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REPORT

OF

THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE

ON

LESBIAN AND GAY MINNESOTANS

The
Governor's Task Force
on
Lesbian and Gay Minnesotans

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INTRODUCTION

The Governor's Task Force on Gay and Lesbian Minnesotans was appointed by Governor Rudy Perpich in April, 1990, and its 14 members first met on May 11, 1990. The Task Force subsequently was expanded to 16 members. The Task Force had neither any funding nor any staff. No member has received any remuneration or reimbursements of any kind from the state.

The Task Force was asked to find whether evidence of discrimination against Gay and Lesbian persons in Minnesota existed and, if necessary, to make recommendations to better the quality of life for these Minnesotans. It should be noted that an earlier Governor's Task Force on Prejudice and Violence found that significant numbers of such crimes were directed at homosexual and bisexual persons.

At the second meeting a chairperson was elected, a volunteer agreed to take the minutes, and seven committees were formed. The committees were: Hearings and Briefings, Legal Issues, Religious Issues, Gay/Lesbian Community Contact, Media, Research, and Community and Organizational Contacts. Each member was assigned to two committees. Each committee was chaired by a Task Force member. The committees were augmented by community persons and met apart from, and in addition to, the Task Force.

The Task Force as a whole met 40 times. The Hearings and Briefings Committee arranged briefings from 35 presenters at 22 meetings on topics as diverse as discrimination in employment, whether or not homosexuals can be "cured", problems of young people, and the Philanthrofund. (The list of presenters and topics is attached.) Almost every presenter had some recommendations to the Task Force.

In an effort to hear from as many Minnesotans as possible, the Task Force held public hearings in Rochester, Albert Lea, Duluth, Grand Rapids, St. Cloud, Moorhead, Bemidji, St. Paul, and Minneapolis, and met with people from Brainerd and Marshall. The format for the visits consisted of four parts: a meeting with Community Leaders, a meeting with leaders of the Lesbian/Gay Community, public testimony, and private testimony. In addition the Task Force received written testimony. Between the briefings and the hearings, the Task Force received approximately 400 recommendations, many of which were repeated several times.

Every attempt has been made to keep this report concise and readable. And despite efforts to emphasize breadth rather than depth there were, nonetheless, certain subjects for which little information was available.

It should be emphasized here that the work of the Task Force was limited to issues concerning Minnesotans. Its recommendations are directed to the State of Minnesota, its agencies and regulatory bodies, including but not limited to: Regional, County, and Local Governmental Units, Departments of Health, Boards of Education, Police Departments, Licensing Authorities, and Human Rights Commissions.

It is also noted that although the gay community has been dramatically affected by AIDS and HIV infection, this report does not specifically address AIDS except as it may relate to general health issues of concern to the Gay/Lesbian Community. There are other organizations whose expertise is AIDS and the Task Force defers to them. It is not the intent of the Task Force to imply in any way that AIDS is not a serious issue.

Perhaps at this point it is appropriate to comment about the work of the Religious Issues Committee. No topic caused more discussion among the members than the propriety of including their report in this document. Although it may be improper for this Task Force to advise the state on religion, nonetheless, the report of the Religious Issues Committee is attached with explanation to the end of this report for the benefit of the reader.

The Task Force heard 25 hours of public testimony, 15 hours of private testimony and amassed over four inches of written materials in addition to the briefings. Based on this information, the Task Force has reached the following

CONCLUSIONS:

Homosexuality, bisexuality, and heterosexuality are equally valid sexual orientations. Homosexuality is **NOT** a disorder. Persons do not consciously choose their sexual orientation.

Homosexual, bisexual, and transgender persons reside and work in every area of Minnesota. The universality of testimony before the Task Force ends the often held perception that all non-heterosexual persons live in the metro area.

There is currently substantial societal hostility to homosexuality. This homophobia is often embodied in federal and state laws and politics.

Homophobia is damaging to gay men and lesbians and ultimately is damaging to society as a whole.

Public policy can have a significant effect on behavior. Therefore the state should adopt as a goal, the achievement of societal acceptance of homosexuality. Business, religious, community, and other organizations can make a significant contribution toward achieving this goal.

Because societal negativity about homosexuality is so deeply imbedded, leadership from elected officials is critical to combatting this prejudice. Forthright public advocacy of acceptance of homosexuality by the governor and other state officials is necessary to making homophobia socially unacceptable.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

Based upon the above conclusions, the Task Force makes four primary recommendations. Other enabling recommendations follow.

Prohibit discrimination against any person because of sexual orientation.

Repeal Minnesota laws concerning private consensual adult sexual behavior

Require training in understanding homosexuality for persons involved in law enforcement, education, health care, and human services.

Establish an on-going state commission to continue the work which this Task Force has begun.

Human Rights Amendment

Prohibit discrimination against any person because of sexual orientation.

Key Findings

Out of several hundred recommendations received by this Task Force at public hearings and briefings, an underlying theme was the need to add gays and lesbians as a protected class under the Minnesota Human Rights Act. This is not to say that this belief was unanimous. Several testified that this would give gays and lesbians preferential treatment over other people; others felt that lesbians and gays did not need such protection. However, the overwhelming body of testimony from gays, lesbians and heterosexuals indicates that, as a group, gays and lesbians are the targets of considerable discrimination in the State of Minnesota. This discrimination can be categorized as follows:

Discrimination in housing, public accommodations, jobs and governmental services: Numerous individuals related stories of being asked to leave apartments when their landlords found out they were gay or lesbian. Several people testified that they had been denied motel or hotel rooms when the inn-keepers discovered they were gay, remarking, "We don't want your kind here."

