

HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK NEWS

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ONE STEP CLOSER: GAY RIGHTS BILLS PASS SENATE, FAIL IN THE HOUSE

Once again, the Montana Legislature provided the stage for the battle to secure equal rights and protection under the law for Montana's gays and lesbians. Unlike past sessions, gay rights bills passed the Senate, which Democrats controlled 27-23. However, the Senate victories did not lead to wins in the House, which was split 50-50 between the two political parties.

With Democratic gains during the last election cycle, Montana's political climate may be shifting; however, gay rights legislation still faces strong opposition. In 2004, the Montana Family Foundation successfully banned gay marriage in Montana by getting CI-96 passed (for more on CI-96, see the July and November 2004 editions of *Network News* at <http://www.mhrn.org>). Also, the Religious Right continues its hold on the Montana Republican Party, whose platform expresses the goal of keeping "homosexual acts illegal."

Legislators like Sen. Dan McGee (R-Laurel) exemplify the close relationship between the Religious Right and the state GOP. An article penned by Sen. McGee and circulated by the party reflects the views of Religious Right groups. He states being gay "is a perversion" and "a form of sexual gratification – it is not love." Sen. McGee continues by stating that opposing gay rights is "about right versus wrong, about truth versus lies, about normal versus perversion" and "some things are just wrong." Montana legislators, from both parties, frequently caved to the Religious Right during the 2005 legislative session.

Montana Human Rights Act: Bedrock of Anti-Discrimination in Montana

One piece of legislation passing the
(*Rights*, continued on page 2)

2005

Montana Legislature

This *Network News* contains articles recapping bills from the 2005 Montana Legislature. Along with the lead article on gay rights legislation, there is information on bills supporting:

Clinic Access
(page 4)

Indian Education
(page 5)

Good Science Curriculum
(page 6)

*Human Rights
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(Rights, continued from page 1)

Senate was SB 199, which sought to include sexual orientation into the Montana Human Rights Act. The Human Rights Act forbids discrimination in employment, public accommodations, housing, financial transactions, education, and government services. It already protects people from discrimination based on characteristics like race, religion, gender, and age.

Sen. Ken Toole (D-Helena), the bill's sponsor, and other supporters stressed that SB 199 would protect basic civil rights, along with addressing the roots of anti-gay discrimination in society. Reverends Vernon Wright and Brenda McLellan reminded legislators that the Religious Right's anti-gay ideology does not represent Christianity as a whole. The bill received support from the Network, Pride, Montana Association of Social Workers, American Association of University Women, union workers, Montana Democratic Party, and Montana Business and Professional Women.

The anti-gay lobby turned out in full force during committee hearings on the bill. Dallas Erickson, representing Montana Citizens for Decency Through Law, compared gays and lesbians to people who engage in bestiality, pedophilia and incest. The most disturbing comments came from Eric Schiedermayer of the Montana Catholic Conference. He told legislators that the Catholic Church views homosexuality as "destructive" and warned that SB 199 would prohibit "just discrimination" against gays and lesbians.

SB 199 got bogged down in the Senate Judiciary Committee; however, Sen. Toole successfully got it taken from committee to the Senate floor. It passed the full Senate 26-

23, mostly along party lines. Democratic Sen. Gerald Pease (D-Lodge Grass) voted against the bill, while Republican Sen. John Cobb (R-Augusta) voted for it.

The legislation did not fair as well in the House. Along with the usual anti-gay groups, the Boy Scouts of Montana turned out in opposition to the bill. Boy Scout Executive Gordon Rubard said the bill would keep his group from accessing state properties for service projects, because it refuses to allow openly gay youth to join. Jerry Keck of the Department of Labor told House Judiciary that the Boy Scouts were exempt from SB 199's provisions, because they are a private organization.

One of the swing votes on House Judiciary was Rep. Jeanne Windham (D-Polson). Rep. Windham proposed amendments to SB 199 which would have weakened the Human Rights Act as a whole. Windham's proposals, which the Network opposed, combined with intensive right-wing lobbying against the bill, led to House Judiciary tabling the bill. While SB 199 did not become law, by passing the Senate it was more successful than similar legislation in the past.

The Next of Kin Registry

Sen. Jon Ellingson (D-Missoula) sponsored SB 485. Not a gay rights bill per se, gays and lesbians would have benefited from the bill, along with the elderly, disabled and economically disadvantaged. SB 485 sought creation of a "Next of Kin Registry." The registry allowed a person to choose and designate his or her legal next of kin. The person chosen could make hospital visits, health-care decisions, and decisions regarding their kin's deceased body.

