

Long Beach, Calif. Bennett, 41, now an executive at Southern California Edison, began coming out to family and friends in 1995, and came out to Dornan in February 1996.

While some are predicting that Bennett will be shunned by conservatives and taken advantage of by liberals, a few pundits say he's still a viable future candidate for public office.

"All this will do is let Brian know who his real friends are," said Sam Roth, public affairs director for the Orange County Medical Association, which considered supporting Bennett when he briefly announced for a state Senate seat in 1993.

Political consultant Eileen Padberg said Bennett is a solid strategist who has always been seen as independent and not beholden to the GOP's power structure.

Some in the party, including Frank Ricchiuzzi, founder of the local chapter of Log Cabin Republicans, are not so optimistic. Ricchiuzzi warned Bennett of liberal Democrats who would seek to exploit him, and said he will likely experience marginalization in strongly liberal gay and lesbian organizations.

Dornan, who reportedly kissed Bennett and said he loved him like a son when Bennett came out to him in 1996, said Bennett "has no future in the Republican Party in Orange County," and attributed his recent public announcement to "self-indulgence."

Queer prom date gets mixed reception

The fact that Jacob Eiler, a gay high school student in Anderson, Ind., brought his boyfriend to the senior prom upset some of his fellow students but didn't disturb the school principal.



The Associated Press reports that Principal Rodney Watson said the matter generated more fuss than it merited: "Jacob Eiler claims he is gay and is escorting a boy to the prom. What's the big deal?"

While the evening passed without the harassment Eiler had feared, the tires of his car were slashed the day before the dance and one former friend rejected him outright, calling him a disgrace to the school and to the town.

Eiler, an honor-roll student who plans to study nursing next year at the University of Indiana, said he wasn't trying to be political or contentious—he simply wanted to go to his prom with the person he likes most. He told the AP he realized he was gay at age 13 and told his parents three years later. He no longer lives with his family and currently shares a home with a lesbian friend.

"Neither of my parents likes it that I'm gay," he said. "My mom hates it and my dad has swept it under the rug. I've lost family and friends over this."

Montana's sodomy law is foundering

The state prosecutor's arguments in favor of Montana's Deviate Sexual Conduct Law were not well received by the state's Supreme Court justices at an April 11 hearing of *Gryczan vs. Montana*, a constitutional challenge to the law being mounted by six gay and lesbian plaintiffs,

according to a press statement issued by the Montana Human Rights Network. The law makes any sexual contact between consenting adults of the same gender a felony punishable by up to 10 years in jail and a \$50,000 fine.

In February 1996, a Helena district court judge ruled the law unconstitutional and ordered the state not to enforce it, prompting the state to appeal to the high court, which is expected to give its ruling by mid-summer.



According to the statement, the prosecutor conceded that there is no compelling state interest to regulate the consensual sexual activity of adults, but argued that there is no right to privacy regarding sexual conduct, whether hetero- or homosexual. MHRN says he then suggested that heterosexual sex might be protected on the grounds of reproduction or the sanctity of marriage, prompting the justices to ask what one should expect to be covered under privacy laws if not sexual activity.

Montana Citizens for Decency through Law, an organization the MHRN says has sponsored failed legislative attempts to censor materials in bookstores, video stores and libraries, filed an amicus brief expressing its opinion that it is inappropriate for the court to be "making political, moral and public policy decisions," decisions it says should be up to the Legislature. The opinion was supported by the Christian Coalition of Montana and 19 current and former state lawmakers.

The six plaintiffs in the case have the assistance of the MHRN, PRIDE! and the Northwest Women's Law Center of Seattle.

Personal ads reveal queer gender conformity

Psychologist Michael Bailey made quite a stir at April's "Sexual Orientation, Biology and Society" conference in Boston by presenting research illustrating that gay men and lesbians are much more loyal to gender stereotypes than one might expect, reports the *Washington Blade*. Bailey's data, gathered mainly from personal ads placed in queer publications, show that 98 percent of gay men described themselves in stereotypically masculine terms and 59 percent of lesbians described themselves as "feminine" or in similar terms.

In addition, Bailey found that 96 percent of gay men submitting ads were seeking men with stereotypically masculine qualities, and 80 percent of lesbians submitting ads sought stereotypically feminine partners.

Responding to criticism that these results might simply reflect the sort of people who place personal ads, Bailey cited further studies he had done involving people who never placed ads, which bore out the results and "suggested strongly that gay men and lesbians have a preference for partners who are sex typical."

But not always. Bailey noted that while lesbians tended to describe themselves and their desired companions in feminine terms, they preferred partners to behave in more masculine ways.

Ultimately, Bailey was hesitant to over-interpret his findings, but he indicated that the gender makeup of couples has a lot to do with observed differences between homo- and heterosexual pairs, and said that "homosexual people are basically just like straight people" in many ways.

Compiled by Christopher D. Cuttano

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