Individuals also related instances of discrimination from governmental bodies, especially the police and elected officials. In several cases where an act of violence had been reported to the police, the victims felt that the police were not committed to a resolution of the issue because the victim was gay, often sensing that the police blamed the victim for the abuse, as though they somehow "deserved" the attack. There seems to be a belief among many gays and lesbians that their elected governmental officials, both on a local and state-wide level, do not do enough to support gay rights or provide for their protection.

Another major category of discrimination is in the area of jobs. While Metro-area gays received a certain amount of protection, at least within the city limits of Minneapolis and St. Paul, gay individuals outstate testified that they were constantly afraid of losing their jobs. Several individuals testified that their employers often took not action to remedy co-worker harassment, even when the company was aware of the activity.

Several reported that they had actually been fired. Others had been threatened with job termination, especially if

they did anything overtly "gay." Those working in the areas of education, health care and food services seemed especially vulnerable to a threatened loss of a job.

The Metro Area and Greater Minnesota: Gays live in seemingly large numbers in Greater Minnesota, although they are often "invisible" because they have a "closeted" lifestyle. It is often difficult to find other gays and lesbians, or even gay-sensitive people for support. Consequently, the levels of frustration leading to mental health concerns and substance abuse are high. Many report a desire to move to the Twin Cities or other cities with a more open and accepting atmosphere for gays, although, the desire to stay in their own communities is strong. Many eventually do leave the rural areas, thereby depriving Greater Minnesota of individuals with skills and talents to contribute to their local communities.

Physical violence: Although physical violence would not specifically fall under the provisions of an amended Minnesota Human Rights Ordinance, it is felt that amending the Ordinance would nonetheless send a message that violence against gays and lesbians will not be tolerated.

Virtually every testimony heard in both Greater Minnesota and the Metro Area included instances of physical violence and intimidation. The use of derogative terms towards gays and lesbians is so wide-spread and common that many gays accept it as a fact-of-life. Young people, especially, report a high incidence of name calling while at elementary or secondary schools, and continuing into college.

More disturbing, acts of physical violence also are very prevalent. Many attacks occur within close proximity to gay bars or other locations frequented by gays and lesbians. However, several attacks occurred while individuals were walking on streets, parks or other public places. Often, the victims were merely perceived as being gay or gay-acting. Attacks include stone-throwing, assault with a baseball bat, gang-attacks and threats of murder.

Conclusion: The overwhelming body of testimony and data indicates that discrimination against gays and lesbians is wide-spread. It is perhaps worse in Greater Minnesota, where gays fear the loss of jobs and housing, although this is also an issue in the Metro area. Adding sexual orientation to the Minnesota Human Rights Act would do much to help eliminate or reduce this problem. It would give individuals a feeling of empowerment, as opposed to a feeling of despair that is felt by many gays and lesbians now. Furthermore, it would allow gays and lesbians to remain as contributing members in their local communities,

rather than leaving for larger cities. Expanding the Human Rights Ordinance would not only give legal protection to lesbians and gay men, it would act as a catalyst to change attitudes everywhere in Minnesota.

Private Sexual Activity

Repeal Minnesota laws concerning private consensual adult sexual activity.

Key Findings

These statutes represent an unwarranted intrusion of the police powers of the state into the private, consensual behavior of adult Minnesotans. If there is any meaning to the concept of privacy rights, it must surely apply to intimate sexual relations which, as Justice Harry Blackmun has written, lie at "the heart of what makes individuals what they are."

Twenty-five states have now repealed their consensual sex laws; these include three of the four states bordering Minnesota (North Dakota, Iowa and Wisconsin). The Minnesota legislature has dealt with this issue on several occasions, dating back to the 1960's, but has failed to remove these archaic laws from the books.

Consensual sex laws are erratically enforced. Lack of uniform enforcement, however, should be viewed as an argument for repeal, not against. These laws have been enforced selectively against individuals who are unpopular with public authorities. This kind of law enforcement is dangerous to basic civil liberties and breeds disrespect for the law.

Consensual sex laws do not concern only gay men and lesbians. Homosexuality is not against the law in Minnesota and Minnesota statutes make no specific reference to homosexual behavior. M.S. 609.34 and 609.36 concern primarily heterosexual activity and 609.293 (the sodomy law) prohibits anal and oral sex - activities engaged in by some gay men and lesbians and by some heterosexuals. Even married couples are legally prohibited from engaging in these activities. Some Minnesotans with physical disabilities have pointed out that they are made criminals for engaging in the only sexual activity that they are able to perform.

Nevertheless, the consensual sex laws are of particular concern to gay and lesbian people. They criminalize sexual behavior often identified with homosexuality and establish in the popular mind a connection between homosexuality and criminality. They enhance the fear that many gay men and lesbians feel and make it more difficult for them to deal honestly and openly with their sexuality. This has societal as well as personal consequences. Medical

authorities, for example, have pointed out that consensual sex laws discourage gay men from having HIV tests because of the fear that they would be confessing criminal behavior.

