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NATIONAL news



U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Tenn., believes homosexuality needs to be "controlled"

TENNESSEE

U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp called homosexuality a "sickness," an "aberration" and a "sin" that needs to be "controlled." The Associated Press reported Oct. 20. The Tennessee Republican added that he believes his "view of what policy should be is based on the biblical values from the Old Testament forward."

Wamp also announced his support for the anti-gay Federal Marriage Amendment. According to the AP, fellow Tennessee Republican U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander said in a statement that he finds a constitutional amendment "unnecessary."

"We are pleased that Sen. Alexander has distanced himself from the views of Rep. Wamp, and we call on all members of Congress to denounce the congressman's comments," said Winnie Stachelberg, Human Rights Campaign political director. "It's time for our nation's leaders to send a message that such hateful rhetoric has no place in our public dialogue."

NATIONAL

In a closed-door executive session Oct. 23, the Senate Armed Services Committee confirmed President Bush's nomination of Maj. Gen. Robert T. Clark for promotion to lieutenant general, the Army's second-highest rank. If later confirmed by the full Senate, he will take command of the Fifth U.S. Army at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

The Senate declined to act on Clark's nomination for more than a year because of serious concerns regarding his leadership. He was commander of Fort Campbell, Ky., in 1999 when Pfc. Barry Winchell was bludgeoned to death by fellow soldiers who believed Winchell was gay.

"There is not, nor has there ever been during my time here, a climate of homophobia on post," Clark said at a news conference prior to leaving Fort Campbell in 2000.

Under his watch, however, many reports of anti-gay harassment surfaced in addition to Winchell's murder, including anti-gay graffiti and assault. Clark also implemented a policy that led to a record number of queer discharges at the post.

A Department of Army Inspector General report found other troubling facts about his tenure, including commandwide low morale; inadequate delivery of health care to soldiers and their families; and widespread, leader-condoned underage drinking in the barracks. According to a report from 60 Minutes, Fort Campbell also saw an alarming spike in domestic abuse cases.

"We are disappointed in the confirmation," said C. Dixon Osburn, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network executive director. "Clark did, however, undergo unparalleled scrutiny by the Armed Services Committee. For the first time,

the Senate sent a strong message that anti-gay harassment under a commander's watch will no longer be ignored."

Last month the Senate Judiciary Committee considered an anti-gay nominee for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

In 1984 Claude Allen served as campaign aide to U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., who was running against Gov. Jim Hunt. A local reporter quoted Allen as stating that Hunt was vulnerable because his campaign could be "linked with the queers." Allen then said, "We could expound on Jim Hunt's connections with the homosexuals, the labor union connection, the radical feminist connection, the socialist connection."

At a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing last month, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., asked Allen, "Do you understand how some people in America might take your use of this word 'queers' as being negative, to denigrate them, and not respectful?" Allen asserted that he did not mean to denigrate homosexuals but that he had been referring to the "strange, abnormal, out-of-the-ordinary individuals and groups" working on Hunt's campaign.

"Even if a truthful explanation, it means that Allen viewed homosexuals as among the 'strange, abnormal' groups to which he referred," said Eric J. Stern, Democratic National Committee GLBT outreach director. "President Bush's nomination...shows that he is clearly more interested in obtaining more support from the religious right than in showing compassion towards GLBT Americans."

In his current role as deputy secretary of the Health and Human Services Department, Allen has been accused by AIDS activists and others of pressing a conservative bias toward HIV/AIDS issues and of conducting a "witch hunt" against AIDS advocacy groups.



Claude Allen has been nominated for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

Lambda Legal filed a discrimination complaint Oct. 29 on behalf of a second applicant who was rejected for a foreign service job by the U.S. State Department because he has HIV.

"The State Department is preventing qualified, healthy people from serving their country—all while there's a severe shortage of foreign service applicants who are badly needed right now," attorney Jonathan Givner said. "This isn't just bad policy—it's illegal."

Kyle Smith, a college student in Columbus, Ohio, applied to be a foreign service office management specialist. After successfully completing the interview process, he was approved for employment pending medical approval. When

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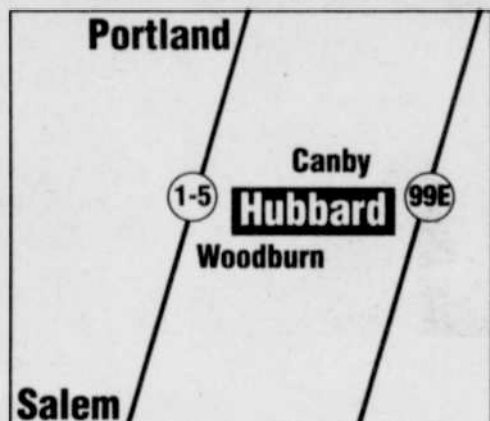


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