



Out candidate Jolie Justus won the Democratic nomination for the Missouri Senate in a heavily Democratic district.

Other breakthrough candidates this year include Patricia Todd, the first openly gay elected official in Alabama history; Kathy Webb, the first openly gay elected official in Arkansas history; and Al McAffrey, the first openly gay state legislator in Oklahoma history.

Justus would join Victory endorsee Jeanette Mott-Oxford, who easily won her primary to retain her seat in the Missouri House.

COLORADO

Basic Rights Petition Filed

Demonstrating broad grassroots support for basic legal rights, Coloradans for Fairness filed Aug. 7 more than double the number of signatures needed to place an initiative on the November ballot to support Referendum I.

A total of 137,544 Coloradans signed in support of basic legal rights for committed Colorado couples.

This initiative was designed to ensure that Referendum I can take legal effect if passed by the voters this fall. Referendum I, referred to the ballot by a bipartisan majority of lawmakers, provides basic legal rights including hospital visitation, property and inheritance rights and the ability to make burial arrangements.

"This overwhelming show of support proves that Coloradans believe committed couples should have basic rights under the law," said Sean Duffy, executive director of Coloradans for Fairness. "All Colorado couples should be able to visit each other in the hospital, make end-of-life decisions and have basic property and inheritance rights."

Coloradans for Fairness' filing stands in contrast to the opposition's failure to file any signatures with the secretary of state. That petition—which was championed by state Rep. Kevin Lundberg, R-Berthoud, and former car salesman Will Perkins—attempted to ban any legal status "similar to marriage."

ILLINOIS

Iraq Vet Support Unclear

Former Army Maj. Tammy Duckworth, the Democratic candidate for Illinois's 6th Congressional District, expressed strong support for repealing the military's "don't ask, don't tell" ban on gay, lesbian and bisexual service members.

Duckworth, an Iraq war veteran who lost both legs during the war, is campaigning to fill the seat left vacant by the retirement of U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde, R-Ill.

"When I was serving in Iraq, it made no difference to me what the sexual orientation of my comrades was," Duckworth said in a statement Aug. 9 to the Human Rights Campaign PAC. "It certainly did not matter to me what the sexual orientation was of the men or women who helped save my life after my Black Hawk helicopter was shot down over Iraq.... Any qualified American who is willing to make that kind of sacrifice for our freedom should be free to do so."

But days later, a spokeswoman from her campaign told *The Chicago Daily Herald* that Duckworth doesn't support the legislation to repeal the ban. "I think she only supports a repeal if it was deemed appropriate by military commanders of the armed forces," Christine Glunz said.

The Military Readiness Enhancement Act, a bill to repeal "don't ask, don't tell," is pending in the House of Representatives. The legislation, introduced by U.S. Rep. Marty Meehan, D-Mass., is supported by 118 other members, including both Republicans and Democrats.

CONNECTICUT

Anti-Gay Group Barred from Lawsuit

The Connecticut Supreme Court denied Aug. 7 an anti-gay group's request to intervene in a lawsuit filed by eight gay and lesbian couples seeking marriage equality.

The Boston-based Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders filed the suit on behalf of the couples in 2004 in New Haven Superior Court after they were denied marriage. The Family Institute of Connecticut petitioned the state's highest court to allow it to intervene in the case, but the justices ruled that the organization had no legal standing to challenge the lawsuit.

NEW MEXICO

Hate Crime Law to Be Tested

A vicious crime that left a gay man seriously injured and his friend fearful of her life has the full power of the law behind it, thanks to New Mexico's hate crimes law.

The hate crime attack July 30 in Santa Fe left a gay man unconscious with bleeding of the brain as well as facial lacerations and bruising. A female friend was allegedly kidnapped during the attack. Three men have been charged with hate crimes under a law passed in 2003.

Human Rights Campaign president Joe Solmonese gave background: "Three years ago, the Human Rights Campaign was proud to support the efforts of state leaders and activists as part of New Mexico's Coalition for Equality in fighting for—and winning—this important law. Sadly, too many states leave GLBT Americans unprotected from this senseless violence. It's past time for a federal law that brings uniformity to hate crimes law. Our thoughts are with the victim, his friend and their families as well as the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community in New Mexico." (j)

Compiled by MARTY SMITH



Tammy Duckworth, an Iraq war vet running for Congress, redacted her support for repealing the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

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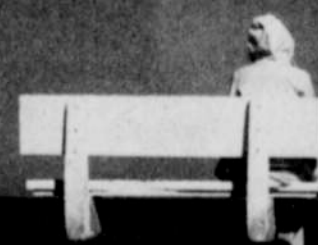
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