Coercive sexual activity, sex with children, public sex and prostitution are all covered elsewhere in the statutes. Consensual sex laws serve no legitimate law enforcement function. These victimless crimes should be repealed.

Anti-homophobia Training

Require training in understanding homosexuality for persons involved in law enforcement, education, health care and human services.

KEY FINDINGS

Minnesota is recognized nationally both as a leader in providing services to residents and as a pacesetter on social policy issues. For example, it was one of the first states to require human relations training for teachers as preparation for desegregation within school districts. Building on that model, the Task Force recommends that persons working in law enforcement, education, health care, and other human services within Minnesota receive anti-homophobia training. This training should be a part of the requirements for licensure and/or recertification where appropriate.

The Task Force received both oral and written testimony concerning the lack of understanding of homosexuality by the professionals who are providing services to lesbians and gay men throughout Minnesota. This testimony ranged from stories of educators who told "fag jokes" in the classroom to police officers who told gay or lesbian victims of crimes that, "Your kind gets what it deserves." Testimony alerted the Task Force to the reality that "fag" and "faggot" are the universal insults in today's society.

Also reported in testimony were: attitudinal changes among health care professionals upon finding that a patient was gay/lesbian, lesbian/gay parents being denied custody of their children, students as young as junior high school being harassed, taunted, and even assaulted because they were "different," and human services professionals telling gay/lesbian clients, "I can't help YOU."

In every city, the Task Force heard testimony from persons who had been victims of either "gay-bashing" or domestic violence who would not go to the police to press charges because the law enforcement people in their communities were themselves homophobic. Reporting a crime to the police was often thought to be making matters worse. One person's comment was a succinct summary of much that said and written to the Task Force: "It's bad enough I was attacked. Why should I be attacked again by the people who are supposed to be protecting me?"

Similar testimony was heard concerning all segments of human services. Persons testified that doctors had ordered HIV tests without their knowledge or consent when it was known that they were gay or lesbian, of having "HOMOSEXUAL" written

in red across the outside of medical records folders, and in one case an emergency room physician refused to examine a woman until a pregnancy test was returned, even though she assured him that as a lesbian she had never had any relationship with a man.

Negative experiences with the courts and social workers in cases of divorce where custody of the children was an issue were also commonly reported. Lesbian mothers and gay fathers often were denied custody or had unreasonable restrictions placed upon them. (e.g., "No person may visit this home while the children are here." or "You may not have any literature which talks about your lifestyle.")

Some of the most painful testimony concerned experiences which lesbian and gay persons had in schools. Support groups in colleges told of harassment, of meeting notices defaced, graffiti spray-painted at meeting places, and rude, very threatening messages left on answering machines.

In every city the Task Force heard from young people who said, "When I was in high school if only I would have had someone to talk to, or books in my library, or even a number to call so I would have known I wasn't alone, then I wouldn't have been alcoholic, or chemically dependent, or pregnant, or a prostitute, or suicidal." At the same time, teachers who were gay or lesbian said that they were absolutely closeted for fear of losing their jobs. These teachers or counselors would never talk to gay or lesbian students because they feared being accused of "recruiting". So great was the fear of being fired that some teachers felt compelled to live in a town or even a state different from where they taught.

In addition, members of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG) pointed out that with no one for their children to talk to, the only avenue for them was the "bar scene." They literally begged for help in ending the homophobic attitudes much of society holds in order to eliminate this unhealthy situation for their teenagers and young adults.

In only a few high schools in the state was the Task Force able to find any services provided for homosexual and bisexual students. One example is a school in which a support group operates with the endorsement of the principal and permission of the school board, and is led by the school nurse. In this instance, there was no evidence of harassment of these students by others even though some parents felt that having such a group was "encouraging undesirable behavior". This school has also taken a lead in AIDS education trying to convey to students the magnitude of the problem without affixing blame.

The Task Force did hear testimony against allowing gay or lesbian persons to work in health related occupations or food service because of fear of the spread of AIDS. There was also misunderstanding on the part of some people who testified that homosexuality and pedophilia were synonyms. And testimony from gay men noted that they sometimes were accused of being child molesters.

Given the magnitude of misunderstanding about homosexuality even among well-meaning people, some education and training is necessary to correct these misunderstandings. If any changes are to be forthcoming in attitudes among service providers, then education must be the first step toward affecting change. Hence, the Task Force recommends anti-homophobia training for persons working in law enforcement, education, health care, and other human services.

State Commission

Establish a state commission to continue the on-going work that this Task Force has begun.

Key Findings

A Commission committed to gay and lesbian concerns would serve as a liaison between lesbian/gay communities throughout the state and with state government. The purpose of the Commission is to facilitate passage of legislation granting gay men and lesbians full civil rights; it will encourage development of a long range plan for new programs and services that meet the needs articulated by gay men and lesbians during the state hearings. It will establish an ongoing entity to achieve the goals of this report, and it will initiate and provide guidance for educational efforts aimed at erasing prejudices and encouraging understanding and acceptance for lesbians, gay men and their family members. The Commission should be representative of every area of the state.