The Montana Attorney General's Office was scheduled to oversee the registry.

SB 485 passed the Senate easily. At the Senate Judiciary hearing, no Religious Right groups testified against it, and the Montana Catholic Conference supported it. SB 485 passed the committee on a 9-3 vote, with Senators McGee, Aubyn Curtiss (R-Fortine) and Gary Perry (R-Manhattan) casting the dissenting votes. Once out of committee, the bill passed the Senate 28-21.

The bill's momentum ended in the House. There were no opponents to the bill when House Judiciary held its hearing. Sen. Ellingson emphasized that the registry was easier and cheaper than having to hire an attorney to draft a living will, power of attorney, etc.

Many committee members questioned Sen. Ellingson about the legality and effectiveness of the proposed registry. Rep. Ron Stoker (R-Darby) believed the registry would require an expansion of the legal definition of family. Other members seemed intent on making Montanans continue paying legal fees to have living wills drafted.

As the legislature was winding down, House Judiciary had not taken action on the bill. Rep. Christine Kaufmann (D-Helena) made a motion to blast the bill out of committee and bring it to the House floor for debate. Although her motion passed by a simple majority of 51-49, it required 60 votes to pass. The vote signaled the end of SB 485 for the session.

Two Hate Crimes Bills Defeated

Rep. Tom Facey (D-Missoula) and Sen. Toole sponsored bills to in-

(Rights, continued on page 8)

“GOD HATES FAGS” GROUP DESCENDS ON MONTANA



In February, Fred Phelps' virulently anti-gay Westboro Baptist Church staged protests in Helena and Missoula. Based in Topeka, Kansas, the church is best known for its 1998 picketing of Matthew Shepard's funeral. Shepard was murdered in Wyoming because he was gay, and Phelps' group held signs at the funeral reading "Hell is Real, Ask Matt."

Phelps and his followers came to Montana to protest the *Snetsinger* ruling [see related article on page 8]. Because of the ruling, Phelps believed the Montana Supreme Court represented the "People's Republic of Sodom." Phelps also demonstrated in front of six Helena churches. He claimed the churches were "pro-gay," an odd claim since some of the denominations supported the constitutional amendment banning gay marriage in Montana.

Phelps protestors "greet" people attending services at the Cathedral of St. Helena.



(Left and below) Following their appearance at the Cathedral, Phelps' crew moved down the street to St. Paul's United Methodist Church.



The Westboro Baptist Church also took aim at Lt. Governor John Bohlinger for his public support of including sexual orientation in Montana's hate crimes statute [see related article on page 1]. Phelps referred to Bohlinger as an "evil, irreversibly Hell-bound man" who "sold his soul for a mess of filthy sodomite pottage."

Over 200 community members and parishoners the St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Helena staged a counter protest when Phelps' group of eight arrived at the church. St. Paul's youth group had gathered pledges from community members based on the length of time Phelps protested their church. The youth group raised and donated over \$2,000 to AIDS research and treatment. □



(Left) Protestor in front of the Montana Supreme Court. (Right) Protestor in front of First Presbyterian Church.

ANTI-CHOICE PROTESTORS MUST ABIDE BY “BUBBLE”

For the first time since the *Roe v. Wade* decision, the Montana Legislature passed pro-choice legislation in 2005. HB 324, sponsored by Rep. Robyn Driscoll (D-Billings), addresses the increased intimidation and militancy of anti-choice protestors directed at clinic patients and employees.

HB 324 makes obstructing access to a healthcare facility against the law. It forbids a protestor from coming within eight feet of anyone entering or leaving such a facility, unless the person consents to receive

gressiveness of Montana’s anti-choice protestors began in 2001 with a statewide tour by Missionaries to the Preborn. In 1993, the group’s founder signed a statement saying the murder of abortion providers was “justifiable,” and he advocated forming church-based militias (for more info, see <http://mhrn.org/news/0502antichoice.html>).

