



LEFT: CHUCK CARPENTER MAKES HIS FINAL BID FOR HB3719 ON THE HOUSE FLOOR; LEFT, INSET: GEORGE EIGHMEY SPEAKS IN SUPPORT, PORTLAND DEMOCRAT FRANK SHIELDS (IN STRIPED SHIRT) ALSO SPOKE IN SUPPORT; ABOVE LEFT: BILL SUPPORTERS WAIT IN THE GALLERY AS STATEMENTS ARE MADE, FOR AND AGAINST; ABOVE RIGHT: CARPENTER LISTENS AS A FELLOW LEGISLATOR GIVES TESTIMONY; BELOW: SUPPORTERS CONGRATULATE ONE ANOTHER AS THE VOTE IS CALLED—(FROM LEFT) RIGHT TO PRIDE BOARD MEMBER KAREN KEENEY, RTP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BARRY PACK, RTP BOARD CO-CHAIR LISA MAXFIELD AND HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN BOARD MEMBER KRISTEN WINEMULLER

Hence the creation of HB3719. A week later that bill sailed through Commerce by an 8-1 vote following a two-hour hearing in which parents, business leaders and legislators testified for the bill.

(During the hearing, Right to Pride unveiled the results of a recent survey which found that 77 percent of Oregonians polled were opposed to employment discrimination based on sexual orientation, and of those, 65 percent said they supported legislation prohibiting such discrimination.)

"Obviously I'm very happy with the Commerce Committee's vote," says Carpenter, "but I can't say I'm surprised by it."

Carpenter has said all along he was willing to play tough on this issue.

From the opening of the 1997 session in January, he vowed to side with Democrats on key Republican legislation if push came to shove. The GOP controls the House by the narrowest of margins—31 to 29 Dems—thus such a move could have a notable impact.

"It's unfortunate it came to that, but I was serious when I said I would do what it takes to move this bill," says Carpenter.

HB3719 now moves to the Republican-controlled Senate, where Pack hopes it will be assigned to the Business, Law and Government Committee. The GOP controls that chamber 20-10.

"I think we would at least get a fair hearing in that committee," he says.

As for whether there is enough support for the measure in the full Senate, Pack says: "We have the votes. I am absolutely sure we have the votes in the Senate."



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