

CALIFORNIA

The state school board has voted against a proposal to prohibit public schools from competing in sports with teams from schools that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

In 1982, the state Legislature first passed a Sex Equity in Education Act. However, the board didn't issue its first set of regulations for implementing that law until 1993.

The act subsequently was amended in 1998 to add race, national origin and religion. It was changed again in 1999 when the Legislature added sexual orientation to the list.

Last month, according to a July 14 story in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, the board once again was forced to debate those regulations. The proposed new rules, according to students and teachers from Christian schools that oppose homosexuality, would prevent them from playing sports with public schools.

Board members insisted they objected to discrimination against gays and lesbians. Nonetheless, they voted 6-1 to remove the section of the proposed rules that dealt with inter-scholastic sports.

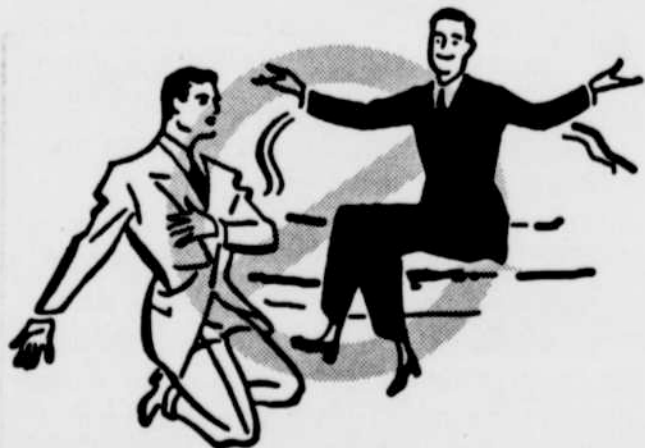
The section removed by the board would have prohibited public schools from competing in sports with teams from schools that discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color or mental or physical disability. Removal of that section leaves in place the current law, which prohibits public schools from competing with schools that discriminate based on race, ethnicity or gender.

Public comments on the proposed new regulations are being taken now. The board will make a final decision in September.

INDIANA

Fort Wayne nonprofit counseling center's decision to ban from board membership lesbians and gay men who are in relationships resulted in the resignations of three key people.

The director, associate director and a board member of Hope Alive Inc. quit after the 5-3, with one abstention, vote. According to the *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, the issue arose when associate director Sheri Dunlavy asked Kathy Pollock to apply for board membership.



She works as an assistant professor in the accounting and finance department at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. Dunlavy hoped Pollock could provide the agency with financial and accounting expertise.

Milli Bishton, Hope Alive's founder, director emeritus and current board member, said the decision was based on a belief by a majority of the board that homosexual behavior violates biblical values. "Not choosing this woman was

not so much her being a lesbian but it was her perspective of homosexuality that it is normal and acceptable behavior," she said.

Hope Alive Inc.'s mission is: "To guide individuals in their recovery from depression and grief...to inspire them and their families to develop healthy self concepts...to support them in their choices of positive behaviors."

The agency's clientele is a diverse one. It includes people of different faiths and beliefs as well as gay men and lesbians.

"We accept people for what they are," Bishton said. "Our reputation is as a Christian organization. We don't impose our beliefs, yet we practice the Christian faith."

Bishton said she felt "a strong pull to say, 'let's be together on this'" but believes the Bible is clear on matters of sexual morality, which extends beyond homosexuality. "I would ask a single man or a single woman to refrain from sex outside of marriage," should that person want to serve on the board.

Hope Alive is financed by client fees, donations and grants from local foundations. The agency does not receive any federal or state funding.

IOWA

Republican legislators are determined to reverse an executive order signed by Democratic Gov. Tom Vilsack in September 1999 prohibiting discrimination in the hiring of state workers based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

According to a July 12 story in the *Des Moines Register*, they first tried to overturn it with legislation, which he vetoed minutes after it passed. Now, the Republicans have turned to the courts.



Last month, 23 legislators filed a lawsuit claiming Vilsack exceeded his authority by signing the anti-discrimination order. The governor, who is a trial lawyer, insists he has the legal authority to determine the hiring policy for employees of the state government's executive branch.

Sen. Steve King, R-Kiron, and Senate Majority Leader Stewart Iverson, R-Dows, are leading the battle against Vilsack. They hired Mark McCormick to represent them in this case.

The Des Moines attorney lost the hotly contested 1998 Democratic gubernatorial primary to Vilsack. McCormick insists the issue is not a political one but rather a matter of constitutionality.

"This is new territory about the separation of powers and the (Iowa) Constitution," he said. "We need to determine what the governor's authority to issue executive orders is. Regardless of what party the governor happens to be in, there has always been some tension between the executive and legislative branches."

The case, which could be precedent-setting, might drag on through years of appeals and legal maneuvering.



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