
The National March

for Lesbian and Gay Rights

San Francisco 1984



Friend:

By the time you receive this letter, there will be only a few weeks to what will possibly be the largest political event in the history of the Lesbian/Gay Rights movement -- The National March for Lesbian/Gay Rights. You have an opportunity to be part of the creation of this event.

You are probably associated with an organization that understands the need to end the discrimination directed against our people. Discrimination which you or people who you know or love have probably experienced because the oppression of Lesbians and Gay Men is so pervasive. The list is long.

-- The AIDS medical crisis is killing our people at an accelerating rate while desperately needed funds for research and patient services are either unappropriated or unspent.

-- All over the country, we can be denied housing and employment for no other reason than our sexual orientation.

-- We are frequently denied custody or access to our own children simply because we are Lesbian or Gay.

-- We are denied employment in many areas of the federal government and the military because we are Lesbian or Gay. Our people serve well for years in significant positions in these professions. Once authorities discover these Gay people, they are fired or are imprisoned for sexual acts.

-- We are victims of violent attacks by homophobic assailants who are often not prosecuted, or are set free after they are arrested. The homophobic legal system will even defend these criminals with the "Homosexual Panic" defense.

-- We are victims of police entrapment and abuse.

-- We are subject to violent assault and rape if we are incarcerated in the American prison system.

-- In most parts of the United States, it is illegal for Lesbians or Gay Men to be sexual.

-- We are denied the legal and economic equality afforded to heterosexual couples because it is impossible for Gay couples to legalize their relationship in marriage.

-- Our people are discriminated against by the immigration and naturalization authorities.

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-- We are at least 10% of the taxpayers in this nation, but government services to our community are infinitesimal. There are virtually no programs for Lesbian and Gay poor, youth, seniors, or disabled.

-- The deplorable conditions for Lesbian and Gay Americans are little better than in many other countries. All over the world, our people are being legally oppressed, imprisoned, and killed. They cannot emigrate or even travel outside their own country. Gay oppression is ignored by world agencies, including the United Nations, the U.S. State Department, and Amnesty International.

And in the last few months.....

-- In California, AB-1 (an employment rights bill) is vetoed by the Governor after a Senate debate which included scripture quotations calling for the "putting to death" of Lesbian and Gay people.

-- Quarantine of People with AIDS is discussed.

-- In Texas, there are efforts to restore archaic laws making Gay sex illegal because of AIDS.

-- In New Orleans, a Gay Rights Ordinance is defeated.....

But the oppression of at least twenty million people is not addressed by any of the Presidential candidates in their debates or presented by the media as an important consideration in this election year. We must move the issue of the oppression of our people into the American political debate. Without even the discussion of our issues, ending the oppression enumerated above is impossible.

For a few days in July, the world will come to San Francisco, and its attention will focus here as the leadership of the Democratic Party selects its candidate for President and debates the issues which confront our nation. Convention officials estimate that more than 20,000 media representatives will carry this story to an audience of between 500 million and one billion people. Many of the reporters who will be in San Francisco to cover the convention will also attempt to write "The Gay Story" to be sent across America. (Indeed the Jerry Falwell anti-gay conference which will be held in San Francisco just two days before the convention opens is sure to generate massive media attention to the Lesbian/Gay lifestyle -- much of it negative).

The National March for Lesbian/Gay Rights will provide all of the convention media representatives and delegates with a true picture of the Lesbian and Gay community and its concerns. Instead of the media choosing our spokespeople which they have done many times to our detriment, we will choose our own spokespeople. Instead of letting the Lesbian/Gay issues raised to hundreds of millions of people be determined haphazardly, we will speak to the issues which we we all agree are of great importance to our people.

The support that we have received thus far has enabled us to: open our office which is now staffed 7 days a week; mail thousands of letters to Lesbian/Gay organizations around the country; post billboards in the San Francisco Bay Area transit systems; produce buttons and brochures and T-shirts; and develop a national media and advertising campaign. Calls are now coming into the office daily from around the country. The word is out.

But time is short, and all of these these things have cost money. By the end of April, we were on target according to the financial plan we have adopted. In May, the massive outreach campaign we believe is essential necessitated seeking loans from supporters. Funds are now our most critical need. The outreach must continue, and we must pay our bills to keep the office open. Our bare-bones budget calls for the raising of \$55,000 -- most of these expenses will be used for national outreach.

We would like you to be here with us July 15th. For many of you travel to San Francisco will not be possible. However, many millions of our people do not yet know about the March. Coverage in the straight press has been minimal, and the vast majority of our people do not have access to the Lesbian/Gay press because they still live in fear. We need financial sponsorship of the March, and are asking you to become a Sponsor for \$25 or an Angel for \$100. If you can give more, we will be grateful. If you can afford only a small amount, we will also be grateful.

We can offer you only the same reason to make this important donation as we have to those individuals who have already supported us -- that you will be helping us to make history for our community. We will acknowledge all Sponsors and Angels who permit us to use their names in the Official Program of the March. Our current brochure is enclosed.

For the millions who are forced to remain silent, we thank you.



Ralph Payne
Fundraising Co-Chair

ENDORISING AND SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS
(Partial list)

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| A.C.L.U. - Gay Rights Chapter | Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL) |
| Alice B. Toklas Lesbian/Gay Democratic Club - S.F. | Gay Rights Project - Honolulu |
| Amethyst Women's Services - Huntington, N.Y. | Golden Gate Business Association - S.F. |
| Arizona Lesbian & Gay Task Force | Harvey Milk Lesbian/Gay Democratic Club - S.F. |
| Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights - S.F. | Hudson-Mohawk Bus. & Prof. Assn. - Albany, N.Y. |
| Big Apple Dyke News (BAD News) - N.Y. | Lesbian/Gay Labor Alliance - S.F. |
| Black & White Men Together - International | Louisiana Gay Political Action Caucus |
| Boston Lesbian & Gay Political Alliance | National Association of Business Councils |
| California Democratic Council | National Coalition of Black Gays |
| Coming Up! - S.F. | National Gay Task Force |
| D.C. Lesbian & Gay Organization of Students (LAGOS) | National Federation of Parents & Friends of Gays |
| East Bay Lesbian/Gay Democratic Club - Oakland | National Organization for Women |
| Eleanor Roosevelt Democratic Club - Albany, N.Y. | National Organization for Women (Calif. Chapter) |
| Foundation - Elkhart, Indiana | Pacific Center for Human Growth - Berkeley |
| Freedom Day Committee - Seattle | San Francisco AIDS Foundation |
| Gay Academic Union - S.F. | San Francisco Democratic Party Central Committee |
| Gay Fathers - S.F. | Seattle Gay News |
| Gay & Lesbian Alliance - Stanford University | Sexual Identity Center - Honolulu |
| Gays & Lesbians of Ames - Iowa | Stonewall Gay Democratic Club - S.F. |
| Gay & Lesbian Independent Democrats - N.Y. | |