

NATIONAL news

ENDA was introduced in 1994 and barely lost a Senate vote in 1996. "Passage of ENDA is a brass ring for our community, and we're making it clear that it must have the strongest teeth possible to protect everyone," said Tim Boggs, HRC board co-chairman.

HRC took this step to ensure that ENDA will provide real protection to incidents of workplace discrimination. Attorneys who specialize in civil rights laws believe legislation without gender identity and expression explicitly stated may not adequately address discrimination against queers who are often singled out because they're viewed as not conforming to gender norms.

"We are strongest as a community when we are united, and that's why we need the strongest and most unifying protections," HRC president Cheryl Jacques added. "The staff of the Human Rights Campaign will continue to work tirelessly to enact this comprehensive ENDA."

UTAH

The three candidates for attorney general of Utah issued a joint statement Aug. 6 opposing an anti-gay marriage and legal rights constitutional amendment. According to the Don't Amend Alliance, conservative Republican incumbent Mark Shurtleff and opponents Greg Skordas and Andrew McCullough realize that the amendment is overly broad and will have unintended consequences that will hurt Utahns and their families.

The Legislature put the two-part amendment on the November ballot. The first part would define marriage as between a man and a woman, and the second part would deny any basic rights afforded to married couples from ever being granted to same-sex couples.

"Utahns of good faith disagree over whether the state constitution should be amended to define marriage as the union of a man and a woman," the statement said. "We respect each citizen's views on this complex issue. However, because proposed Amendment 3 goes far beyond simply defining marriage, and would prove unnecessarily hurtful to many Utahns and their families, we oppose the amendment."

"As written, Part Two of the proposed amendment would prohibit the Utah Legislature from ever extending even the most basic partnership rights to an unmarried couple, such as rights to hospital visitation, to emergency medical decision-making and to inheritance. Moreover, Part Two's overly broad language could lead private employers in Utah to question the legality of their desire to extend certain benefits (such as health care) to unmarried partners of employees."

"Furthermore, proposed constitutional amendments, such as Amendment 3, ought to be given the careful scrutiny of the Utah Constitutional Revision Commission."

MISSOURI

In an article published Aug. 6 by *The Los Angeles Times*, Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry said he would have voted for the anti-gay constitutional amendment that Missourians approved Aug. 3. Log Cabin Republicans denounced the position as "yet another example of a Kerry flip-flop."

The Missouri amendment is different from a proposal in Massachusetts that Kerry also supports. Unlike in Massachusetts, Missouri law already defines marriage as between a man and a woman. Additionally, unlike the Massachusetts amendment, the Missouri amendment does not provide any protec-

tions, such as civil unions, for gay and lesbian couples.

"Sen. Kerry's position before had been that he would only support an amendment that provides some protections for gay and lesbian families," said Chris Barron, Log Cabin political director. "He has flip-flopped once again and now supports a discriminatory amendment, without any protections, in a state where the law is already clear. This is an alarming departure from Sen. Kerry's previous position. It is wrong for President Bush to play politics with the constitutional process, and it is wrong for Sen. Kerry...to do the same thing."



Terry McAuliffe

TEXAS

Democratic National Committee chairman Terry McAuliffe has called on President Bush to renounce language in the Texas Republican Party platform calling for unnecessary and discriminatory changes in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Texas platform inaccurately calls for the immediate removal of people with "homosexual practices" from protection under the ADA. Since its passage in 1990, the ADA has clearly stated that sexual orientation is not a disability and as such is not covered under the law.

"The Texas Republican Party is changing facts in a blatantly homophobic attack against gay and lesbian Americans," McAuliffe said Aug. 11. "Republicans are abusing the ADA, which has guaranteed equal opportunity and access for millions of Americans, for their own political games."

"This platform does not represent the values of Texans, just as it does not represent the values of the American people. George W. Bush must take a stand and renounce the discriminatory and divisive rhetoric coming from his own party in his own state."

ALABAMA

Two men recently were killed in Alabama because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Scottie Joe Weaver of Bay Minnette was beaten, strangled, stabbed, partially decapitated and burned; his mutilated and decomposed body was found July 22. Defendant Robert Holly Lofton Porter expressed his hatred of homosexuals and told others he wanted to kill the 18-year-old days before the victim was murdered, according to a lawyer representing co-defendant Christopher Ryan Gaines.

Roderick George of Montgomery was shot in his car July 27 and died July 28. Anthony T. Johnson, who has been charged with capital murder in the 40-year-old's slaying, told police that the incident was brought on by "inappropriate sexual advances."



Scottie Joe Weaver

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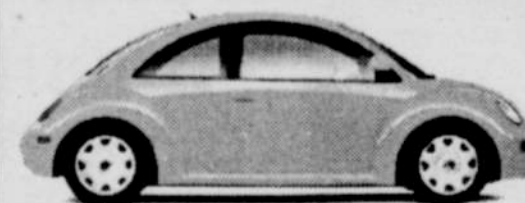
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