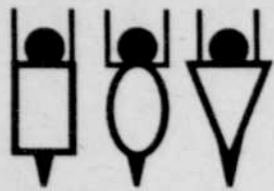


Overcoming Low Self-Esteem

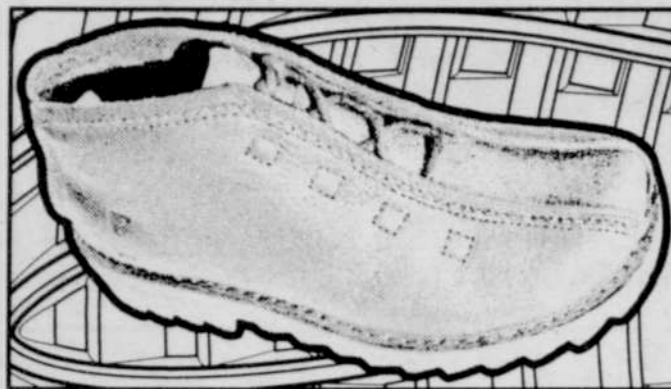
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NATIONAL news



The "Rockwellian" town of New Hope, Pa., now has a nondiscrimination ordinance that includes sexual orientation and gender identity

ing a year off, she intends to try out for the Philadelphia Phoenix, a new team forming in the fall, and hopes it also will adopt a sexual harassment and nondiscrimination policy.

"The time I spent playing with the team was amazing, but the treatment of women and lesbians was not fair and shouldn't be ignored," Butz said. "I am dying to play ball again, but I have to stand by what I believe in as

a woman and a lesbian and hope there is a brighter future for women in sports."

PENNSYLVANIA

The Borough Council of New Hope unanimously passed an ordinance Sept. 10 prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

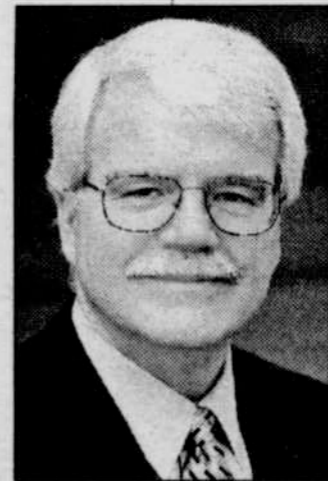
Seven Pennsylvania municipalities now have laws protecting their gay, lesbian, bi and trans citizens. Allentown, Erie County and Philadelphia passed similar laws in the past several months.

"We view the passage of this as a celebration," Borough Councilor Geri Delevich said after the vote. "We can now proudly say 'with liberty and justice for all.'"

Described as "Rockwellian," New Hope is a bedroom community of Philadelphia with about 1,400 residents. The ordinance vote reaffirms the town's "history of tolerance and acceptance for members of their LGBT community," said Doug Shaps, executive director of OutFront, a sexual minority advocacy group.

The council also is sending letters to state and federal representatives encouraging them to pass similar laws. It is still legal to fire someone based on their sexual orientation in 38 states and on their gender identity in 48 states.

"New Hope, the little town that roared, sends a loud clear message," said Delevich, original sponsor of the resolution. "This ordinance is about dignity and respect."



George Miller

The Philadelphia Liberty Belles have prohibited harassment and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. It is the first and only team in the National Women's Football League to adopt such a policy.

"This team's policy should serve as an example to other teams," attorney Tiffany Palmer said. "We call upon the NWFL to adopt leaguewide sexual harassment and nondiscrimination policies to prevent future incidents."

The Liberty Belles drafted the policy after a team member filed a complaint with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. Cyndi Butz, 27, was a starting player in the 2000-2001 championship season but quit because of sexual harassment by male coaches and discriminatory treatment of lesbian athletes.

"At a time when women are fighting to get on the playing field, they should not have to worry about sexual harassment and discrimination from their own team personnel," attorney Stacey L. Sobel said. "This policy will help protect the players and send a message that these types of behaviors will not be tolerated."

As a result of the policy implementation, Butz agreed not to pursue the matter further. After tak-

NATIONAL

Activists are urging senators to close discriminatory loopholes in the CARE Act of 2002, which provides federal funds for religious institutions to implement secular charitable programs.

The White House originally had fought to include language in the bill that would allow these charities to ignore state and local nondiscrimination laws pertaining to sexual orientation. Although the anti-gay provisions have been removed, remaining language inadvertently allows for employment discrimination on religious grounds, which historically has served as a back door for anti-gay bigotry.

As it now stands, the bill would allow an employer to fire, or refuse to hire, a person who holds another faith. Therefore, even if gay applicants share the same faith as their employer, religious institutions can assert that the employees' sexual orientation automatically disassociates them from that faith.

"Loopholes for religious bigotry have consistently served as cloaks for anti-gay discrimination," said Chad Johnson, National Stonewall Democrats executive director. "I don't think that a federally funded soup kitchen run by Jerry Falwell would view a gay Baptist employee as a full partner in Falwell's faith, as most evangelicals would argue that true gay Christians would renounce their sexual orientation upon conversion."

The Bush administration has indicated it will implement faith-based initiatives that include discriminatory provisions in the absence of congressional legislation. Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., recently protested plans by the Education Department to include discriminatory language in certain after-school programs it funds.

U.S. Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., filed a resolution Sept. 9 pressing House leaders to address federal hate crimes legislation. Republicans so far have prohibited the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act from moving out of the Judiciary Committee and onto the floor for an open vote.

Under the resolution submitted by Conyers, if House leaders refuse to allow a vote within two weeks, then members may circulate a discharge petition that, if signed by 218 representatives, would force a vote on the legislation. Although the act has 206 co-sponsors, including 182 Democrats, gathering the required signatures