

Change from the inside

Donna Shalala, secretary of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, circulated a strongly worded anti-discrimination policy for employees in her department that includes protections for sexual orientation. By doing so, the HHS becomes the fifth federal department that has issued a policy forbidding discrimination against gay and lesbian federal employees since President Clinton took office last January.

Shalala said in her statement, "My personal commitment to diversity and equality is long-standing and non-negotiable." Shalala's policy differs somewhat with those already issued from the Departments of Transportation, Agriculture, Justice, the Office of Personnel Management and the White House. A separate statement issued at the same time directs top managers of the HHS on the specifics of carrying out the policy. Shalala's policy calls for "providing training on diversity issues, taking measures where mistreatment of employees exists or persists, and clearly communicating the policy by incorporating it in your internal personnel processes." The memo also delineates remedial actions available to employees who feel they have experienced discrimination or harassment.

This series of departmental directives is, according to Rep. Barney Frank, the process President Clinton is using to protect gay and lesbian federal workers from discrimination instead of issuing an executive order. Sources say that an executive order might provoke appeal measures from homophobic members of Congress. Frank said, "By January, it will be made clear that all civilian employees in the government will be free of anti-gay discrimination." Frank also projects that directives will be issued by agencies who require security clearances, similar to the one issued by Attorney General Janet Reno, to prohibit discrimination against gay men and lesbians in granting and retaining security clearances.

Montana's sodomy law challenged

Six people from the state have filed a lawsuit that challenges the state's sodomy law provision that makes sex with persons of the same sex a felony. The state law is the most severe in the country, say legal experts. Those convicted can serve up to ten years in jail and be charged fines of up to \$50,000.

Although the law has never been enforced, Diane Sands co-chair of the gay and lesbian rights group Pride Montana believes the law "is an affront to the dignity, privacy and humanity of Montana's gay and lesbian citizens." She added that the law is damaging because it justifies discrimination and violence toward lesbians and gay men.

Rosemary Daskiewicz, an attorney for the

plaintiffs, said the lawsuit challenging the law is based on the state constitution's guarantee of individual privacy. She said, "Clearly, if the concepts of individual dignity and privacy mean anything, they must protect the rights of consenting adults to engage in acts of intimacy in the privacy of their homes."

Earlier last year, the state of Montana rejected two bills protecting the rights of gay men and lesbians.

Florida groups fight homophobic initiative

Twelve civil rights groups have filed a brief with the state Supreme Court to keep a homophobic initiative off next November's ballot. The groups argue that the proposed amendment to the state's Constitution is misleading, vague, too broad, unconstitutional and would not only affect gay men and lesbians but other groups as well.

The amendment entitled "Laws Related to Discrimination are Restricted to Certain Classifications" contains no mention of gay men, lesbians or sexual orientation. Rather, the proposed amendment forbids the state or any municipality from recognizing "any right, privilege or protection for any person based upon any characteristic, trait, status or condition other than race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, ethnic background, marital status or familial status." Therefore, the proposed amendment, if passed, would eradicate legislation currently protecting lesbians and gay men in four of Florida's cities and three of its counties. Moreover, it would prohibit any future anti-discrimination laws in the state.

In addition, opponents argue, if passed, the amendment could strike down laws affecting groups such as veterans, students, corporations and consumers. "This amendment could void all consumer protection statutes which provide protections based upon a person's status or condition of being a consumer," the brief says.

The American Family Political Committee of Florida, an arm of the American Family Association, is initiating the proposed amendment. A spokesperson for the group has denied that the initiative would affect a variety of groups. The group has made copies of the petition available to anyone calling the AFA at (800) GAY LAWS. Callers also receive a cover letter stating, "This petition is designed to stop homosexual activists and other special interest groups from improper inclusion in discrimination laws," and a brochure entitled, "Are Homosexual Rights Traditional Civil Rights?"

Florida state law requires that the state Supreme Court must certify, in advance, that the title and text of a proposed amendment accurately state its purpose, and that the amendment deals with only one subject.

Compiled by Lee Norwood

Waddell & Reed FINANCIAL SERVICES



Eric Brown Floreid Walker Karen Curry

Ask us about...

- Savings and Investing
- Life Insurance
- Retirement Planning
- Financial Planning
- Disability Insurance

To the Lesbian and Gay communities~
Thanks for your support!

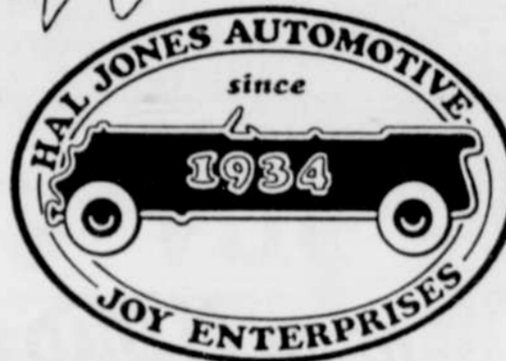
Call today for information:
(503) 238-6036

500 NE Multnomah, Suite 278
Portland, Oregon 97232

HAL JONES AUTOMOTIVE JOY ENTERPRISES

Bill Joy
Bill Joy

Ron Joy
Ron Joy



**We love our just out
customers.**

**See us for your
automotive needs.**

5111 NE Fremont
Portland, OR 97213

288-1130

TWENTY-THIRD AVENUE B·O·O·K·S

1015 NW 23rd Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97210, (503) 224-5097

Monday-Friday 9:30 - 8 pm □ Saturday 10 am - 8 pm □ Sunday 11 am - 4 pm

EYES!

ON BROADWAY
2300 NE BROADWAY • PORTLAND
284-2300

THOMAS M. BARRETO, O.D.

- Eye examinations
- Contact lenses
- Contemporary eyewear

*"See what you've
been missing"*