Along with Missionaries’ tour, a key component of today’s clinic protests is the Constitution Party of Montana (CP-MT). CP-MT combines Christian fundamentalism with

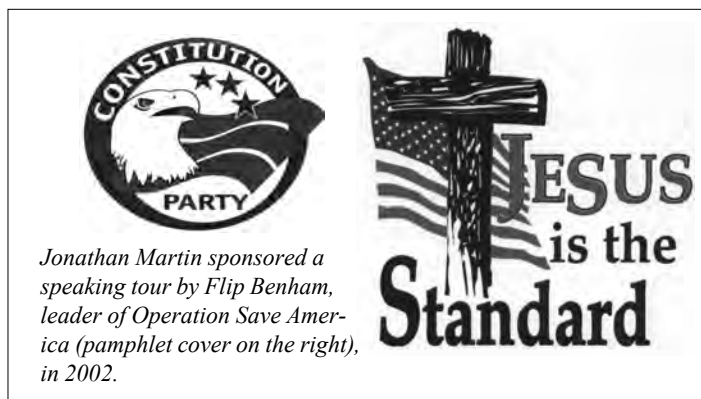
the bill struck a “reasonable and responsible” balance between the protestors and patients. She said courts have ruled that protective bubbles, like the one in HB 324, do not violate anyone’s First Amendment rights. Driscoll also stated anti-choice protestors frighten and intimidate patients, along with violating their right to privacy.

The bill’s supporters included Planned Parenthood and representatives from other Montana clinics. Jeri Duran of Planned Parenthood said most of their patients visit the clinics for a wide range of services, everything from prenatal care to flu shots. Duran stated that 90% of Montana’s Planned Parenthood clinics have had to call law enforcement to deal with anti-choice protestors.

Raquel Castellanos of Missoula’s Blue Mountain Clinic testified that some anti-choice protestors routinely cross the line of acceptable behavior. One of those people is Lolo’s Marilyn Hatch. Hatch is active with CP-MT, and her husband, Lou Hatch, has run for the Montana Legislature as a CP-MT candidate. According to Castellanos, Hatch takes pictures of people entering the clinic; writes down license plate numbers of clinic employees; harasses clinic employees; and has made personal threats against Castellanos.

“Stop the Death Clinics”

The Religious Right lined up against HB 324. Dallas Erickson, representing the Montana Family Coalition, stated anti-choice protestors are engaged in a battle against the “death clinics.” Also of the Montana Family Coalition, Harris Himes (*Access, continued on page 7*)



Jonathan Martin sponsored a speaking tour by Flip Benham, leader of Operation Save America (pamphlet cover on the right), in 2002.

ing the protestor’s materials. The buffer applies within 36 feet of a healthcare establishment.

The hearings on the bill gave ample evidence for the necessity of the “bubble bill.” Employees at clinics discussed how anti-choice protestors are increasing their levels of harassment and intimidation of both clinic staff and clinic patients. This escalation is not surprising when the catalysts for Montana’s anti-choice demonstrators are examined.

Launching Montana’s Anti-Choice Fringe

The increased volume and ag-

ing the ideology of the anti-government “patriot” movement. Along with being CP-MT’s chairman, Jonathan Martin is listed as an organizer for Operation Save America, a militant anti-choice group. He leads Great Falls Pro-Life, which regularly protests the Planned Parenthood Clinic in Great Falls. Not surprisingly, Martin and other CP-MT activists opposed HB 324.

The Right to Privacy and Clinic Access

Rep. Driscoll stressed that HB 324 would not limit anti-choice protestors’ freedom of speech. Instead,

SMALL VICTORY IN FUNDING “INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL”

Montana’s Constitution declares that Native American culture needs to be taught to *all* students attending Montana’s public schools [see inset box]. The goal of this mandate is to increase understanding between Indians and non-Indians. Through education, problems such as racism and the lack of knowledge regarding tribal sovereignty and treaty rights could be addressed. It may also help curb the high dropout rate of Native American students in Montana schools, because their culture will be reflected in their studies and learning environment.



Rep. Carol Juneau
(D-Browning)

In its 33-year history, the Indian Education provision of the Montana Constitution has never received state funding for implementation. This has left it to individual school districts to apply this provision on their own. More than a quarter of Montana schools have no approved policy to implement Indian Education, and more than 70% of schools offer no training to teachers on Indian culture.

Although it is constitutionally mandated and the “Indian Education for All Montanans” law was passed in 1999, it took a Montana Supreme Court ruling to make the Montana Legislature take this responsibility seriously. In 2004, the Montana Supreme Court ruled that the state of Montana needed to define what constituted a “quality education” and declared the current funding system for public education inadequate. The Court also ruled that the state was “defenseless” for not funding the mandated Indian Education program.

