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NATIONAL news

MINNESOTA

Gov. Jesse Ventura quickly came to the defense of his gay chief of staff after a brush with the law became public. The Associated Press reports Nov. 23. Steve Bosacker pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor for allegedly propositioning a male police officer, while nude, in a steam room.



Steve Bosacker

"There's people out there in the hetero world that like bondage," Ventura told KFAN-AM, where he worked as a talk radio host before running for governor. "It's not my cup of tea, but I'm not going to sit there and say that it's right, wrong or whatever."

People do not apply the same standard to straight folks who have sex in public as they do to gays, Ventura added. "We can do it, and people just shake their fingers at us and tell us we're spirited," he said. "Is there any of us talking here that hasn't gone out and had sex in a place they're not supposed to?"

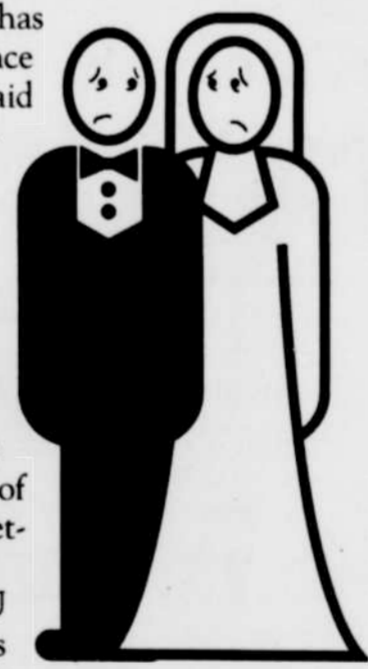
Ventura did not defend his aide's actions. However, he said the situation could have been handled differently.

"I know in my alpha-male world, and I get in situations like that, I don't call the police," he said. "This is just me personally. I would just laugh it off if I'm propositioned and I'm not gay, if I'm a hetero."

NEBRASKA

Nebraska's initiative prohibiting legal recognition of same-sex marriages or civil unions will be heading to court before it can join the state's constitution, the *Lincoln Journal-Star* reports.

"Our board has been against 416 since its inception," said Tim Butz, American Civil Liberties Unions Nebraska executive director. "We've been against it because of its constitutional flaws. It denies gays and lesbians the same protection of the law afforded heterosexuals."



The ACLU board of directors voted unanimously Nov. 18 to challenge the constitutionality of Initiative 416, approved in the Nov. 7 election. Butz said he realizes the action clearly will not be popular with Nebraskans.

"But the organization has never let popularity define what we would do," he said. "Just because 70 percent of the people voted for the amendment doesn't mean what they voted for is constitutional. It is wrong to enshrine bigotry in the state constitution, and we think that is what has happened."

At least 33 other states have passed what are called Defense of Marriage Acts and are similar to the first sentence in Initiative 416. But none has adopted language like the second sentence of the amendment, which says the uniting of two people of the same sex in a civil union, domestic partnership or other similar same-sex relationship shall not be valid or recognized in Nebraska.

"As far as we know, this language has a

broader sweep than anything else we've seen when it comes to anti-marriage statutes," said David Buckel, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund senior staff attorney. The New York-based group might assist the ACLU with the case.

MICHIGAN

Oppressed heterosexual students have banded together to form a club in response to Jackson High School's controversial Gay-Straight Alliance. The Associated Press reports Nov. 18.

Lifting Our Voices for Excellence will offer a message of "a spirit of love," according to organizers Eian Wright, the Rev. Ira Combs Jr. of the Greater Bible Way Tem-

ple and Gary Glenn, American Family Association of Michigan president. They say the alliance shouldn't be allowed because more students have been discussing homosexual acts in school since it was formed in October.

"This is disturbing the education of students, and that is not bringing a positive image to the school," Wright said. Combs, whose son attends Jackson High, said he doesn't want homosexuality forced on his children.

Junior Tyler Hampton, co-founder of the alliance, said he is gay but "wouldn't know how to promote homosexuality." He said the club's purpose is to "break the silence so students would know that they're not alone."

Hampton said he formed it "for students who are trying to understand their sexuality or the sexuality of their friends. We don't discuss sex acts of any kind or sexual relations in the group."

Hampton said gay students sometimes are called names, bullied or ostracized in school. He said he has been asked why he hasn't cut off his genitals and has been pushed on the stairs and had a bottle thrown at him.

Principal Jim Graham said that Lifting Our Voices for Excellence followed procedure for forming and that the school can't exclude one club without excluding them all. Religious and pro-violence groups are the only ones not allowed, he added.

ARIZONA

A homeless shelter said "thanks, but no thanks" to a gay congressman who agreed to be a celebrity waiter during its annual Thanksgiving dinner, the *Tucson Citizen* reports Nov. 25. Then after receiving tons of bad press, the Gospel Rescue Mission suddenly got back into the holiday spirit and offered a "tearful apology" to U.S. Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz.



Rep. Jim Kolbe

"The action we took did not properly effect our Christian belief that God loves and desires a personal relationship with every person," a letter from the board stated.

"We hope that you accept this apology, and we ask for your forgiveness."

Quite a change from earlier in the week, when Kolbe was told not to bother volunteering his time serving meals even though he was allowed to last year. Gospel Rescue Mission board member Evelyn H. Haugh scolded him in a faxed memo for being inconsistent with her beliefs.

"This decision is based on your publicly announced sexual orientation that is diamet-