ISSUE AREAS

COURTS, CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SAFETY

Lesbian and gay people around the state reported anti-gay harassment and violence, and insensitivity and ineffectiveness of law enforcement and courts in responding to crimes against lesbian and gay people. Silence on the part of public officials and the media when hate crimes occur add to the problem.

Many people reported turning to their local law enforcement officials to report hate crimes, and being told they deserved it for being at all open about being lesbian or gay, or being told that nothing would be done. Several people reported being afraid or unwilling to turn to the police for help and protection because of homophobic acts of law enforcement officials. A few people also reported surveillance, harassment and brutality committed by law enforcement officers against lesbian and gay people.

Testimony was also submitted about statements by public officials encouraging violence against lesbian and gay people.

People also testified about experiencing homophobia in the courts when dealing with other legal issues, especially cases brought to resolve family issues.

Recommendations:

1. Strong public statements by public officials that hate crimes against lesbian and gay people will not be tolerated.
2. Financial assistance for hate crime victims.
3. Establishment of a hate crimes ombudsman for central, coordinated reporting.
4. Training of police officers about investigation of hate crimes and working with lesbian and gay crime victims.
5. Training of prosecutors, judges and other court personnel about anti-lesbian/gay hate crimes.
6. Establishment of bias crime units in local police departments.

7. Appointment of openly lesbian and gay judges.
8. Recruitment of openly lesbian and gay police officers.
9. Greater police protection in areas with a high incidence of hate crimes.

DIVERSE POPULATIONS

Lesbian and gay Minnesotans come from, and are part of, nearly every group in Minnesota. It is not surprising, therefore, that the problems encountered by Minnesotans because of their sexual orientation were found to be profoundly affected by other demographic characteristics. Some issues were of heightened importance to, and others nearly unique to, subsets of lesbian and gay Minnesotans. This was particularly true for youth, the elderly, people of color, and persons with disabilities. In this section we have focused on some of the special problems encountered by these groups. As is pointed out elsewhere in this report, many factors affect the nature and the extent of discrimination encountered by lesbian and gay Minnesotans. It is important when considering the realities of discrimination against gay or lesbian Minnesotans to be aware of any other factors that may compound that discrimination.

GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH

There are many adolescents who engage in same-sex sexual activity, others who report strong same-sex sexual attraction, and a significant, but smaller number, who consider themselves to be lesbian or gay, many coming to this realization as young as age 13. The environment in which these adolescents find themselves is acutely hostile. Frequent harassment, ostracism, damage to property and physical violence are directed at adolescents thought to be gay or lesbian. In many schools "gay-bashing", homophobia, and "fag" jokes are pervasive, socially accepted and usually left unchallenged by school professionals and other adults who work with students.

Tragically for adolescents who often feel isolated and insecure, this leads to confusion, denial, and internalization of that external hatred. Self-destructive behavior, emotional stress, substance abuse, and suicide are frequently the results of attempting to deal with the daily stresses of prejudice. Attempts to conceal one's sexual orientation may also lead to running away from home and to unwanted pregnancies.

The US Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Task Force on Youth Suicide (1989) found that gay and lesbian teenagers were almost three times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers. It was not unusual to discover that the teenager felt isolated from family and friends, with no place to go to discuss their questions about sexual orientation, or the discovery that they were gay or lesbian.

The HHS secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide found that "many suicidal youth tend to be lonely, isolated and

withdrawn with few social support systems....Gay youth face rejection and abuse from family members and other youth, and are often unwelcome in youth groups or recreational activities." The report recommended that "help for these adolescents needs to derive from all levels of a society that stigmatizes and discriminates against gays and lesbians."

There is an immediate need for sensitivity training and accurate information about sexual orientation for adults in positions of authority over adolescents. There also is an immediate need for supportive groups to assist adolescents experiencing emotional stress because of their sexual orientation.

Schools presently play a key role in either fostering or reducing homophobic behavior. Thus, policies must include prohibitions against harassment and violence due to sexual orientation by staff and/or other students. Age-appropriate programs that create a non-hostile, non-threatening environment and that foster respect for diversity are crucial, especially in elementary school.

To integrate these programs into the whole community, it is recommended that the on-going or newly developed Commission on Gay/Lesbian Concerns (see above) create a Task Force focused on Youth Issues. It should include professional persons, representatives from the State Departments with responsibilities in the area (education, human rights, etc.) and qualified resource persons from the gay and lesbian communities as well as from the total community.

Such a Task Force should give attention to specific "high priority services" recommended to the Governor's Task Force including:

Primary Prevention: Programs in AIDS prevention, suicide prevention, Hepatitis B immunizations, social support groups, adult mentorships, and achievement awards.

Early Intervention: Crisis counseling, crisis shelter, specialized family therapy, school-based interventions, emancipated minor legal status and specialized HIV testing and counseling.

Morbidity Reduction: Specialized mental health, chemical dependency, HIV treatments and case management, immediate and long term shelter and prostitution diversion programs.

Such programs should be implemented as quickly as adequate state and local funding is available. Insofar as is possible, new programs should occur within existing

structures drawing on expertise within gay and lesbian communities within the state.

MINORITY GROUPS

Many gay and lesbian persons live with "multiple-minority" status, i.e. race, religion, sex, age, and/or disability. Each plays a part in the experience of sexual minorities. Other critical factors that must be taken into account include cross-cultural family settings (for adopted persons or those in foster care) learning dysfunctions/illiteracy, incarceration, chemical/physical/sexual abuse, geographic isolation and poverty.

