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NORTHWEST news

MILITARY BAN UNDER ATTACK

A resolution will be introduced April 23 to lift the Portland Public Schools ban on military recruiters, according to board member Marc Abrams. He sent out an e-mail April 17 warning allies about the proposal.

The sponsors are Derry Jackson and Ron Saxton. Abrams slammed the resolution, saying it "declares (erroneously) that Portland is alone in America in having such a ban; raises (ridiculously) the specter of a resumption of the draft; and states, without a scintilla of evidence, that the ban harms students."

He is urging supporters of the ban to show up for the meeting at the Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N. Dixon St. Although it starts at 6:30 p.m., testimony probably won't be taken until 8:30 or 9.

Abrams also asked allies to alert the media. "Ask why, when we face a \$20 million deficit, helping the military back into our schools is these members' priority," he wrote.

Abrams said he especially wants to hear from current and recent former students who recruiters were able to contact regardless of the ban. The main target of his efforts will be the undecided board members.

"The two votes that lie in the balance are those of Debbie Menashe and Karla Wenzel," he wrote. "Karla ran for the board in support of the ban but has been retracing her steps ever since."

Menashe and Wenzel could not be reached for comment. Jackson admitted the "don't ask, don't tell" policy is flawed but said the military is an option that must be presented to African American students in order to close the so-called achievement gap.

Those who wish to testify must sign up in advance by calling 503-916-3741. For more information send e-mail to marc6138@att.net.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS GO WEST

Two prominent national organizations, the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, are expanding their efforts in our direction.

Lambda said April 6 it is boosting its Western Regional Office in Los Angeles by adding Tracy Moore as director and widening



Tracy Moore

its legal and outreach work to cover Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah. The organization fights for civil rights through litigation, education and public policy work.

"It is very exciting to strengthen Lambda's power in the Western region," executive director Kevin M. Cathcart said. "I especially am pleased to welcome Tracy to our staff in this very vibrant and important part of the country, where so many people need to hear about Lambda's goals for justice and equality."

Moore, who will oversee administration and development to enhance outreach and visibility in the region, called the new position "a dream come true for me. This is an organization that I have long admired and supported, and it is thrilling to help such a talented, determined staff realize Lambda's civil rights mission."

Meanwhile, the Victory Fund opened a Western Regional Office on April 9 in San Francisco to serve Oregon, Washington, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. The organization raises money to elect exemplary openly gay and lesbian candidates to local, state and federal offices throughout the country.

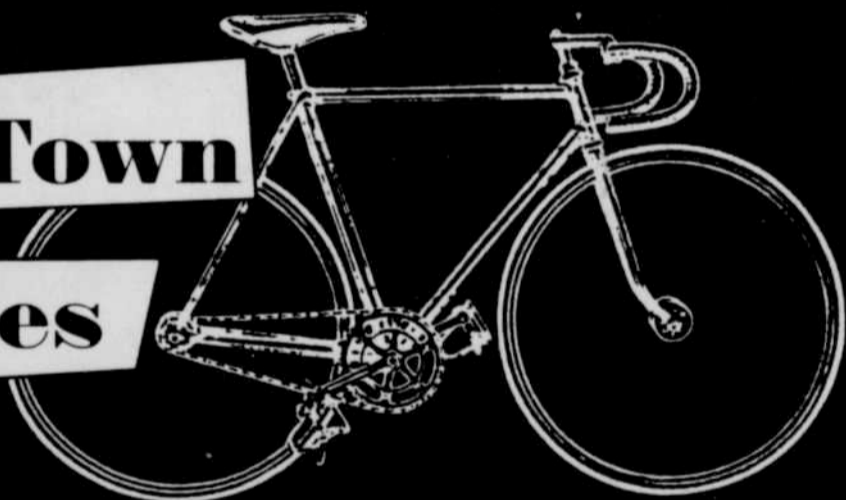
"At all levels of government, openly gay and lesbian public servants make an incredible difference for securing equality—and we will be better able to elect them by strengthening our efforts in the field," said Brian K. Bond, Victory Fund executive director. "Our community has a strong presence in the West, making the region fertile ground to build on Harvey Milk's legacy and support openly gay and lesbian candidates throughout America. The Western Regional Office will help us create more opportunities for gay and straight public servants to work openly together to overcome discrimination."

The fund selected the San Francisco Bay Area because it is centrally located and because California long has been home to one of the nation's largest and strongest openly gay and lesbian communities. Tony Esoldo will serve as Western Regional Office director.

"The Victory Fund has always focused on empowering local gay and lesbian community leadership," he said. "We are dedicated to helping our candidates rise through the ranks from local to state to national public service. Our new regional office will help us bolster our base of support and maximize upcoming opportunities to elect an unprecedented number of candidates."

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Former Rep. George Eighmey (second from left) is among the openly gay politicians elected thanks to the Victory Fund