



Newsletter

February 2006

Dignity/Seattle Liturgy

Reminder

Liturgy is at 6:00 p.m. every 2nd Sunday: February 12, March 12
Ravenna United Methodist Church 5751-33rd Ave NE Seattle

Gay Civil Rights Bill Passes! Marriage Equality Next Much more hard work ahead as moves to repeal bill initiated

Equal Protection Under the Law

Commentary by Barbara J. Monda, Olympia WA
Call to Action - Western Washington
January 28, 2006

One would imagine that people living in a democracy founded on the belief that all its citizens enjoy equally the same rights and protections would in fact never need to reestablish this by separate law. However, for a certain percentage of its citizens, that is exactly what they are being asked to do. The milieu of our times has made it necessary for these citizens to wait decades until proven "worthy" to be granted what the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution purports to have established long ago for all Americans.

Yesterday, in Washington State, after 29 years of failed attempts, the State legislature passed a law granting equal protections to all Gay, Lesbian and Transgendered citizens of the State. While this is worthy of celebration, since in fact this group has been singled out for harassment and discrimination, yet we must ask ourselves why was this even necessary?

It is a grim fact that in our modern, *leader of the free world* country, we are still necessitated to enact legislation to allay discrimination against certain classes of its citizens, Blacks, Women and now G/L/T.

I feel it is important to remember that one of the reasons this country was founded was to secure a haven of freedom from the tyranny of legislated religious ideology. Yet it seems that is where we are today. We are involved in a battle with those who virulently believe it is their duty to impose their religious beliefs on all. Remember, Diversity is a fundamental American characteristic.

Marriage Equality Ruling Soon

Commentary by Leo N. Egashira, Editor
Dignity/Seattle Newsletter

Nearly one year ago, the Washington State Supreme Court started hearing oral arguments challenging the constitutionality of the state's "Defense of Marriage Act" (DOMA), which effectively prohibited marriage between same-sex partners. The case was brought to the Supreme Court after two lower courts in King and Thurston Counties found for the plaintiffs.

The passage of the Gay Civil Rights Bill has no legal bearing on the Supreme Court ruling, but the trend in interpreting laws to be more inclusive bodes well for GLBT citizens. A ruling this month is all but assured. A favorable ruling is considered "likely." Whether favorable or unfavorable, the community will gather to celebrate or protest one of the most important state court rulings that will affect our full participation in society. Please refer to the announcement on the next page for details on the rally.

Challenges to Gay Civil Rights Bill Afoot

Even before Governor Christine Gregoire signed the bill into law on January 31st, the perennial "initiative pest," Tim Eyman filed both an initiative and a referendum to overturn the Gay Civil Rights Bill in the general elections in November 2006.

So, despite 29 long, hard years of work in passing the bill, we have much more hard work to ensure the new legal status quo. One point that needs to be emphasized is that throughout American history, the will of the majority cannot be used to circumscribe the rights of a minority.

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Washington State Supreme Court Marriage Equality Decision Day Rally: Page 2

An urgent message from Equal Rights Washington: Page 3

An Important LGBT Court Decision, affecting equal access to marriage and all of its benefits and burdens will be made sometime soon.

The Washington State Supreme Court will decide a case that will affect the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people to marry. Whether or not it decides to overturn Washington State's "Defense of Marriage Act" (DOMA)...We* are calling all who support LGBT people's right to marry to a community gathering to either...

PROTEST or CELEBRATE

Formerly planned for Seattle's Volunteer Park, it will now be held at

Seattle 1st Baptist Church

1111 Harvard Ave

at 5:30 p.m. on the evening of the

STATE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION

Supreme Court decisions are handed down on Thursdays, but announced on Wednesdays. This will give us only 24 hours to spread the word when notice of the decision is announced. Whatever the decision, we* call on all fair-minded Seattle area individuals and organizations to commit to quickly spread the word and to join together by attending this action. For more information please go to www.DontAmend.com

***Sponsored by:**

DontAmend.com * Lambda Legal * American Civil Liberties Union of Washington * American Friends Service Committee * Entre Hermanos * Equal Rights Washington * Freedom to Marry * Greater Seattle Business Association * Legal Marriage Alliance * National Gay & Lesbian Task Force * Northwest Women's Law Center * Parents, Friends & Families of Lesbians and Gays * Religious Coalition for Equal Rights * Seattle Gay News * Seattle Metropolitan Elections Committee for Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgenders * Seattle National Organization for Women

A message from

February 1, 2006

Equal Rights Washington

The LGBT community and our allies scored a major victory yesterday when Governor Gregoire signed HB 2661. If your Representative or Senator voted in favor of the bill, please take the time to call and thank them for their support at **800-562-6000**.

Now we must fight to keep a law that community activists worked for 30 years to pass.