Persons coping with combinations of these factors have needs which are not met with available services. Instead, they are ignored and become invisible. It is not rare to find persons with four or five needs, while service providers can generally deal with only one or two. Minnesota must develop appropriate services for multiple-minority persons.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

While the Task Force found ample evidence of discrimination against gay and lesbian Minnesotans, it also found that one group experiences double, if not triple, discrimination, i.e., those lesbian and gay persons who have disabilities. They first face societal discrimination because of their handicaps. Second, they face societal discrimination because of their sexual orientation. Third, they experience rejection within the gay/lesbian community because of their disabilities, and finally they are rejected by others with disabilities because they are gay or lesbian.

It is very difficult for lesbians or gay men with disabilities to form any kind of community, primarily because each person's disabling condition is different from that of everyone else. These persons often find that gay/lesbian social events are closed to them because there is no handicapped access, or because there is no sign language interpreter, or in the case of blind people, or the learning disabled, because they could not read the print notice announcing the event. If one is dependent on subsidized public transportation or taxicabs, being taken to a site generally identified with gay or lesbian persons makes them vulnerable to harassment or abuse.

The issue of sexuality is difficult for all persons with disabilities. Society tends to regard them not primarily as "persons", but primarily as "disabled". Their situations are not included in sex education. Very few of the service providers have any background or training that enables them to even talk about the issue. This is especially true in special schools and institutions. Testimony to the Task Force pointed to the need for special training for staff at these facilities. There is often added emphasis on the evils of homosexuality to the point of disturbing the normal bonding of same sex friendships for fear that "something else" may develop. Parents often sanction this control or may even request it, because they, themselves, are at a loss on how to deal with their disabled children's sexuality and feel that such control is for "the good of the children."

Persons with disabilities are often in dependent situations. They are many times in a position in which a third party service provider, often governmental or quasi-governmental, has considerable control, even veto power, over whom they see or talk to, where they go, and what they watch or read. The effects of such control on a person with disabilities can only be imagined by those who have never experienced it.

Discriminating against persons because of disabilities is prohibited by the MHRA; this prevents persons from being fired or losing housing on the basis of disability. They

are not protected on the basis of sexual orientation, and those persons with disabilities who testified asked for such protection, as well as for reform of the laws regarding guardianship and power of attorney. Laws that attempt to limit sexual activities of consenting adults may impact negatively on persons with limited use of their bodies and who must rely on alternative methods to achieve sexual satisfaction. Such laws should be repealed.

Education

The schools in Minnesota, K-12 and postsecondary, play a crucial role in developing attitudes and in providing an atmosphere for learning and for acceptance. Because of their important role, the Task Force believes the schools can and should bear a strong responsibility for creating change for the lives of gay and lesbian Minnesotans.

The Task Force learned that at no level in the Minnesota schools is there a systematic approach in curriculum, personnel policies, or student services to eliminate homophobia in materials or among staff and students, or to create a climate of acceptance of diversity. To the contrary, at the K-12 level, we found that students and teachers endure a harsh climate. We heard of teachers who tell "fag jokes" in class, that there is a lack of supportive and informed counseling and that there is no appropriate material in school libraries. In at least one district, there was a lack of support for AIDS prevention programs coming into the school. We heard that gay and lesbian students were harassed in many districts, large and small. We learned that there is a strong correlation between gay and lesbian youth and teen suicide.

The situation is not better for staff. Gay and lesbian teachers have grave concerns that they will lose their jobs. (Because these teachers must hide their sexual orientation, young people have no positive role models.) We heard that there is a generally homophobic undertone to health education classes, particularly those dealing with AIDS.

Testimony from students and faculty at the public post-secondary level revealed a similar pattern. There is no consistent pattern of policies on nondiscrimination. Even where there are policies against sexual harassment for faculty, they don't appear to apply to students and it isn't clear whether these policies apply to homophobic acts. Often campuses are threatening places for gay and lesbian students. At one campus, students were afraid to establish a gay/lesbian group because of possible reaction from other students.

Military recruitment on college campuses, as well as training for ROTC, is seen to be inconsistent with nondiscrimination policies because the military excludes gays and lesbians from service. As in the K-12 system, there is no general attempt to make curriculum inclusive. We heard of harassment and threats to students, and at one school a faculty member felt that hiring and promotion decisions had been made reflecting homophobic attitudes.

The Task Force believes that it should be a goal to have a climate of acceptance of diversity among students and staff at all levels of our public education system. The attitudes students form in school will affect their attitudes when they enter the workplace. The climate of the acceptance of diversity will ensure gay and lesbian students full access to the benefits of education at all levels. By expanding curriculum materials and making them inclusive, everyone will benefit from the enrichment that inclusiveness will provide.

Recommendations:

1. The State Board of Education should expand the rule on Multicultural/Gender Fair Curriculum to include gays and lesbians. School boards are required to develop curriculum that "establishes and maintains an inclusive education program. The program must reflect the wide range of contributions and roles open to Americans of all races and cultures." The rule enumerates certain racial groups and should be expanded to include gays and lesbians.

2. The Department of Education should provide technical assistance for staff development for school districts in antihomophobia training.