Indian Education for All Montanans (IEFAM) was a centerpiece of the legislative debate to comply with the court ruling. Sen. Don Ryan (D-Great Falls) sponsored SB 152. Passed

into law, the bill defines what constitutes a quality education. IEFAM advocates were able to amend SB 152 to make sure that the definition included teaching the “cultural heritage” of Native Americans. However, the bill contained no mention of how much funding was needed to implement an overall quality education. Sen. Kim Gillan (D-Billings) sponsored SB 341, which included \$23 million to implement IEFAM. The bill died in committee.

Rep. Carol Juneau (D-Browning) sponsored HB 791, which was the only bill during the session specifically focused

on funding IEFAM. The original request of \$23 million for IEFAM was reduced in HB 791 to \$6 million. The bill made it out of the House Appropriations Committee to the House floor, but it was defeated 53-47. Meanwhile, HB 63, the state’s school funding bill, passed both legislative chambers and was signed by Governor Brian Schweitzer, without any mention of IEFAM.

With HB 791’s failure, supporters of IEFAM then focused on HB 2, Montana’s main appropriations bill. Gov. Schweitzer initially earmarked \$2 million to the Office of Public Instruction for implementation of the program, with an additional \$1.4 million tacked on later. The final state budget for fiscal years 2006-2007 included \$3.4 million for IEFAM for grades K-12.

Although this is the first time IEFAM has been funded, supporters say it will cost much more than \$3.4 million to build a statewide, K-12 integrated curriculum and train educators to teach the subject. A panel of legislators is continuing to work on a new funding formula for Montana’s public schools.

IEFAM supporters want the committee to include the program in its new funding formula. □

Montana Constitution

“The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity.”

STRONG SCIENCE CURRICULUM IGNORED BY COMMITTEE

At the urging of citizens from the Bitterroot Valley, Sen. Ken Toole (D-Helena) sponsored Senate Joint Resolution 8 during the 2005 legislature. Although unsuccessful, SJR 8 asked the state of Montana to recognize the importance of separating church and state when it comes to science curriculum in public schools. It urged schools to stand strong against “fundamentalist organizations” wanting schools to teach religiously-based “creationism, creation science, and intelligent design.”

The catalysts for the resolution were Bitterroot Valley residents who experienced firsthand what



Sen. Ken Toole
(D-Helena)

happens when the Religious Right tries to place creationism into science curriculum (for more examples, see inset box on page 7).

Local minister Curtis Brickley gave a presentation supporting “intelligent design” to the Darby School Board in December 2003. Intelligent design holds that an “intelligent designer,” generally recognized as the Christian God, created life (for more on the Darby controversy, see the February 2004 and July 2004 editions of *Network News* available at <http://www.mhrn.org>).

Brickley’s proposal aimed at getting the Darby School Board to adopt an “objective origins” policy, which would teach intelligent design (ID) alongside evolution. An initial vote by the board favored ID. However, the 2004 elections ousted chairperson and ID supporter Gina

Schallenberger. This swung the school board’s balance in favor of science over ID.

Learn from the Bitterroot

The Senate Education Committee had the first crack at SJR 8. A large contingent of Bitterroot residents, along with scientists, joined Sen. Toole in supporting the resolution.

In explaining SJR 8, Sen. Toole reminded committee members that the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that teaching creationism, no matter what name it goes by, in public schools is unconstitutional. He pointed out that many scientists are

also Christians who embrace creationism as part of their personal religions. The problem arises when fundamentalists ignore standard scientific practices and proclaim that creationism is science.

Rod Miner, one of the main opponents of Darby’s ID proposal, read a letter from a former Darby School Superintendent to the Education Committee. It stated ID is a “covert attempt” to put religion in curriculum, and the time wasted debating it hurt Darby schools. Miner added that ID proponents do not follow the scientific method and have no peer-reviewed studies supporting their positions.

Professional scientists also supported SJR 8. University of Montana Geology Professor George Stanley described ID as a “smoke screen.” David Baker, an earth sci-

entist from Monarch, said he has not found a scientific argument to support creationism or ID in the 20 years he had investigated the subjects. Another SJR 8 proponent said ID was an “end run” around the scientific process.

