

House Floor Transcript
3/10/03

Lindner: It's just been within the recent two or three years that its been brought forward that homosexuals also suffered like that. And whether or not they suffered as a homosexual or as resistant fighters against the Nazis, you know, you don't know and I don't know either. But there's information out there on both sides. I'm still stating it myself, the purpose of my bill that you don't like, it has to do with removing sexual orientation from our Minnesota Statutes. That, that's one place that that expression sexual orientation occurs. As most people know, there's 22 or more orientations that fall into this category. We should have never codified that into law in the first place. It's time to get rid of it. It's causing a lot of problems in our schools, businesses and so forth. Ahh, that's what this is about. It's not about a holocaust. And what I'm trying to prevent is the holocaust of our children getting STDs, AIDS and various other diseases that's going to affect their lives the rest of their lives. If you want to sit around here and wait till America becomes another African continent, well then, you do that...but I'm going to try to do something about it.

Speaker: The member from Hennepin, Representative Ellison.

Ellison: Mr. Speaker, I have to strongly object to that racist comment that was just made by Representative Lindner. Referring to an African continent in such a derogatory length is offensive to everybody in this body. It's offensive to everybody in this state. And that is another cause for Rep. Lindner to have to apologize. I am embarrassed for us today when I think about the evil, bigoted statement that was just expressed, and the way in which it was expressed. It seems like every time that gentleman says something he digs himself into a deeper hole and embarrasses this state even more.

Speaker: The member from Hennepin, Representative Walker.

Walker: Will Mr. Lindn...

Speaker: For purpose to you arise...

Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I actually have a question for Representative Lindner....personal privilege, we'll do that.

Speaker: State your point of personal privilege, Rep. Walker.

Walker: Actually, no it's not. Actually, it's a point of inquiry. Parliamentary inquiry.

Speaker: State your point of parliamentary inquiry.

Walker: Will Rep. Lindner

Speaker: Parliamentary inquiry is for the front desk.

Walker: Ok, point of personal privilege.

Speaker: State your point of personal privilege, Rep. Walker.

Walker: I actually will take this moment to commend Rep. Ellison for eloquently speaking something that I probably would not have been able to say myself. I, actually, as a third year representative have many things that we will agree upon. There are many things that we will disagree upon. We come from different parts of the state. We represent different constituents. I am a proud African American, representing not only individuals in District 61B, but also African

Americans throughout the state. It is amazing to me how we can have ignorance at all levels of 'isms' talked about in the point of manner by certain representatives without any follow-through, media attention, other representatives, including that caucus, saying that was wrong. I was personally attacked just a couple of minutes ago as an African American. I'm not going anywhere. I do believe that the continent of Africa has not only given this country great riches, but continues to do that. I'm interested in hearing more from your constituents, Representative Linder, because I'm going around actively talking to folks saying, "You know, Representative Lindner might be confused," but I'm not sure his folks in his district are. And so, Keith, thank you for pointing out these racist statements. That, hopefully, in '04, your constituents will do the right thing and ask for your resignation now.

Speaker: The member from Hennepin, Representative Clark.

Karen Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rep. Lindner, when you said

Speaker: For what purpose do you arise?

Clark: Oh, personal point of privilege, I'm sorry.

Speaker: State your point of personal privilege.

Clark: And I do want to address the comments that Rep. Lindner made. Rep. Lindner, when you said that it has only been two or three years that it has been known that gays and lesbians were victims of the holocaust, you're displaying a great lack of knowledge. I brought with me today a document that was shared at the press conference earlier today. It says 10 million people were murdered in the Nazis death camps. I will have this made smaller if it will be useful to members of the body here. This is 101 education that I learned more than 30 years ago. But, you know what, I know that not everybody knows it. So I'm happy to share it. I probably know it because I am an open lesbian, and I knew about my brothers and sisters in the millions who were slaughtered in those death camps. This shows the kinds of symbols that all different kinds of minorities at that time who were persecuted, who were hated, who were victims of bigotry, who were forced to wear as the Nazis regime went forward. And I'll just show you, this isn't in color, but you can see, and we all know, that Jews were required to wear yellow stars. Individuals who were accused of having an ideology that conflicted with the Nazi agenda wore a triangle, included those who were considered habitual criminals, and included very minor legal offenses were forced to wear another colored triangle. Anyone not of pure German descent were forced to wear another type of triangle. Any students of religion were required to wear another kind of triangle. Gays, lesbians or anyone accused of having a homosexual thought were required to wear pink triangles. And the individual who testified at the press conference this morning, talked about how she saw people led into the gas chambers who had pink triangles on their clothing. And the last triangle on here is one that is called anti-social. It's a black triangle that included the mentally ill, alcoholic, and the mentally retarded. And I know that lesbians were also a part of those who were required to wear the black triangle. Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others were all required to wear certain types of insignias. And, Rep. Lindner, maybe everybody doesn't know all those different symbols. But I have to tell you this is not new historical information. It's not new at all. And I really hope that you will educate yourself. And I'd be glad to be part of that education. I'm trying to keep my heart and mind open to you. I find your comments...my folks taught me, I grew up a religious minority, they taught me that the bigotry and intolerance I was experiencing was due to ignorance. That I should feel sorry for the people that are so ignorant. And so I am going to try to have an attitude of feeling sorry, being charitable. But, I tell you, you try to pass that law, you try to pass that law to protect people from hate crimes, as the woman in the press conference talked, we're going down the road that the Nazis went down. You start choosing one group of people to hate and persecute, and pretty soon, it's your next minority, your next door neighbor. I just encourage us members to ah... I guess I'd just be glad to be a source of information for

