

# HB 2930, Anti-Discrimination Bill

*By Oregon Legislative Assembly*

During the 1973 legislative session, Representative Vera Katz introduced a bill that would have prohibited "discrimination in employment and certain real property transactions" based on "sexual orientation." This reprint of the bill came from Katz's office. The bill was co-sponsored by representatives Stephen Kafoury, Margaret U. Deleri, Ralph Groener, Lloyd C. Kinsey, William McCoy, Mary Wendy Roberts, Keith D. Skelton, Pat Whiting, and Howard Willits and senators Keith Burns, Edward N. Fadeley, Keith A. Burbridge, Ted Hallock, Betty Roberts, and Bill Stevenson. HB 2930, the first bill of its kind, did not pass and it was not until 2007 that Oregon enacted statewide anti-discrimination protection for homosexuals.

Without legal protection, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) people have been routinely discriminated against by coworkers, bosses, and prospective employers and landlords. The movement for gay rights dovetailed with similar movements for civil rights for women and African Americans during the 1960s and 1970s. Advocates formed local and national groups such as the Portland Town Council, which won a major victory in 1971 when Oregon repealed a law that had criminalized sex acts (in this case, sodomy) between consenting adults.

Governments repeatedly acted on this new push for anti-discrimination legislation, but citizens, who held widely disparate views about the relationship between civil rights and GLBT people, complicated the process. In December 1974, for example, the Portland City Council adopted a measure that ensured sexual orientation could not affect hiring policies in municipal agencies, and the council extended that protection to private employment throughout the city in 1991. On November 28, 1978, the Eugene City Council passed anti-discrimination legislation, but voters soon repealed it in a referendum. Governor Bob Straub appointed an advisory committee, the Task Force on Sexual Preference, which met for several months from fall 1976 through spring 1977. Portland Mayor Neil Goldschmidt made a proclamation that June 25, 1977, would be Gay Pride Day and, as governor in 1988, used an executive order to protect gay and lesbian employees throughout the state. Later that year, voters passed Ballot Measure 8, which overturned the governor's order.

During the 1980s, the movement for LGBT civil rights was complicated by the emergence of HIV/AIDS, an anti-immune disease that was particularly prevalent in the gay community. People working against homophobia had to then work also against "AIDSphobia." While HIV/AIDS brought on a resurgence of GLBT discrimination, it also brought new power to the advocacy movement, which fought for both civil rights and lives.

**Further reading:**Christa Orth, "Brothers and Sisters (and Everyone in Between): Sexuality and Class in the Pacific Northwest, 1970-1995," (M.A. Thesis, University of Oregon, 2002). Peter Boag, "'Does Portland Need a Homophile Society?': Gay Culture and Activism in the Rose City between World War II and Stonewall" *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 105:1 (Spring 2004): 6-39.Written by Eliza Canty-Jones, © Oregon Historical Society, 2007.

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