3. The State Board of Education should include gays and lesbians and family diversity in the Proposed Graduation Outcomes. (The graduate will demonstrate processes, strategies and skills to value, understand and accept the interdependence and diversity of humankind.)

4. The State Board of Education should establish a task force to research the needs of gay and lesbian and bi-sexual youth.

5. The State Board of Teaching should promulgate a rule change that requires antihomophobia training as part of licensure and for continuing education for re-licensure for teachers. Required training should be established for counselors to prepare them to serve diverse student populations sensitively and effectively.

6. Local school boards should:

- o adopt policies affirming diversity and providing for and enforcing acceptance of diversity among staff and students.

- o provide staff-development programs to enhance acceptance of diversity and antihomophobic attitudes.

- o implement state promulgated rule on multicultural curriculum by adopting non-sexist materials K-12 and by including recent gay/lesbian materials in libraries.

o encourage programs and support groups for gay and lesbian teenagers as well as for students who have gay or lesbian family members. A resource center where gay and lesbian youth can find support and informational materials should be established and an anonymous information and referral line made available.

o provide educational materials, supportive staff and role models to high-risk students (chemically dependent, suicidal, vulnerable to prostitution, emotionally stressed).

o establish hiring practices that are nondiscriminatory.

o ensure that sexual harassment policies apply to gay and lesbian teachers and students and that they are enforced.

7. At the post secondary level, presidents at each state institution should take the lead to achieve the goal of eliminating the vulnerable status of gay and lesbian students and staff on their respective campuses. The President of the University of Minnesota should set the tone by appointing a task force on gay and lesbian issues.

8. All public higher education institutions must establish policies and practices in support of gay and lesbian student and faculty rights. For example, sexual harassment policies should prohibit homophobic acts. Anti-homophobia training and sensitivity training should be encouraged for faculty and other staff. Gay and lesbian resource centers for support, information and referral should be established. The University should review its policy on permitting military recruitment and ROTC training on the campus in light of its policy on non-discrimination. Faculty should be encouraged to develop courses that reflect the diversity in society, including establishment of a "Gay and Lesbian Studies Program," with a minor and a major course concentration being offered.

9. At all levels of education, there needs to be AIDS education taught in a non-homophobic manner to both students (in age-appropriate manner) and to staff.

The Task Force recognizes that our educational institutions are repeatedly asked to take on non-academic responsibilities. Nevertheless, we believe that it is imperative for Minnesotans to recognize the issues surrounding the lives of gay and lesbian citizens, to establish legal protection of the rights of all, and to foster and nourish a climate that respects everyone as worthy of the same rights and advantages. The public schools can and must take the lead in developing a climate where diversity is respected and protected.

Health and Human Services

The Task Force heard testimony about a range of health and human service needs that are not being met in communities around the state. The testimony was provided by individuals directly affected by the lack of adequate services, and by professionals who work in the health and social service fields.

Around the state, people spoke of the need for more, affordable social services for lesbian and gay people. Needs that have barely begun to be addressed are: support for children of lesbian and gay people; support for hate crime victims; and services for gay men who have been victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. Counseling and support must be improved in the areas of chemical dependency, coming out and suicide prevention. Mental health professionals reported on the special issues of lesbian and gay people due to the stresses and effects of experiencing discrimination, harassment, violence and isolation. Services must be developed which are appropriate for lesbian and gay people of color.

Additionally, much testimony was submitted about the need for anti-homophobia training for existing social service agencies. Anti-homophobia training should become a minimal requirement for all professionals working with the public and whose professions require licensure or certification. Such training should also be required as a part of relicensure. This is necessary to ensure that there is an acceptable standard for services provided to lesbians, gay men, and their families. It will be necessary for each of the various state licensure boards to develop what an acceptable standard of service means in their particular instance.

People in greater Minnesota repeatedly reported the absence of any services for lesbian and gay people, and spoke of fear for their physical safety and job security if they go forward to make use of whatever services are available.

Resources are needed to develop services to address domestic violence among lesbian and gay couples. The myths that women are not violent and men can not be victims are still significant obstacles.

Lesbian and gay homeless people face a lack of services as all homeless people do, and they encounter homophobia and ignorance when they attempt to access any services which may be available. Advocacy for homeless people, state guidelines for shelters and anti-homophobia training for shelter workers and county workers are ways to address the needs of lesbian and gay homeless people.

Much testimony was received regarding the insensitivity of health care professionals to the needs of lesbian and gay people. Most of the testimony about health care issues was related to AIDS. The need for increased resources for AIDS prevention and treatment is especially great in greater Minnesota. Time and again, people living around the state reported that the AIDS-related services in their communities are woefully inadequate to meet their needs.

In addition to medical care and education, there is a need for support services such as housing and financial assistance. People also called for expanded availability of anonymous testing for HIV at locations scattered around the state, and for greater attention to the needs of lesbians with AIDS.

Gay people of color informed the Task Force about the need for more resources to be devoted to AIDS prevention and treatment services that are culturally appropriate for people of color.

Another health care issue raised repeatedly was the hardship that results when lesbian and gay partners are not allowed to visit or take part in the health care decisions of their loved ones. This problem could be remedied by creation of a mechanism for recognition of lesbian and gay couples, and adoption of non-discriminatory policies by hospitals.

