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Senate

RYAN WHITE CARE ACT

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I am delighted that last night the Senate voted to reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act, S. 2311. I am proud to count myself as one of the cosponsors of this legislation in the Senate and strongly support its swift passage by the House.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to take a high toll on Americans infected with HIV and their families. HIV/AIDS has affected Oregon in many ways. Almost 5,000 Oregonians have been diagnosed with AIDS—resulting in almost 3,000 deaths. In addition, those infected with HIV number up to 8,500 in Oregon. This epidemic has touched people in every part of my state—rural and urban, rich and poor, senior citizens and newborns.

Although the story of each of these individuals living with HIV/AIDS is different, they all have one thing in common: They all benefit from the Ryan White CARE Act. Oregon received almost 8.5 million federal dollars last year to fund programs through the Ryan White CARE Act.

Passage of the Ryan White CARE Act will allow Oregonians living with HIV to have timely access to life-prolonging medications and necessary health care and support services, regardless of income level or

insurance status. The Ryan White CARE Act will also improve access for HIV-positive Oregonians to clinical trials, with the potential for additional scientific breakthroughs in the treatment of HIV/AIDS.

I call for the House to join the Senate in a similar quick passage of the Ryan White CARE Act that will allow hundreds of thousands of HIV-positive Americans to remain healthy, productive members of their communities, while slowing the AIDS epidemic.

I would like to thank my friend Terry Bean of Portland, Ore., for talking to me about the good things the Ryan White CARE Act does for Oregonians living with HIV/AIDS. Terry is a longtime board member of the Human Rights Campaign and has been a highly valued adviser on issues affecting the gay and lesbian community in Oregon.

Terry's thoughts and wisdom on hate crimes, ENDA and fighting against all types of discrimination have provided me with an ethical marker for doing what is right on the Senate floor for Oregonians. I do feel lucky that Terry's advice is dispensed on a golf course—though the only criticism I may have for Terry is that he lacks the political savvy to lose to a United States senator. I thank him anyway for his strong support and good advice.

U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith will receive the Equality Award during the Portland Human Rights Campaign Gala Dinner on Nov. 3. Terry Bean also will be recognized for his many accomplishments and contributions to the gay and lesbian community. For additional details, contact HRCPCOM@aol.com.

PHELPS PLANS PICKETS ACROSS TOWN

Since *Just Out* reported Aug. 18 that Fred Phelps' Westboro Baptist Church plans to picket Newberg High School, one of his Web sites, GodHatesFags.com, posted an update about a pending visit to the City of Roses. Sept. 8 is going to be a busy day for these protesters.

Now, Phelps and company will demonstrate at Portland State University, the Portland office of Waddell & Reed and Grant High School, the Internet site says. Protests in Seattle will follow.

PSU and Waddell & Reed are being targeted because of the Gay Life Health Network's *Tunnel of Love...Greatest Hole on Earth* forum held earlier this year at the university. Julie Smith, a spokeswoman for PSU, had not been notified about the upcoming protest. Waddell and Reed's management recently was notified by fax from the church.

Eric Brown, a Waddell & Reed district manager in Portland, independently sponsored *Tunnel of Love*, but the company's logo inadvertently was included in an acknowledgment advertisement for the event's program. "I made a personal contribution in support of the community," he says.

The company's name was used without its permission, a Waddell & Reed spokesperson says. But Brown did not know about the ad before the event, the company says.

Since then, producers of the safer-sex event, attended by more than 600, sent a letter of apology to Waddell & Reed. Brown says his company has been extremely understanding about the mix-up.

But Phelps has not. He plans to picket not only the Portland office of Waddell & Reed but also the company's headquarters right in his own back yard in Kansas during the coming weeks.

Phelps is after PSU President Daniel Bernstine as well. He claims tax money was used in putting on *Tunnel of Love*.

