

POWERFUL TESTIMONY FOR EQUALITY

More than 350 supporters of Senate Bill 1000 gathered May 4 in Salem, and many stayed until midnight in order to give testimony before the committee chaired by Senate Majority Leader Kate Brown.

The bill that is before the Democrat-controlled chamber has two parts. The first would extend to same-sex couples the same rights under civil unions that married couples get through marriage. The second would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in matters of employment, housing and public accommodation.

The second provision of the law would affect

the Oregon Revised Statute to include sexual orientation and gender identity wherever the law prohibits discrimination against people based on race, class, creed, color, gender, etc. Thus it would bring all of Oregon's laws in line with a nondiscrimination policy mirroring what the state's largest employers, Nike and Intel, already have codified in their policies, and what some communities in Oregon (such as Portland and Bend) have codified in their local law.

Oregon's first lady, Mary Oberst, made her first appearance before lawmakers to testify in favor of the bill.

"In effect, without Senate Bill 1000, we are telling these citizens that they can give but not receive," she said. "They can give Oregon their tax dollars, they can give Oregon their votes...but they cannot depend on receiving equal treatment."

Although speakers in support far outnumbered speakers in opposition, the testimony from those opposed was vitriolic. If there was any doubt in the minds of the assembled that homophobia is alive and well (and well spoken) it was dispelled.

Just Out will provide ongoing coverage of the legislative

progress of SB 1000. To read the text of the document, visit www.leg.state.or.us.

CASCADE AIDS PROJECT NETS \$600,000 AT ART FOR LIFE

In a spectacular show of support from the art and philanthropic communities, Art for Life netted \$600,000 April 9, setting a new record for HIV/AIDS fund raising in Oregon. The event raised \$395,000 in 2004, and Cascade AIDS Project had budgeted to raise \$415,000 this year.

The event could not have been so successful if it weren't for co-chairwomen Mary O'Connor and Kathleen Lewis, Andy Davis and the entire Art for Life steering committee. In addition, adulation is due to honorary chairmen Craig Hartzman and Jim John, producing sponsor Howard Hedinger, contributing artists and galleries, corporate sponsors and the events staff team led by Roma Peyser.

Executive director Thomas Bruner noted: "Art for Life '05 was our greatest success because it brought over 2,000 people—from beautiful drag queens to handsome guys and gals to hundreds of dedicated art lovers—together to support the work that CAP does every day to prevent HIV/AIDS and to support those who are affected by the epidemic. We couldn't be more thrilled, because that support is absolutely crucial to underwrite such key activities as our men's program and the HIV/AIDS hot line."

CAREER MOVES: OREGONIAN LANDS NPR FELLOWSHIP

University of Oregon senior journalism student Doug Hopper became the envy of his peers when he scored a Kroc Fellowship with National Public Radio.

He was one of three selected from 300 applicants. When asked how he stood out from the competition, Hopper gandered it might be his sexuality.

"They thought my queer experience was actually an advantage because of the perspective it's afforded me. I think it says something about the values at NPR," said Hopper.

This realization was reinforced when Hopper volunteered for a photography project in Kenya, documenting the humanitarian work of Watoto Wa Dunia, a nonprofit focused on feeding the hungry, addressing AIDS and creating a community leadership structure.

"My experience being queer has motivated me to use the media to create space for people to be heard. Being queer and feeling silenced and marginalized growing up in the Midwest inspired me in some ways to do the work I did in Kenya. The people I met there were classic examples of marginalization," he said.

Hopper's experience in Kenya, combined with a stint as a photojournalist with *Just Out*, shaped his passion for communication.

Hopper is among the inaugural fellows. The program was created recently after a sizable donation to NPR from Joan Kroc.

"It's pretty extraordinary to even be able to apply for such a fellowship. I feel really lucky we'll be setting a stage, and NPR will look to our successes as a measurement of the fellowship," he said.

The fellowship will afford Hopper opportunities to work in all aspects of public radio journalism—writing, reporting, producing and editing, for both radio and the Web. He will begin working Aug. 15 for one year at the NPR head-

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From left, Liz Cahil and Diane Groff, both teachers from Milton-Freewater, join Roey Thorpe of Basic Rights Oregon in testifying in favor of Senate Bill 1000.

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