

# NORTHWEST BRIEFS

## »Bullies Be Gone

House Bill 2599 passed a hurdle Wednesday, March 11, when it was approved by the House Education Committee in a 9 to 1 bipartisan vote. The committee sent the strengthened anti-bullying bill for a vote in the Oregon House. This bill builds on current law, which states that schools districts must have a policy on bullying and harassment. The new law lays out minimum requirements for that policy: it must cover behavior at school-sponsored activities or on school-provided transportation. The policy must identify a point person at each school. Students, parents and teachers can report harassment. It also requires a uniform complain process across school districts. The proposed new law also requires that the policy be made available to the public. The bill addresses further training for teachers that will prevent and address bullying. Basic Rights Oregon, who has been working diligently on behalf of the bill, hopes the House will take up the bill before the end of March.

## »Protecting Our Youth From Other Potential Dangers

"Our nation's youth deserve the facts about how to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections, including HIV," said Human Rights Campaign President



Members of Human Rights Campaign Portland converged on Washington, D.C., for HRC's annual Lobby Day and Equality Convention.

Joe Solmonese on Tuesday, March 17. "The federal government has tied states' hands when it comes to providing prevention education to teens."

Solmonese, who heads the HRC, the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization, hailed the re-introduction of the Responsible Education about Life (REAL) Act in the 111th Congress. The bill, sponsored by Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA), would authorize federal funding for comprehensive and medically accurate sex education.

Currently, states can only receive federal funding for sex education if they teach abstinence-only-until-marriage programs

that are prohibited from openly discussing condoms and other forms of contraception. In addition, the federal government has spent more than \$1 billion providing funding to abstinence-only programs whose federal guidelines mandate defining marriage as "only a legal union between one man and one woman as a husband and wife."

"It's time to ensure that states can provide comprehensive sex education that gives students the tools they need to make responsible decisions. The needs of the vast majority of American students, especially LGBT students, are currently ignored by federally-funded sex education programs," adds Solmonese. "Sex education must be based on public health, not narrow right-wing ideology. We urge members from both sides of the aisle to co-sponsor and support this critical legislation."

During the previous weekend, and prior to Tuesday's announcement, eleven members of Human Rights Campaign Portland converged on Washington, D.C., for HRC's annual Lobby Day and Equality Convention. Todd Canon, Wendy Blenning, Michael Long, CM Hall, Scott Lasing, John Leonard, Shaley Howard, Betsy Watkins, Donna Tarabella, Barb. Bloom, and Harvey Lau (seen in photo above left)

visited members of Congress and personally visited with Sen. Jeff Merkley, D, Ore., Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore., and Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore. The group spent March 6 and 7 at Human Rights Campaign's Equality Convention, participating in workshops and discussing the important work of achieving our equality. Workshops included topics such as how to build up the Federal Club, what to do after Prop 8 and how to work with straight allies.

During the lunch session on Friday, Rep. Betsy Markey, D-Colo., gave the March 6 lunch address. Markey's campaign against the anti-gay incumbent, Marilyn Musgrave, was strongly backed by HRC.

Another highlight was a speech delivered by President Barack Obama's longtime friend and Senior White House advisor Valerie Jarrett.

"I was so moved by her inclusive language—saying lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender multiple times in her remarks, and not stumbling over these words but having a keen understanding that this administration intends to be inclusive and will work to pass a fully inclusive ENDA and the Mathew Shepard hate crimes bill," said CM Hall, HRC Portland's steering committee political co-chairman. "It was just amazing to get a sense that HRC and

*continued on page 10*

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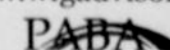
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