

tion a victory even though he says to his knowledge there is no history of housing discrimination against sexual minorities in Lacey.

"This will preclude there from ever being any," he says.

Not everyone is applauding the amendment, however. Tim Seth, president of an association of 300 rental unit owners, told the *Tacoma News Tribune* he fears the ordinance will result in legal actions that will increase the city's workload and consume more taxpayer dollars.

Washington voters favor recognizing same-sex marriages

An Elway poll conducted in Washington state in January yielded some promising results for those involved in the fight for recognition of same-gender marriages. Fifty-six percent of responding registered voters said they oppose "withholding legal status to same-gender marriages performed in other states." Thirty-eight percent said they support such a ban.

The poll notes that the results were consistent across all geographic and demographic categories. The only demographic group to show a narrow majority in favor of disallowing recognition of such marriages was among voters with incomes greater than \$60,000 per year.

Democrats were opposed by a margin of 58 percent to 34 percent, but Republicans were also opposed, by 52 percent to 45 percent.

Virginia to consider civil rights laws

A Virginia state senator has filed bills to outlaw hate crimes and discrimination in housing and employment against homosexuals, reports the *Fairfax Journal*. Although sodomy is a crime under state law and same-gender marriages are explicitly not legal, these proposals are expected to generate less controversy than a third bill submitted by Sen. Patricia S. Ticer, an Alexandria Democrat, which would allow companies to extend health coverage to domestic partners.

Because present state law deals only with spouses and dependents, companies incorporated in Virginia cannot offer insurance to employees' domestic partners. Although Ticer's proposed bill would not require companies to do so and simply makes the option available, other legislators have already stated opposition on the basis of increased cost and the belief that such benefits would validate nontraditional relationships.

The bill defines domestic partners as "any person who shares a familial relationship with another person characterized by mutual caring and the sharing of a mutual residence," leaving the door open not only for same-sex and unmarried heterosexual couples but also for roommates and non-nuclear and extended families.

Black gay forum chides Christian Coalition

The National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum is calling on the religious right to be more inclusive of African Americans and the poor and to make an effort to change the divisive climate created by years of public condemnation of homosexuals. In a letter to Christian Coalition leader Ralph Reed, BGLLF executive director Keith Boykin criticized the coalition's recently unveiled Samaritan Project and suggested ways the organization could better work for social and economic justice.

Despite the plan's positive rhetoric—which includes an 8-point agenda for strong families, safe neighborhoods, charitable giving, racial justice and revitalizing the church—Boykin said it is

only a first step and advised members of the black and sexual minority communities to remain skeptical. Along with making specific recommendations on improving the Samaritan Project, Boykin asked Reed to meet with members of the black lesbian and gay community.

In order to respond to the Christian Coalition's Samaritan Project and to foster a dialogue about religion and social justice, the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum discussed the issue at its 10th annual national conference, held Feb. 13-17 in Long Beach, Calif. In addition, the forum will distribute to churches nationwide copies of the award-winning documentary *All God's Children*, which deals with the role of the religious right and gay and lesbian issues in the black church.

Louganis gets a rise out of Florida Republican

State Sen. John Grant, a Republican from Tampa, Fla., who is chairman of the Senate Education Committee, is pressuring the University of



Greg Louganis

South Florida to cancel a speech by former Olympic diver Greg Louganis. A committee of students and faculty members selected Louganis to deliver the keynote address for the school's third annual Gay and Lesbian Awareness Week.

According to an Associated Press story, Grant said the appearance "represents moral decadence," apparently referring to the fact that Louganis is openly gay and HIV positive. Louganis is being paid \$14,000 from student activities fees to deliver the speech.

In a Jan. 14 letter to University of South Florida president Betty Castor, Grant threatened to limit future funding for state schools if student money is used to pay for the appearance. University officials say the speech will take place April 3 as planned.

ACT UP is 10

Ten years after its first protest—a gathering on Wall Street in 1987 to denounce the high price of AZT, the only FDA-approved AIDS treatment at that time—ACT UP will commemorate its anniversary with a similar event March 24 in New York. Activists will converge once again on the nation's financial heart for civil disobedience in the name of lower prices for and increased access to HIV/AIDS treatments.

Members of the group claim that protease inhibitors, currently manufactured by Abbot Laboratories, Hoffman LaRoche and Merck, are grossly overpriced. Treatment with protease inhibitors in combination with other drugs seems to be very effective in combating HIV, but with an annual price tag of \$20,000 such therapy is beyond the reach of many people with AIDS.

ACT UP is also targeting the federal government's failure to provide adequate funding for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, which subsidizes treatments for working people with insufficient insurance, and the Clinton administration's plan to place a per capita cap on Medicaid.

ACT UP's 10th anniversary protest will follow a weekend conference of AIDS activists from around the country.

Compiled by Christopher D. Cuttore

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