We will beat Tim Eyman's initiative and referendum. And we are prepared for the battle to come over marriage equality. Equal Rights Washington is a membership based organization. Please join us. We rely on contributions from people around our state to fight the right-wing bullies.

Tim Eyman lashes out:

"The voters have watched this disgusting display of arrogance and selfishness for weeks."

Equal Rights Washington's Fran Dunaway responds:

"It's unfortunate that the principle of basic equality is the target of this year's right-wing organizing drive disguised as a ballot campaign.

"Fair-minded Washingtonians rejoiced at the history we made together with HB2661, in extending equal rights throughout the state. But we and our allies also anticipated that our opponents would go to any length to see that discrimination continues in Washington, and we will do what we need to in order to protect equal rights. We are mobilized, we are motivated and we are ready. **We won on Friday and we will win again in November.**

"We don't need this in our state. This is about everyone. Washingtonians don't discriminate and we don't divide communities. And the sponsors of this initiative are about to learn that the hard way." Please tell your family and friends about ERW's work on behalf of LGBT equality. Thank you for all that you do.

Yours in Equality,
Lee Frankl
Associate Director
Equal Rights Washington

Fighting for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equality.

To join and/or contribute, please go to: **<http://www.equalrightswashington.org/>**

The most disheartening aspect of the 25 to 23 vote to pass the bill was the strikingly deep partisan divide it revealed: Only one Republican (Finkbeiner of Kirkland) voted for the bill and only two Democrats (Hargrove of Hoquiam and Sheldon of Potlatch) voted against. The polarization in Washington DC is reflected here in Washington State, as well. I'm afraid that the votes on the Gay Civil Rights Bill will lead to even more polarization. In a terrible irony, the "Party of Lincoln" has shown itself to be the "Party of Bigotry." I shudder to think the fate of the bill had the Washington State governorship been in the hands of Republican Dino Rossi, instead of Democrat Christine Gregoire.

Gay Republicans have a difficult conundrum, with which I sympathize: The perfectly admirable policies of fiscal restraint and personal responsibility have been linked part and parcel to the loathsome policies of intolerance and discrimination. The Republican Party has been hijacked by right-wing extremists in much the same way that the Catholic Church is in the hands of patriarchal homophobes. The Washington State Catholic Conference, the lobbying arm of the three bishops in the state, opposed passage of the bill as it has done every legislative session.

The situation between Gay Republicans and Gay Catholics is different, however. In the pews and parishes, most Catholics consider themselves to be socially moderate or liberal and work for and vote for justice. It is no accident that the "hero" of the newly-enacted bill is Representative Ed Murray (D-Seattle), a church-going Catholic gay man. It is to the credit of the Catholic Democratic State Senators that all but one (Hargrove) voted in defiance of the bishops to recognize the rights of all Washington citizens.

The battle lines have been drawn: Sitting on the sidelines is not an option. Work to defeat repeal of our belatedly recognized civil rights. Work to promote or defend Marriage Equality, once the Supreme Court hands down a decision. Equally important, challenge the Catholic Church to return to its roots and live by Jesus' example of embracing and affirming all of God's children. Here: I'll make it easy:

<http://www.equalrightswashington.org/>

<http://www.DontAmend.com/>

<http://www.DignityUSA.org/>

Dignity/Seattle Board Meeting **Tuesday, February 7th, 7:00 p.m.** **at Delia Vita's house**

Dignity/Vancouver BC/Dignite

Dignity/Vancouver BC

604/432-1230

Friday, Feb. 3rd 7:30 p.m. Business Meeting at Dennis L-H's. 604/430-3466.

Friday, Feb. 17th 7:30 p.m. Worship/Liturgy at Gerry W's. 604/435-1950.

Sunday, Feb. 19th 5:00 p.m. Preparing dinner at Diamond Centre (palliative care for persons with AIDS). Contact Kevin S. 604/874-3428.

Monday, Mar. 6th 7:30 p.m. Business Meeting at Dennis B's. 604/669-3677.

Did you know . . .

that there are three ways to read the Dignity/Seattle Newsletter and DignityUSA Dateline every month?

1. Go on-line to <<http://www.DignitySeattle.org>> to read or download the Dignity/Seattle Newsletter, and <<http://www.DignityUSA.org>> to read or download the Dateline. Both are in PDF (Portable Document Format) and require the free Adobe Acrobat Reader.
2. Electronically receive PDF copies of both the Newsletter and Dateline to your e-mail on record. In order to receive news to your e-mail, please contact Paula Lavallee at <plandtish@aol.com>.

Advantages of Options 1 and 2 above:

- a) Save our Dignity/Seattle chapter copying, envelope and postage costs,
 - b) Ability to make color hard copies, instead of the black & white mailed hard-copies,
 - c) Receiving news 1-3 days faster on-line than "snail-mail," and
 - d) Ability to go to links on-line.
3. Hard-copy sent via USPS will continue to be an option.