became the 11th Maine community to pass a gay and lesbian civil rights law in September, making Maine's second largest city the latest to defy a string of statewide votes against an omnibus equal rights provision.

"Equal rights and equal dignity are not special rights. They are basic American values," City Councilor Joe Baldacci told The Bangor Daily News when the measure was approved. Baldacci, brother of pro-gay U.S. Congressman John Baldacci (D-Maine), sponsored the effort with Councilor Judy Vardamis.

In the weeks following the passage of the law, Bangor city councilors attempted to also pass a law that would have extended domestic partner benefits to city employees. The measure failed largely in part to budgetary constraints. Anti-gay signature gatherers have 30 days to collect the signatures necessary to put the measure to voters in November. Galena said that MLGPA has already spoken with activists in the Bangor area and have offered them a number of resources if a campaign to stave off the repeal effort is necessary.

quest was forwarded to the city's attorney for review.

If the measure is approved in Westbrook, the city would join 12 other Maine cities and town with protections for gays and lesbians. They include: Bangor, Bar Harbor, Brooksville, Brunswick, Camden, Castine, Falmouth, Long Island, Orono, Portland, Sorrento, and South Portland.

**Help make MLGPA a strong
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(Continued from page 1)

HIV/AIDS

percent – the total appropriation for the program is approximately \$1.5 million.

Maine was the first state in the U.S. to be approved for the program in early 2000, but failed negotiations with drug companies and budgetary shortfalls slowed implementation of the program. Although officials suggested that the program would be implemented in early 2002, funding for the waiver was stricken from the state budget earlier this year. As concerns for budget shortfalls eased, activists rallied lawmakers to reinstate the funding.

"This has been held up in the Department of Human Services for almost two years now and, meanwhile, AIDS service organizations have been telling their clients that this program would lift a huge burden from their lives," said Galena, in December. "There are a

great number of people who would prefer to be in the workforce, and to get back to the life that they knew before they got sick, or to begin to follow their dreams, but, without this waiver, they simply cannot afford to do so."

The program, when announced in February 2000, was regarded as a boon for Maine and its residents living with HIV. "This is tremendous news," said Gov. Angus King, announcing that Maine was the first state to be approved for the waiver in February 2000. "I want to compliment the Dept. of Human Services, which led the effort to secure the waiver. Their research was able to show conclusively that it is less expensive for the state to pay for preventive measures that control HIV than it is to wait for the disease to progress to full blown AIDS. It's an excellent example of cutting edge research leading to a solution that improves the lives of Maine citizens suffering from a deadly virus."

SAVE THE DATE!

August 28, 2002

**MLGPA will be voting on
2002 Congressional, Gubernatorial
and State Legislative Candidate
Endorsements**

**All members are invited to attend.
We welcome and encourage your
participation in the candidate
endorsement process.**

**For more information, contact MLGPA
at 800-55-MLGPA
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