MAINE CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION

LD 602 is a bill to amend the Maine Human Rights Act to include the term "sexual orientation" in the protected categories of employment, housing, public accommodations, and credit, providing gaymen and lesbians protection from discrimination in these areas. Hearings before the Judiciary Committee, originally scheduled for May 5, have been re-scheduled for Monday, May 11 in the State Office Building, Augusta. This Legislative Session will conclude no later than June 15. The Judiciary Committee will recommend that the gay-lesbian civil rights bill "ought to pass" or "ought not to pass".

Legislators will vote on the bill between mid-May and the end of the session. Now is the time to let your legislators know what you think. You may write your State Senator and Representative or you may choose to call them. When you call, you can identify yourself or merely state that you live in their district. Whatever you do, contact your two legislators.

When speaking about the bill, refer to it as it is titled (a bill to include sexual orientation in the Maine Human Rights Act) or as the "gay civil rights bill". Try to avoid the term "gay rights bill".

Opposition comes exclusively from a small group of fundamentalists. Employers, landlords, banks, or restaurant owners, those who would be affected by the bill, have not testified against it. The Chamber of Commerce in Maine has taken no position.

As to the religious question, the issue is separation of church and state. Objections are made to the bill on moral grounds based on religion. These people have a right to hold these beliefs, even to teach their children these values. But they do not have the right to impose this narrowly-held moral view on the rest of society. Passage of this bill will not impinge on or limit in any way the private practice of any religion.

The bill does not talk about unlimited rights, or more rights than others have. It would grant us the right not to be fired, evicted, denied public accommodation, or denied credit SOLELY because of our sexuality.

On AIDS: The lack of civil rights of gay people impedes the fight against AIDS. The State of Maine's policy is a contradiction when dealing with gaymen and lesbians. We are not granted equal protection under the law and have no redress through the courts. Enter AIDS. Now the State Bureau of Health is urgently seeking our advice and cooperation in fighting AIDS. The Bureau would also like gaymen to be tested for exposure to the virus (HIV), but because of years of lack of legal protections, gay people are wary of government and have learned how to hide. The State cannot have it both ways. Civil rights must be granted to lesbians and gaymen to foster the cooperation that is urgently needed.

Here are the names, addresses, and home phone numbers of the 15 members of the Aroostook County delegation. Call them at home on the weekend. We pay their salaries; they work for us. There's nothing wrong with contacting them at home. They expect it. You may want to contact them in Augusta by mail (Senators: State House, Station 3, Augusta 04333; Representatives: Station 2) or by telephone: Senators: 1-800-423-6900/Reps: 1-800-423-2900. The switch-
board will take a message. Whatever method you choose to tell your two legislators to vote for LD 601, TELL THEM TODAY. A single phonecall or letter has tremendous impact.

MAINE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Districts 140-151 (Aroostook County)

140: Rep. Carl B. Smith, FOB 39, Island Falls 04747, 463-2192
141: Rep. Gennette M. Ingraham, 45 Court Street, Houlton 04730, 532-2415
142: Rep. Mary H. MacBride, 63 Hilleide Street, Presque Isle 04769, 769-0421
** Mary MacBride is a member of the Judiciary Committee. You don't have to live in her district to urge her support for LD 601.
143: Rep. John Lisnik, RDF 1, Box 130, Presque Isle 04769, 764-0421
144: Rep. Carolyn T. Mahany, RDF 1, Box 159, Easton 04740, 488-2741
145: Rep. Susan J. Pines, 22 Long Road, Limestone 04750, 328-4821
147: Rep. Malachi Anderson, Route 1, Caribou 04736, 492-1771
149: Rep. McHenry, Jr, North 4th Avenue, Madawaska 04756, 728-4365
150: Rep. Judy Paradis, RDF 1, Box 1009, Madawaska 04756, 728-4854

MAINE SENATE, Districts 1-3 (Aroostook County)

1: Sen. Raymond Theriault, 1 First Street, Fort Kent 04743, 834-3082
2: Sen. Donald F. Collins, 4 Borsca Avenue, Caribou 04736, 492-0391
3: Sen. Margaret C. Ludwig, 2 Rogers Road, Houlton 04730, 532-2715

CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION ADOPTED IN ONTARIO AND THE YUKON

Two jurisdictions in Canada have adopted legislation protecting lesbian and gay men from discrimination. Ontario's liberal government passed a bill to include "sexual orientation" in that province's Human Rights Code. Similar rules have been adopted in the Yukon by their territorial Liberal government. Quebec also provides legislation to protect the gay people of that province. No Atlantic Canadian governments have adopted similar protections. It has not been finally determined if and when a Charter of Rights and Freedoms will include gay people as a protected class.

RACISM CONTINUES ON ENTRANCE BY FOREIGN GAYS

Ronald Reagan has signed into law a newly-adopted U.S. Immigration Reform and Control Act which leaves fully intact language in the previous immigration law that excluded gai men and lesbians from entering the United States. Under current law all gay people can be excluded from the US on the basis of being accused of a "psychopathic personality." This law applies to foreign gays entering the US to visit, do business, or to immigrate. All Canadians are reminded to avoid identifying themselves as gay when entering the USA. Avoid wearing buttons or T-shirts dealing with gays or carrying books or magazines which may indicate that you are gay.

HIV AGENDA

The agenda for Lambda's next monthly meeting in Fort Fairfield will include nominations for the Steering Committee for the period June-December 87. Elections will be at the June meeting in Presque Isle. There will also be a report about the newly-acquired books, many of which are first-editions and autographed copies of lesbian-gay literature.
COMMUNIQUE is published ten times yearly by Northern Lambda Nord, an organization serving the Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual community of northern Maine and northwestern New Brunswick. Subscriptions - $10 per year. NIN Membership - $13 per year, which includes Communiqué. Low-income people may make arrangements to pay in installments. NIN accepts Canadian and U.S. funds at par. NIN is a non-profit organization; all donations are U.S. tax deductible. Advertising rates in Communiqué are available upon request. Your comments and contributions are welcome.