A proposal was made for establishment of an office of lesbian and gay health concerns to respond to the range of health needs as they arise.

FAMILY

The definition of "family" needs to expand beyond the traditional definition to conform to reality in Minnesota. The nuclear family, father and mother married to each other with children, applies to a small percentage of Minnesotans. This section of the report entitled "Family" refers to families with gay or lesbian members. It touches on partnerships and particular problems of lesbian or gay parents, but does not talk about families with homosexual children. That topic is covered in the diverse populations section of this report.

Many lesbians and gay men live in committed, permanent relationships with their partners. These relationships are not recognized in any official way, and persons living in them are in some ways punished, because benefits given to heterosexual partners are not available to them.

It is in the best interests of society, especially in light of the AIDS crisis, to encourage stable partnerships. The state should institute a system for persons to register as domestic partners. While this registration in and of itself is not legally significant, it would satisfy a plea made many times in testimony before the Task Force that was, "Please recognize us in some official way." The state should then also extend insurance benefits and allow sick and bereavement leave for employees in committed partnerships.

Persons desiring sanction and recognition of their unions often approached their churches asking for a blessing or a ceremony. It was rare to hear of a pastor who would do so. The Task Force did hear, however, from many persons who were forced out of their churches if their sexual identity was known or even suspected. The Task Force also received testimony from persons who entered heterosexual marriages because pastors or other ministers of the church led them to believe that marriage would "cure" them. Overwhelmingly, these marriages ended in divorce.

Many gay men and lesbians are parents. Some of the most painful testimony came from mothers and fathers who were denied custody of their children (or even visitation rights) solely because of their sexual orientation.

One woman who submitted written testimony was separated from her husband and owned her own home several miles away from him. The husband had broken in, trashed the house, beaten her, and taken their son. The police response to her call was that she must have done something for him to get so angry, and that there was nothing they could do because no one had witnessed the assault. (She later found out that her husband had called the police and told them that she was a lesbian.

She appealed to a battered women's advocate only to be told that, "I can't get involved in 'that' issue." She went to court to get a protection order. Instead, the judge ordered joint custody of the child, a week with each parent, and ordered that the mother could have no adult visitors while the child was in her home. Another lesbian mother testified that while she had custody of the children she was forbidden to have any literature in her home referring to her sexuality. A gay father was forbidden to see his children except at a shopping mall.

Parents were very concerned about discrimination against their children in school. In most school districts there is no recognition of a non-traditional family, either on registration forms or in classroom discussions concerning family. The curriculum does not include alternative lifestyles. Children are not introduced to homosexuality anywhere in the curriculum, except perhaps in AIDS education. There was additional worry about harassment of children by other children because of the parent's sexual identity. (Issues related to education are more thoroughly discussed in that section of this report.)

Since Minnesota does not allow benefits for domestic partners, children of gay or lesbian parents are often without health insurance. Adoption of one partner's children by the other partner is not allowed. The report of the Legal Issues Committee (attached) discusses this issue in more depth.

Testimony to the Task Force in every city pointed out the need for the same kinds of social services for same sex partners as are available to heterosexual couples, such as counseling for victims of domestic violence, battering, or rape. Other testimony described the refusal of hospitals to recognize partners as next-of-kin and the problems faced by partners in guardianship cases and in probate. Again, the reader is referred to the report of the Legal Issues Committee which has done a careful analysis of Minnesota law concerning benefits, adoption, discrimination, tort, probate, and hate crimes.

Based on the testimony received by the Task Force, the state of Minnesota should institute a formal registration system for domestic partners in stable relationships, provide benefits for domestic partners of state employees and allow for adoption of a partner's children by the other partner.

Invitational Briefings

Although the Governor's Task Force planned an ambitious schedule of city visitations, it was felt that there were additional issues and information that were unlikely to be discussed in the hearing and meeting formats of the city visits. Consequently, the Task Force authorized the development of a series of "invitational briefings" that would draw upon various individuals and groups with diverse expertise. These briefings were tightly focused on specific issues, and presenters were encouraged to "tell the Task Force what we needed to hear."

Topics, presenters and a brief narrative of each presentation follow:

- (1) "Introduction to Gay and Lesbian Minnesotans and Their Issues." Ann DeGroot, Executive Director, Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council, presented an overview of the "NorthStar Survey Project." This is one of the most comprehensive surveys about lesbians and gay men ever undertaken, and it provided a helpful backdrop for understanding the life experience and issues of lesbians and gay men.

"The Effects of Homophobia on Lesbians, Gay Men, Their Families, and Broader Society." Ray Myers, Board Member, Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council and leader in a national organization of "anti-homophobia educators", spoke about the levels of harassment, physical and emotional abuse, damage to personal property, and violence which is directed against lesbians and gay men. He also spoke of the pervasive nature of "heterosexism."