Montana’s Office of Public Instruction also supported the resolution. An agency lobbyist testified that OPI Superintendent Linda McCulloch swore to uphold the Montana Constitution, which emphatically dictates there must be separation of church and state in regards to education.

We’re Not in Kansas Anymore

The most noteworthy resolution opponent was Scott Hill, a former member of the Kansas Board of Education. In 1999, Hill was part of a right-wing faction that removed evolution from Kansas’ educational requirements. The Kansas Board adopted guidelines declaring evolution unsuitable as an explanation for the development of new species. While evolution could still be taught, it wasn’t required and students were not tested on it.

The anti-evolution guidelines were the central campaign issue in the 2000 elections for the Kansas Board of Education. Moderate Republicans defeated two candidates who supported the 1999 changes. Before the election, Hill resigned from the Kansas Board after questions surfaced regarding his residency. He ran a ranch in Mosby, Montana, and was traveling back and forth to Kansas for meetings. The Kansas Attorney General threatened to sue for his removal from the board, so Hill resigned. Following the 2000 elections,
(ID, continued on page 7)

(*ID*, continued from page 6)

the Kansas Board restored evolution to its guidelines.

At the Senate Education Committee's hearing on SJR 8, Hill came to the rescue of fundamentalist Christians. Portraying them as helpless victims, he said the controversy in Darby "beat fundamentalists over the head" and amounted to "religious bigotry."

Two people integral to Darby's ID debate also opposed SJR 8. Gina Schallenger, the chairperson who was ousted for supporting ID, echoed Hill's comments about ID being used to persecute Christians. Current Darby School Trustee Doug Banks said the ID proposal was "about good science versus bad science," and evolution is not fact.

Religious Right organizations also opposed the resolution. Rachel Roberts of the Montana Family Foundation read a letter she attributed to John Bacon, a member of the Kansas Board of Education. Bacon said the resolution was "propaganda and a misrepresentation of the facts." Julie Millam of the Montana Family Coalition stated SJR 8 was "religious discrimination at its worst."

Committee Takes Easy Way Out

When closing on the bill, Sen. Toole told Education Committee members, "Welcome to the culture war." The committee members were not willing to back sound science, as they let SJR 8 die without taking a vote before transmittal. Transmittal is the middle of the legislative session when bills have to be moved to the other legislative chamber. If no action is taken on a bill, it dies at that point. □

(*Access*, continued from page 4)

said the bill would do nothing to stop assassinations of medical personnel.

During the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on the bill, Himes also showed part of a "documentary." Filmed outside Blue Mountain Clinic, Himes produced the piece. Part of the segment aired for the committee contained an interview with Marilyn Hatch. She claimed that clinics have "buckets of babies" lying around.

CP-MT's Jonathan Martin claimed that Planned Parenthood protects pedophiles and child molesters. Martin was joined in opposition by Kandi Matthew-Jenkins, a former CP-MT candidate for the legislature.

Good Policy Wins

Despite the Religious Right's opposition, HB 324 became law. Although the votes on the bill largely followed party lines, there were exceptions. It then passed the Montana House 50-48. Republican Representatives Mark Noennig (R-Billings) and Rep. Bernie Olson (R-Lakeside) voted with the Democrats.

On the Senate side, HB 324 easily made it out of Senate Judiciary on an 8-4 vote. Rep. Jim Shockley (R-Victor) sponsored the bill in the Montana Senate, which didn't sit well with the Religious Right. Dallas Erickson said Shockley's action made him a "traitor." The Senate passed the "bubble bill" 28-22. Gov. Brian Schweitzer signed HB 324 into law shortly thereafter. □

The Battle Over Science In America

Montana is not the only state witnessing the fight over teaching versions of creationism in schools.

In Cobb County, Georgia, the school board ordered stickers denouncing evolution placed in all science textbooks. A federal judge ruled this was an unconstitutional endorsement of religion and ordered removal of the stick-

ers. Following the ruling, GOP Rep. Ben Bridges introduced legislation in the 2005 Georgia Legislature to ban the teaching of evolution.

Pennsylvania's Dover Area School District requires science classes to discuss intelligent design. A lawsuit against the current policy is going before a federal judge. The school district is represented by Thomas More Law Center, a Reli-

gious Right law firm.

