

# **LGBT History Project of the LGBT Center of Central PA**

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**Title:** *PA Rural Gay Caucus Press Release*

**Date:** July 22, 1976

**Location:** LGBT-001 Joseph W. Burns Collection

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PRESS RELEASE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA RURAL GAY CAUCUS

P. O. Box 182

Northumberland, Penna. 18757

DATE OF RELEASE: July 22, 1976

BY: Joseph W. Burns  
1136 Walnut Street  
Allentown, Penna. 18102  
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SUBJECT: Open Letter from the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus to the Legislators and Governor of Pennsylvania.

Attached is a copy of a letter delivered on Thursday, July 22 to the Harrisburg office address of all General Assembly Representatives and Senators of Pennsylvania, and to the office of the Governor. The events which gave rise to it were the Governor's Proclamation of Gay Pride Week, June 12 - June 19, and a resolution passed by voice-vote in the House of Representatives on June 16th rejecting the Proclamation.

The letter is referred also to the People of Pennsylvania, in order that they too might understand our grievance. One cannot redress the past. But, one can look to right the future.

Enclosed, also, is a sheet identifying the Rural Gay Caucus.

The Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus  
P. O. Box 182  
Northumberland, Pennsylvania 17857

July 22, 1976

To Members of the House of Representatives:

We, the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus, as the united representatives of nearly one million rural gay people throughout the State, sincerely regret the action of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives on June 15 in passing a resolution rejecting Governor Shapp's proclamation of Gay Pride Week. Never, in the annals of Pennsylvania history, has a people in peaceful pursuit of civil rights been so put down.

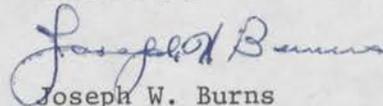
The Founder of this State began the great and proud tradition of tolerance and respect for differences in others. Pennsylvania has starred in the role of alleviating the oppression of peoples within its borders. From Penn's treaty with the Indians, to the Underground Railway, to the magnificent melding of immigrant workers and farmers whose daughters and sons we are proud to be, to the women, poor, and aged of today, those who felt oppression in this State have found support in its political leaders - until now.

We, as gay people, met with you, our legislators, on March 23rd of this year. Then, you were attentive and friendly. We told you that tens of thousands of gays live in terrible loneliness, afraid to share their secret homosexuality, afraid to reach for love. We told you of the thousands of gays beaten, robbed, publicly abused, and discriminated against for their sexuality. We told you that the stigma of criminality applied to homosexuality threatens to shatter the lives of 1.2 million gay Pennsylvanians. We told you that in learning to accept ourselves, that in learning how to love one another, that in striving to stand tall against a great weight of oppression, we have found pride and happiness.

You were attentive on March 23rd, but, we now know, you did not listen.

We of the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus have vowed to give our message to our legislators again- and again- and again. We have the pride, the strength, and the love to persevere.

Sincerely,



Joseph W. Burns  
Secretary of the Legislative  
Committee

By direction of the Caucus, July 11, 1976.

cc: Members of the Senate  
Governor Milton J. Shapp