"Freedom of thought and expression is the bedrock principle on which all university activity is based," Bernstine said. "PSU supports the right of every individual to seek knowledge, exchange ideas and form opinions. We encourage everyone to respect the right of freedom of speech even when such speech may be offensive to one's personal beliefs."

Grant High also likely will see picketers. The group claims the school is using "governmental power to proselytize kids to sodomite shame."

GROUP MEETS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Members of several sexual minority communities showed up at a special meeting Aug. 23 to speak their minds about Pride Northwest, the non-profit organization that produces Portland's annual pride parade and festival. A total of 25 people attended the three-hour gathering.

The meeting was organized when a group of community members requested to meet with Pride Northwest's board of directors and the board refused. At the center of the controversy is the recent removal of two board members and concerns about the organization's financial statements.

Organizers invited Pride Northwest board members to the event, they say, but only one, Dana Oslund, attended.

Tamara Swan maintains she was removed illegally from the board one week before the Pride 2000 event. Jana MacAuslan also is fighting her removal from the board.

Pride Northwest maintains that it held fair elections and that it operates not only legally but ethically. Attorney Brad Woodworth—who was retained to review the situation—says he doesn't believe any of the complaints against the organization have merit that would warrant concern about possible legal action.

But Swan says enough is awry with Pride Northwest that the Department of Justice already has stepped in to take a look. She says an attorney with the agency recently read an e-mail addressed to *Just Out* and subsequently called her.

Soon after, the two former board members interviewed with four attorneys from the department, Swan says. They answered questions for more than two hours.

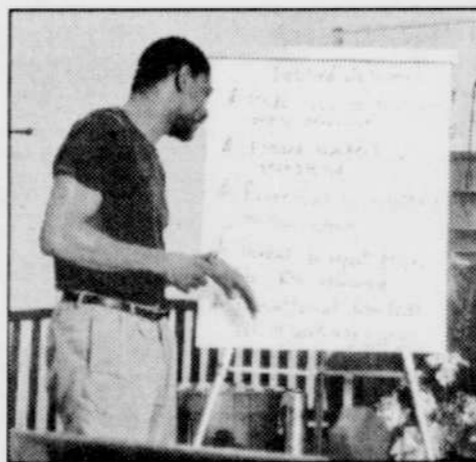
An agreement was made before the meeting that the department only would review the information and would oversee mediation if the

lawyers thought such action was appropriate, Swan explained. The agency reassured the women that their intent was not to dissolve the organization but to resolve the issues.

Swan says that the department is reviewing the information and that she is uncertain of its next step. She says they are waiting to hear a response.

Pride Northwest board chair Carmella Ettinger confirms she has been contacted by the attorney general's office. "We are ecstatic that a neutral party will be involved in reviewing the decision-making and financial status of Pride Northwest. ... It is our hope that their opinion will put an end to the lies that a few people are perpetuating."

The community meeting was expected to result in a formal request to the current Pride Northwest board of directors asking for their resignations. But that did not happen.



Cliff Jones facilitates the community meeting

PHOTO BY MARY ANN SMITH

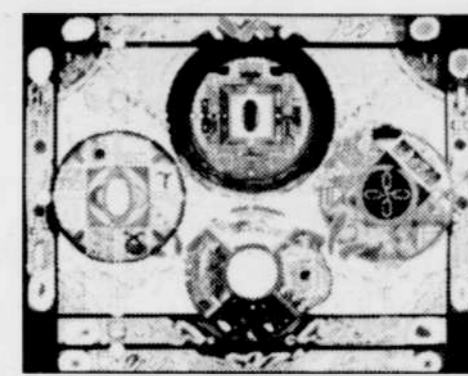
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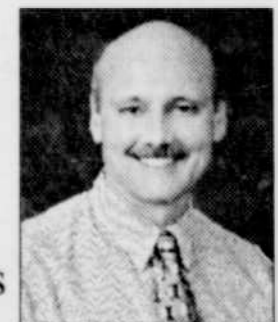
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