Right-wing conservatives recaptured the Kansas Board of Education in 2004. It recently put evolution on trial, hearing testimony from supporters and opponents of intelligent design. The Kansas Board will consider new guidelines in August and is expected to be friendly to intelligent design proponents. □

(Rights, continued from page 2)

clude sexual orientation, gender and disability in the characteristics contained in Montana's hate crimes statute. The statute allows longer sentences to criminals who harass or harm people because of the traits found in the law.

The impact of a hate crime extends beyond the individual victim. It sends a message to the victim and members of the targeted group that they are not welcome in the community.

Religious Right groups vehemently opposed the bills. During the House Judiciary hearing on Rep. Facey's HB 240, Dallas Erickson compared gays and lesbians to people engaging in pedophilia, bestiality, incest and necrophilia. Harris Himes of the Montana Family Coalition claimed hate crimes laws are used to persecute and prosecute anti-gay Christians. Eric Schiedermayer worried HB 240 would legitimize the "destructive" behavior of homosexuality.

The bill passed the House Judiciary 10-8, with Rep. Mark Noennig (R-Billings) joining the Democrats on the committee. During the debate on the House floor, Rep. Noennig continued fighting for the bill, even denouncing his fellow Republicans for using the Bible to oppose it. The House ended up killing the bill 54-46. While Rep. Noennig voted to pass the bill, Democrats Larry Jent (Bozeman), Jim Keane (Butte), Jeanne Windham (Polson), Jonathan Windy Boy (Box Elder) and Gary Matthews (Miles City) opposed it.

During the Senate Judiciary Committee's hearing on his SB 202, Sen. Toole said there is no doubt that Montanans are targeted for violence because of their sexual orientation, gender or disability.

Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger testified on behalf of the Schweitzer Administration for SB 202. He said the Administration supported the bill, because "We must continue to root out hate and teach tolerance."

The Religious Right and the Montana Catholic Conference lined up against SB 202. Jeannie Poe, representing All Nations Ministry, stated, "Our moral structure is being totally trashed" by bills mentioning sexual orientation. Eric Schiedermayer said gays and lesbians violate God's ordained structure and Christianity. Harris Himes urged the persecution of gays and lesbians in the name of the Bible.

Senate Judiciary allowed SB 202 to die without even taking a vote.

CI-96 Smokescreen Defeats Civil Unions

For years, the Religious Right opposed including sexual orientation in proposed legislation by claiming it would lead to the legalization of gay marriage. Due to the passage of CI-96, the Montana Family Foundation has eliminated the possibility of gay marriage in Montana for now. However, the Religious Right continued its campaign to make Montana's gays and lesbians live as second-class citizens.

Rep. Christine Kaufmann sponsored HB 259, which would have created civil unions in Montana. By filing a civil union license, a couple

(Rights, cont. on page 9)

U-System Opens Benefits to Same-Sex Partners

On December 30, 2004, the Montana Supreme Court issued its landmark *Snetsinger* decision. The Court ruled that the Montana University System was violating the state constitution's equal protection clause by denying benefits and health insurance to same-sex partners of University System employees.

The 4-3 Supreme Court decision overturned a lower-court ruling. In his opinion supporting the Court majority, Justice Jim Nelson wrote, "(T)he equal protection clause states that 'No Person' shall be denied the equal protection of the laws. The language is clear and unambiguous. 'No person' means simply that - there is no language in this clause excepting out of this guarantee gay and lesbians. At least our society has not come to the position that homosexuals are not even to be considered as persons."

In March, the University System's Board of Regents voted unanimously to change the current policy to comply with the ruling. The new policy allows University System employees to add one adult dependent to their insurance coverage. Enrollment under the new policy will begin July 1, 2005.

The *Snetsinger* ruling and subsequent policy change ends a long battle. Former University of Montana employees Carol Snetsinger and Carla Grayson sued in 2002 after their same-sex partners were denied health insurance by UM. After filing the suits, both couples received threatening letters in the mail. Four days after filing the suit, the home of Grayson, Adrienne Neff, and their infant son was destroyed by arson. The case was never solved. □

WOMEN'S VOTE PROJECT A HUGE SUCCESS

Nine organizations, of which MHRN was one, formed the Montana Women Vote Project in the summer of 2000. Representatives from these groups estimated that approximately 30% of the women associated with their organizations weren't voting. Montana Women Vote (MWV) decided to change that, focusing especially on low-income women whose daily lives are directly impacted by current policy.

