

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY OKS CIVIL RIGHTS ORDINANCE**

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners approved Nov. 8 a Civil Rights Ordinance extending protection based on sexual orientation, gender identity and source of income in work, housing and public accommodations. A second reading will take place during a meeting Nov. 29, when the measure is expected to be officially approved.

The Multnomah County Civil Rights Task Force has been working on the ordinance since February. It held two public hearings and heard testimony from 54 people.

The wording is very similar to a city of Portland ordinance, according to task force co-chairwoman Kris Burr, who also serves as co-chairwoman of the Oregon Gay and Lesbian Law Association. It contains a few exceptions including churches, owner-occupied duplexes and landlords who do not accept Section 8 vouchers.

The only opposition to the ordinance came from low-income housing advocates. John Engel, Fair Housing Council vice president, testified that the Section 8 exemption could be used as a "smoke screen" for other forms of discrimination.

"We don't want to splinter the work that has taken place," said Angel Williamson of the Community Alliance of Tenants. "We want to urge you to continue to work on this."

Commissioner Lisa Naito recommended moving forward with the vote but promised to address these concerns in the future. "There are moments in government that are bittersweet," she said.

**LESBIAN LEADS FIGHT FOR RIGHT TO DIE**

Oregon Death with Dignity filed a lawsuit Nov. 8 seeking to enjoin U.S. Attorney

Lesbian activist Jeana Frazzini, who serves as the organization's political director, has been involved in the effort since 1998. Before she came on board at Oregon Death with Dignity, she was executive director of Oregon Right to Die; the groups merged in October.

"I see this choice as part of basic civil rights," she says. "To determine the time and manner of your own death is just one of the most fundamental civil rights."

PHOTO BY HEISSA SALTER



Jeana Frazzini attends the press conference announcing Oregon Death with Dignity's lawsuit against the federal government

Frazzini, who also serves as Basic Rights Oregon board co-chairwoman, sees a connection between the battle surrounding end-of-life care and the struggle for gay equality. Both involve "the right to determine the course of your own life."

In both cases, she says, it simply "comes down to personal experience." People who have witnessed a difficult death or a terminal illness are going to be more sympathetic to the cause, just as those who know gay, lesbian, bi or trans people tend to be more fair-minded.

Oregon Death with Dignity prefers the terms "hastened death" and "physician-aided dying" to "assisted suicide." The latter term, although commonly

used in the mainstream media, implies the decision is made under duress, according to Frazzini.

"It's really disrespectful to the patients who make this choice," she says. "This is a very rational, well-thought-out decision."

For now, a temporary restraining order is allowing physicians to continue providing end-of-life care to patients who seek it. Frazzini is confident that Oregon Death with Dignity ultimately will prevail.

"The federal government has clearly overstepped their authority in this case," she says. "It's up to the states to determine what is and is not legitimate

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**—Jeana Frazzini**

medical practice."

Oregon Death with Dignity's efforts were stymied last year when U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., expressed his support for the Pain Relief Promotion Act. The failed effort would have overturned Oregon's law and prosecuted physicians for intentionally hastening death.

"This scares doctors from aggressively treating pain," she says. "That's going to keep doctors from taking care of patients the best way they know how."

For more information call 503-228-6079 or visit the Internet site [www.dwd.org](http://www.dwd.org).

Continued on Page 8



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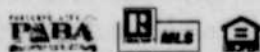
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Don Duncan  
owner

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