

# Just news

## Hundreds arrested in AIDS actions

Twenty cities around the nation took part in ACT NOW's (AIDS Coalition To Network, Organize and Win) Day of Action on October 6. The nationwide coordination of events, timed to coincide with the final showing of the AIDS Quilt in Washington, D. C.

In San Francisco a march of 500 people organized by ACT UP/San Francisco was harassed and attacked by hundreds of police. Demonstrators protesting federal AIDS policies were repeatedly thwarted in their attempts to march in the street, previously a common practice in that city. Sixty people were arrested primarily for blocking traffic and at least one man received injuries substantial enough to require hospitalization.

Four hundred demonstrators closed the Los Angeles Federal Building to arriving employees for much of the morning. Seventy-nine people were arrested for blocking entrances to the building in an effort to press their demands for release of AIDS drugs, an end to HIV-related discrimination, and a national health care program. One man was arrested on assault charges of allegedly spitting on a police officer when he was chanting. He was then held in violation of a judge's order by federal officers attempting to obtain a blood sample from him.

In Chicago 800 demonstrators marched in that city's downtown Loop area for sexual freedom. The action brought together ACT UP/Chicago and pro-choice groups. In Washington, D. C. 200 people demonstrated in front of the White House. Only a massive police presence kept activists from chaining themselves to the White House fence.

ACT UP/Boston protested at the home of Astra Corporation's president. Astra is the maker of fosfocit. Meanwhile protesters in Denver struck at Burroughs Wellcome, the makers of AZT. In Austin 40 people demonstrated against the Texas Medical Association. Dallas activists used the occasion to attack an HIV sero-prevalence survey being conducted by the county health department. ACT UP/Kansas City held nine hours of actions, one for each year of the epidemic, attacking the city health department and distributing safe sex literature.

Demonstrations in New Orleans, Syracuse and Ann Arbor attacked local handling of AIDS care. The testing and release of AIDS treatments was the focus in Pittsburgh, Orlando and Ft. Lauderdale. Sonoma County, Calif. and Houston rallied against federal AIDS policies generally. ACT UP/Seattle targeted a placebo study being conducted on HIV-positive infants. Actions were also held in Atlanta and Portland, Oregon.

On April 23 activists will converge on Chicago demanding access to quality health care for all. The Prudential Insurance Building and Cook County Public Hospital will be the targets. In June activities will shift to the International AIDS Conference being held in San Francisco.

## Congress approves homophobic legislation

National and District of Columbia lesbian and gay organizations strongly denounced the recent anti-gay Congressional vote that weakens the D. C. Human Rights Act and permits religiously affiliated educational

institutions to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

The House, on October 11, approved by voice vote the so-called Armstrong amendment. The amendment exempts religious educational institutions from Washington, D. C.'s Human Rights Act and its strong gay and lesbian anti-discrimination protections.

Before passing the Armstrong-Dammeyer amendment, the House rejected by 252-170 an alternative amendment supported by gay and lesbian activists and approved by House and Senate conferees, which would have allowed religious institutions, including Georgetown University, to "deny endorsement, approval or recognition" to those who promote sexual lifestyles contrary to their religious doctrine.

However, it also would have forbidden discrimination in terms of offering equal services, facilities and other campus resources to all student groups regardless of sexual orientation. The alternative language was later rejected by the House.

In 1988, Congress passed a similar amendment, but Federal and Appeals Court decisions ruled that the amendment violated the D. C. Councilmember's First Amendment rights. The recent Congressional action amends the D. C. code directly.

The amendment was created after an ongoing battle between D. C.'s Georgetown University and its gay and lesbian student group was settled in court to the satisfaction of both parties.

## New study cites violence

A new report from the Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR) ties the rising tide

of violence against gays and lesbians to far right and white supremacist organizations that are using anti-gay bigotry to attract new recruits.

The report is entitled *Quarantines and Death: The Far Right's Homophobic Agenda*. "Gay people have increasingly become the target of bigoted violence," explained Daniel Levitas, executive director of the Atlanta-based CDR. "This report describes the theoretical framework of the far right's homophobic agenda and outlines the basic steps needed to confront anti-gay bigotry."

The 40-page monograph was written by CDR research director Leonard Zeskind and Mab Segrest, a long-time lesbian activist, who is currently director of research and publications for North Carolinians Against Racist and Religious Violence, based in Durham.

"Homophobic violence challenges all citizens who wish to preserve the fabric of democracy to act," says Segrest, who serves on the board of directors of the CDR.

*Quarantines and Death* examines such issues as why gay men and lesbians have been targeted by far right groups, the nature of homophobic violence, and the ideology of the new right and the far right regarding homosexuality, AIDS and civil rights and is available for \$5 (including postage and handling) from the Center for Democratic Renewal, P. O. Box 50469, Atlanta, GA 30302. A discount of 15 percent is available on orders of 10 or more.

"This document underscores the basic need for all groups that are the targets of bigoted violence to work together," said Kevin Berrill, director of the Anti-Violence Project of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

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