Initially, MWV wanted to register 5,000 new voters. When all was said and done, MWV easily surpassed that total, registering 7,300 new voters. Of the new

registered voters, MWV conducted interviews with more than 2,000 of those women to discern what the most important issues were to them. MWV focused on areas like affordable childcare, domestic violence, poverty, reproductive freedom and environmental pollution.

MWV provided over 20,000 voter guides concentrating on the identified issues and eight key races. It also did phone calls to get these new voters out to the polls on Election Day. The results were impressive. Of the eight races, five winning candidates supported women's issues, including Montana's new governor. Also, two of the three initiatives on the ballot that MWV supported were passed. □

(Rights, continued from page 8)

could access the same civil benefits and legal protections afforded to married spouses. Rep. Kaufmann stated the bill was not about marriage. Instead, it was about allowing two people to proclaim they are a family.

HB 259 supporters included parents of gay and lesbian children, along with many Montanans who were part of longtime, committed same-sex relationships. Helena's Linda Gryczan stated she and her partner have been together for 21 years; however, under current law, they are legally strangers. Other supporters discussed how legal documents, such as powers of attorney, are not always recognized in crisis situations. This bill would have made benefits and legal protections concrete.

Frequently referring to Montana's recent adoption of CI-96, HB 259 opponents left little doubt concerning their beliefs. The Family Foundation's Jeff Laszloffy said HB 259 was a "semantic game" to try and circumvent CI-96. Dallas Erickson called the bill a "slap in the face" to Montanans who supported CI-96. He added that, if love was the only requirement for marriage, a father could marry his daughter or

the household pet.

While some House Judiciary members expressed an interest in reworking the bill to avoid perceived constitutional problems, other committee members just wanted the bill dead.

Rep. Stoker stated, "Our society is based on marriage between one man and one woman." Rep. Windham opposed the bill, fearing it would interfere with the rights of biological parents. House Judiciary tabled the bill by a 15-3 vote, with Representatives Gail Gutsche (D-Missoula), Arlene Becker (D-Billings) and Art Noonan (D-Butte) voting not to table.

The Depths of Absurdity

Along with bills mentioning sexual orientation, Religious Right lobbyists opposed any legislation they thought might benefit gays and lesbians.

Sen. Carol Williams (D-Missoula) sponsored a bill seeking to increase the penalties for family member or partner assault. Rachel Roberts, representing the Montana Family Foundation, said the bill dealt with a "designer crime" and was trying to

give legal status to gays. Harris Himes claimed the absence of gay-rights supporters at the hearing was "proof" that the bill secretly sought to promote the "homosexual agenda."

Similar happenings took place during a hearing on HB 47, which would have funded full-day kindergarten in Montana. Himes stated all the bill accomplished was giving teachers more time to indoctrinate kids with values opposed by the Montana Family Coalition. Following comments by Himes and other Religious Right activists, House Education Committee member Rep. Dan Villa (D-Anaconda) asked that those testifying stick to the bill.

Another bill opponent, Helena's William Wise, began criticizing a former head of the Office of Public Instruction. The committee chairperson asked Wise to stay on the bill's subject matter.

Representatives Roger Koopman (R-Bozeman), Ed Butcher (R-Winifred), John Ward (R-Helena) and Bob Lake (R-Hamilton) all jumped to the Religious Right's defense. They claimed committee members were trying to intimidate the bill's opponents. □

(*McGuire, cont. from page 12*)
 wanted to foster a “sense of racial identity, pride and belonging” for white students in Bozeman. He lamented that schools did not provide white students with “any sense of White racial solidarity or White racial pride.”

McGuire got almost 40 Bozeman residents to sign his nominating petition to run for office. Following press reports of his candidacy, many of the signers said they had no idea who McGuire was when they signed his petition. Others said they did talk with McGuire before signing, and he distorted his beliefs.

Like his euphemistic descriptions of NA, McGuire’s candidacy was an attempt to reposition himself in the community. He followed the example of longtime Klansman David Duke. Back in the 1980s, Duke stashed away his Klan robe, bought a business suit, and began calling himself a conservative Republican. McGuire attempted the same trick.

As he wedged himself into the mainstream political debate over Montana’s schools, McGuire knew a “conservative” talking “school reform” was more appealing than a white supremacist with an anti-Semitic message. His campaign literature sought to capitalize on the Religious Right’s themes of homophobia and family values. He complained that school curriculum not only “preaches acceptance of homosexuality but actively encourages it to our children.” McGuire’s literature also stated that he wanted children to be taught “healthy, moral, traditional family values.”

