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Title: Gay Lobby Day Report

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Contact:

LGBT History Project
Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

To: All Participants and Supporters of Gay Lobby Day
The Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus
The Governor's Council for Sexual Minorities

From: The Gay Lobby Day Committee, Sam Deetz, Chairperson

Date: April 11, 1976

Subject: Report on Gay Lobby Day

If you had any part in Gay Lobby Day (or Gay Education Day, as it has come to be known), you are to be congratulated on a successful effort. It was an important and historic occasion in Pennsylvania, when on March 23 nearly a hundred gay men and women and their friends converged from all parts of the State upon the Capitol to visit their legislators. They left lasting impressions with hundreds of legislators and their staffs, as well as thousands who read newspapers, listened to radio, or watched TV. We'd like to share with you some of the results of Gay Lobby Day and suggestions for the future.

Gay Lobby Day in Harrisburg

Gay Lobby Day had an impact upon everyone in the Capitol that day - legislators, their aides and secretaries, all who walked the corridors and saw the sea of pink triangles which marked us. We were received more positively than many of us expected. Many meaningful discussions made a difference which will be visible in coming months.

In conversations with over eighty legislators, we found 30% quite positively disposed toward our interests, an equal number quite negative, and the remainder undecided or indifferent. As we look back, we ask, then, why the results on S.B. 743?

Senate Bill 743 was passed overwhelmingly in the Senate, and, according to Representative Charles Caputo (Vice-Chairperson of the Labor Relations Committee), would pass as easily in the House, if it were to come up for a vote before the primary elections. The reason is clear and pragmatic: votes. After the primary, many of our Representatives will be otherwise disposed, and, in fact, the Bill is likely to die for lack of interest.

Another aspect of the Senate performance on S.B. 743 is that many Senators voted 'yes' without thinking, without reading the bill. In our visits we raised consciousness so that next time they will think first. Some legislators said that they have changed their positions as a consequence of our visits.

We found that our legislators are at many stages of awareness of gays and other sexual minorities. In general, legislators from cities are more knowledgeable than those from rural areas, due largely to the fact that gay groups have been in existence longer in urban areas.

For many of us, the day started very early with the trip to Harrisburg. Lobbyists began arriving at 8:00 a.m. They were greeted at the Friends Meeting House with coffee and donuts, and with all sorts of materials - copies of bills, educational information for legislators, and the lobbyists forms. One form had been prepared for each legislator, and included a photo, a short biographical sketch, pertinent data such as office address, and space for the lobbyists to make notes.

You might ask, "Who were these lobbyists?" Well, they were teachers, laborers, coal miners (female)), counselors, ministers, shipping foremen, computer analysts, sociologists, accountants, and many more. They were women and men, young and old, single and married, parents and children. Most importantly, they were all people with a mission and a willingness to work for it.

In groups of two to six, the lobbyists trekked off to the Capitol in search of legislators. They found them in many places - their offices, the corridors, the floor of the House or Senate, the cafeteria. Sometimes appointments were made; other times the contacts were impromptu. Sometimes the first attempt was successful; other times several tries were necessary. Only two Representatives flatly refused to be interviewed, either on Lobby day or later. All in all, we made contact with approximately 150 legislators.

There were many humorous incidents, such as the situation when a transvestite from a rural area in the company of a female friend visited a Representative who mistakenly thought they were Lesbian lovers. One lobbyist travelled across the State with his parents. Can you imagine the impact on a legislator when the three of them marched into the office together?

It was particularly fortunate that we were able to have copies of H.R. 2220 to pass to legislators. This bill, which amends the Human Relations Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual preference, had just been introduced, and not yet officially printed. It provided a useful tool in our lobbying effort, and gave us a positive approach. Quite a number of legislators indicated support of the bill, including some who voted for S.B. 196 or S.B. 743; additional sponsors for the bill were also identified.

A number of us made a point of personally thanking Representative Berson for introducing it.

Another issue which we raised was that of the laws concerning voluntary deviate sexual intercourse. In discussing this matter with legislators, we found considerable sentiment in favor of repealing these Sodomy statutes.

In Preparation

In the time since Lobby Day was initially planned last Fall, a great number of people in many areas have contributed of their time, talent, and means. While the working nucleus of the Committee has been small, most of the work has been outside the Committee. Most important has been the discussion of the project that has occurred everywhere - in the Caucus meetings, in gay groups across the State, in other meetings of people, in the Governor's Task Force, on the telephone - discussion which has not only laid the concrete plans that became Gay Lobby Day, but also generated interest and enthusiasm which brought lobbyists to Harrisburg and made them effective.

Discussion was the essence of the Workshops which were held in Pittsburgh, State College, and Philadelphia. These Workshops proved valuable not only in their primary function of educating potential lobbyists, but also in the exchange of ideas about approaches and procedures.

Other contributions came in many forms. Money was contributed which paid printing and telephone bills. Travel costs were, mostly, underwritten by those traveling. GAA Philadelphia and the Society of Friends contributed the booklet, "20 Questions about Homosexuality". Meeting halls were provided for the Workshops. Gay Era of Lancaster contributed space for reprinting the recruitment letter. In various devious and not-so-devious ways official areas of the Capitol contributed to these costs.

Of special note are the support received from Nation Gay Task Force, which sent the recruitment letter out in a special mailing, and GAA of New Jersey.

Follow-Up

As the Committee looks to the future, and in consideration of what was learned in Harrisburg, it seems that there are a number of areas which need attention.

One of the disappointing aspects of Gay Lobby Day is that we did not

have available the pamphlet of educational material which was planned. This should be ready shortly, and will serve as a useful tool in continued lobbying.

A number of legislators were not seen; all of them should be visited, and a program in support of this is needed. Some central coordination of this is essential, particularly since we were not able to contact groups in some areas of the State.

The information gathered on Gay Lobby Day could serve as a very useful tool for future endeavors. It should be held in a central location where additions can be made, and where the information can be retrieved by those needing information about legislators.

Recommendation

The Gay Lobby Day Committee suggests that a permanent committee of the Rural Gay Caucus would be a useful adjunct to the activities of the Caucus. This committee, which could be considered a Legislative Action Committee, could be responsible for following up on the Gay Lobby Day activity in the several areas mentioned above, in addition to carrying out new programs.

For the Committee,

Sam Deetz, Chairperson

PENNSYLVANIA LAWS APPLICABLE TO CONSENSUAL

ADULT MONOSEXUAL ACTS

Sodomy 18 C.F.S.A. #3123	Involuntary deviate sexual intercourse	Felony 1st. Degree	NTE 20 yrs. and/or \$2,500
#3124	Voluntary deviate sexual intercourse	Misd. 2nd. degree	NTE 2 yrs. and/or \$5,000
Indecency #3126	Indecent assault offensive to another	Misd. 2nd Degree	NTE 2 yrs. and/or \$5,000
Indecent Exposure #3127	Indecent exposure	Misd. 2nd. Degree	NTE 2 yrs. and/or \$5,000
Disorderly Conduct #5503	Disorderly conduct; Abscene features	Misd. 3rd. Degree	NTE 1 yr. and/or \$2,500
Loitering #5506	Malicious loitering at night	Misd. 3rd. Degree	NTE 1 yr. and/or \$2,500
Lewdness #5901	Open lewdness	Misd. 3rd. Degree	NTE 1 yr. and/or \$2,500
Solicitation #5902	Loitering in public for sexual activity	Misd. 3rd. Degree	NTE 1 yr. and/or \$2,500