people... it's very hard, Mr. Speaker, to hear about the kind of rewriting of history that has been talked about here today.

Speaker: The member from Washington, Rep. Lipman, to what do you arise? State your privilege to the House, Rep. Lipman.

Lipman: Mindful of some of the remarks from the gentleman from Hennepin County were seen as provocative, I guess I would just hope that the privilege of the House, in future, he would stick closer to Sec. 223 of Mason's. Namely, that public accusations of a member, which, if true, would not incapacitate that person from membership are not proper points of personal privilege. Likewise, merely criticizing a member's act in the House, which seems to me we've had a great deal of today, likewise does not constitute a proper point of personal privilege. I understand that tempers are high on this matter, and that the debate has been provocative, but rules are there for a purpose. They're there for all members. They're there for the good functioning of this body. I would urge members to look at Section 223 with regards to their future requests for a time of personal privilege.

Speaker: The member from Ramsey, Rep. Entenza, for what purpose do you arise?

Entenza: Mr. Speaker, to create a point of order pursuant to 2.31. Mr. Speaker, if I may explain.

Speaker: Rep. Entenza.

Entenza: Mr. Speaker, 2.31 is a rule we have about offensive rules in debate. And I raise this so that as a House we may consider this at a future time. Rep. Lindner's intransigence and apparent racism causes me to be forced to raise this issue. His reference to the African American continent is a clear reference apparently to blacks. And as raised by my African American colleagues from Hennepin County, a topic which I fear we will need to revisit after I and my colleagues have had a chance to cool down a bit. In addition, Rep. Lindner, I know that you had indicated in the Tribune that you had studied this issue. I only wish that you were willing to open your heart and studied a little bit more. And go with our Jewish colleagues who had invited you to the Holocaust Museum. I suspect your ignorance, hostility and bigoted words would change very quickly if you saw the carnage that is amply demonstrated there.

Speaker: Rep. Entenza, you read him the entire 2.31?

Entenza: Mr. Speaker, 2.31 in the last sentence, and I will read it to you, says a member must not be held to answer, be subject to censure of the House for the language used in debate unless exception is taken...and, Mr. Speaker, Representative Ellison spoke to that issue and was clearly taking exception to it. As you saw, I rose, as well, to make the point, as did Rep. Walker. And I wanted to make it clear what the intention of this group was. You ...

Speaker: I just wanted to make sure you read the entire 2.31.

Entenza: You know what's clear to me, Mr. Speaker? The coldness in Rep. Lindner's heart. That's clear to me.

Speaker: The member from Rice, Rep. Boudreau, for what purpose do you arise?

Boudreau: Mr. Speaker, personal privilege.

Speaker: State your point of personal privilege.

Boudreau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the real issue here is the coldness in the heart of the Nazi regime and what they did to people...Jewish people. I don't think anyone here

supports those actions. In fact, they're horrible. If that's the point we're talking about, then let's stick to that point. They were atrocious. People were killed and murdered. And do you know how people were killed and murdered? First, the Nazis outlawed firearms. Then, they took them out of the homes of Jewish people and they couldn't defend themselves. And I think that's an equal point that needs to be made. And if you don't believe that, look at the history book.

Speaker: Rep. Kahn, for what purpose do you arise?

Kahn: Point of personal privilege.

Speaker: State your point of personal privilege, Rep. Kahn.

Kahn: Just a correction, Rep. Boudreau, actually the first law the Nazis passed was the repeal of legalized abortion.

Speaker: Representative Paulsen for what purpose to you rise?

Paulsen: Mr. Speaker, I move that when the House adjourn today, it adjourn until 3:00pm, March 13, 2003.