On Election Day, McGuire lost, receiving 157 votes which translated into 3.7% of the total vote. However, winning was never a realistic goal. McGuire used the campaign (*McGuire, continued on page 11*)

The National Alliance

William Pierce started the National Alliance in the 1970s after a stint with the American Nazi Party. Before his death, Pierce acquired a racist book publishing company (National Vanguard Books), a white power music label (Resistance Records), and hosted a bigoted radio program (“American Dissident Voices”). His legacy to the hate movement includes his novel *The Turner Diaries*. For decades, it has been a blueprint for violent activity, even providing the inspiration for Timothy McVeigh’s Oklahoma City bombing. Race-based violence and weapons violations fill NA’s history. A few examples from recent history help tell the story:

- Carl Carson, a regional NA leader from Nebraska, tried to sell bombs to a local militia group.
- Chris Gilliam, an Alabama NA member, served 10 years in prison for buying grenades to use in mail bombs.
- Eric Hanson, an Illinois NA member, was convicted of assaulting an African-American man and possessing illegal weapons. He later died in a shootout with police.
- Todd Vanbiber, a Florida NA member, served six years in prison for possession of explosives. He planned to use bombs as a distraction for bank robberies.

The National Alliance Splits

Ever since William Pierce died in 2002 and Erich Gliebe took over as NA’s chairman, NA activists have grumbled about Gliebe’s leadership. At the end of April, a large split took place in the National Alliance. Led by important NA leaders like Kevin Alfred Strom (host of “American Dissident Voices”), Roger Williams (NA’s Western States Regional Director), and NA board members, a faction consisting of many local chapters demanded Gliebe’s resignation. The main complaint was that Gliebe and Shaun Walker were misusing organizational resources.

Kevin McGuire joined the Strom-Williams faction, which may be a smart tactical move. Going under the name “National Vanguard,” this faction includes the on-the-ground racists who are actually carrying out NA’s mission. Gliebe did resign; however, Shaun Walker is now the National Alliance chairman. Walker can claim he leads NA, but it means little if most of the local chapters, including the Bozeman one, are loyal to “National Vanguard.”

This type of infighting is common in hate groups. They become so identified with their founders, in this case William Pierce, that they suffer organizational turmoil when the leader disappears. It is common for competing factions to claim they are carrying on the founder’s vision. That is what is happening now with the National Alliance-National Vanguard split. □

SUPREMACIST ESCALATES CAMPAIGN AGAINST BOZEMAN

In June 2004, racist and anti-Semitic literature began appearing in Montana communities. The National Alliance, a hate group with chapters across the country, started distributing the material in Bozeman and eventually reached communities across Western Montana.

Shaun Walker, a spokesperson for the National Alliance, said the literature drops were part of a strategy to increase the group's presence in Montana. By mid-summer, Bozeman had its own local chapter of the National Alliance (NA). The person behind the Montana activism is a California import named Kevin McGuire. McGuire recently ran for the Bozeman School Board with a "family values" platform.



Kevin McGuire
National Alliance

www.mhrn.org). After establishing himself as NA's state leader, McGuire helped spread the group's literature throughout Montana.

McGuire learned lessons from his California experience. The firestorm erupting from his anti-Semitic editorial limited his options, so he moved to Montana to start over. The NA literature distributed by McGuire and his cronies avoids hardcore white supremacist messages, and McGuire presents NA as a benign, European-American heritage group. The truth is very different [see inset box on page 10].

To counter McGuire's inaccurate characterizations of NA, the Network continues to publicize the truth about both McGuire and the National Alliance. What's a white supremacist left to do? Run for office.

The Evolution of a Racist

While studying engineering at Santa Rosa Junior College in 2003, Kevin McGuire wrote an anti-Semitic column that the student newspaper published. Controversy erupted, and McGuire gained celebrity status in the hate movement. He moved to Montana later that year, eventually setting up shop in Bozeman (for more background on McGuire and the National Alliance, see the November 2004 edition of *Network News* at <http://>

The David Duke Template

The Network was not surprised when McGuire announced in March he was running for the Bozeman School Board. Racists in Montana and across the country have run for office, attempting to repackage their beliefs and gain access to the political mainstream.

In announcing his candidacy, McGuire stated he
(McGuire, continued on page 10)

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