- (2) "Questions and Public Policy Concerns of The Berean League Regarding Homosexuality." Tom Prichard, Executive Director of the The Berean League, and Dottie Ludwig, Board Member, The Berean League, gave sequential presentations emphasizing several points: opposition to homosexual rights, origins of homosexuality ("there is no medical research to substantiate the claim that homosexual preference is genetically or biologically based" and "that the homosexual population is very promiscuous"), that "the act of sodomy is inherently unhealthy behavior, and consequently they opposed human rights protection for lesbians and gay men and "hate crimes" legislation.
- (3) "Opinions About the Causes and Cure of Homosexuality." Rev. Gary Bawden, Acting Director, Outpost Inc. and

staff members Ed Hurst and Joe Hallett presented personal reflections, compatible with the views expressed by the Berean League on both these issues. They believed that homosexuality is a chosen lifestyle and that one can be brought out of that lifestyle through a process that is largely religious in nature. These presenters subsequently indicated that they had been misled in the nature of the topic to which they were asked to speak, and that they were unaware of the presence of others providing a briefing from an opposing point of view. They were offered the opportunity to make an additional presentation to the Task Force, but chose not to do so.

Dr. John Gonsiorek, Licensed Consulting Psychologist in private practice, and Jeff Ford, former Director of Outpost Inc., now in private practice as a licensed psychologist, presented a review of research and other data challenging the notions advanced by Outpost Inc. Significantly, research seems to indicate that gay or lesbian identity is not a matter of choice, although choice is related to behavior. The origin of homosexuality, as an orientation, may find its causation in the physiology of the brain. Claims concerning "cure or change", as a result of "conversion therapy," appear to be without substance, and Jeff Ford indicated that he, and others, had left ministries such as Outpost Inc. because they were eventually unconvinced that anything approaching change or cure actually happened to a client's sexual orientation, and that some significant harm was done to clients in those attempts.

- (4) "Gay and Lesbian Youth Concerns." Dr. Gary Remafedi, Adolescent Health Program, Medical School, University of Minnesota spoke from information gathered by his program about the experiences and concerns of teenagers discovering themselves to be gay or lesbian. His presentation emphasized strongly the need of youth-serving programs to begin to address the needs of these "at risk" teenagers.
- (5) "Gay and Lesbian Seniors." Tim Zuel, Staff member, Jewish Family Services, said that gay and lesbian seniors are an invisible minority, unrecognized by most service providers. This group also has their needs unrecognized within the gay and lesbian communities of the state. He proposed several recommendations that would help raise the level of visibility of this group and help care-providers begin to recognize their unique needs.
- (6) "Employment and Workplace Issues Facing Lesbians and Gay Men." Emma Hixson, Executive Director,

Minneapolis Civil Rights Department, and Tim Cole presented information indicating the extent of discrimination experienced by gay and lesbian people in employment situations. Many times the discrimination or harassment takes the forms of denial of benefits, denial of opportunity, the use of "double standards," and AIDS related prejudice.

- (7) "Homeless Amongst Lesbians and Gay Men." Emma Eskelson, Staff with Catholic Charities, and Larry Tills, a former homeless individual, now working as an advocate for the homeless, spoke about the invisibility of lesbians and gay men in the homeless population and the task of appropriate programming and sensitivity to their needs.
- (8) "Mental Health Services and Their Impact on Gay and Lesbian Clients." Beth Zemsky, Staff, Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council, and Tom Cytron-Hysom, Director, Gay/Lesbian Program, Family Service of Saint Paul. They advocated for gay/lesbian sensitive and affirming services, and the need for appropriate education and training of professionals in order to address the needs of these clients. Licensure and funding issues were also discussed.
- (9) "Chemical Health Issues for Lesbians and Gay Men." Susan Olin, Director of Affirmation Place, Dr. Don Wert, Clinical Director, PRIDE Institute spoke about needs for appropriate treatment models and settings. Ted Thompson, CD Therapist spoke about the additional needs of gay and lesbian clients who come from the Communities of Color.
- (10) "Domestic Violence Within the Gay and Lesbian Community." Pam Elliot, Coordinator of the Lesbian Battering Intervention Project, and Craig L. Anderson, Coordinator for the Lesbian and Gay Counseling Service of Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis, spoke about the increase in the incidence of violence within gay and lesbian relationships, and how this is complicated by societal prejudice against lesbians and gay men, as well as insensitive or unresponsive services in this area.
- (11) "Issues Specific to Native American Lesbians and Gay Men." Lee Staples and Angukcuaq (Richard LaFortune), one of the founders of a national organization for gay and lesbian Native Americans and a Task Force member, spoke about the positive role of gay and lesbian people within the traditional understandings of many native peoples, and how this has been lost due to the impact of Western Europeans. He also highlighted some of the special needs of this group, and indicated the poor response from many human service programs.

- (12) "Developing a Christian Ethic on Sexual Orientation Issues." Dr. Jim Nelson, professor of Christian Ethics, United Theological Seminary, indicated that Christian ethics on human sexuality and homosexuality require reliance upon multiple sources, that there is no justification for a Christian ethic that judges lesbians and gays adversely because of their sexual orientation, that a single standard of Christian ethics is applicable to all persons regardless of orientation, that Christians and Christian Churches need to repent of their oppression and exclusion of lesbians and gays, and that Christians ought not attempt to use civil law to enforce their religiously-based ethical positions when such positions cannot also be defended by a general moral consensus.
- (13) "Special Issues Facing Gay and Lesbian Students in Post-Secondary Settings." Rex Gaskill, faculty, Normandale Community College, presented information concerning the level of intolerance found in post-secondary settings. Harassment and violence were found to be frequent. His data was substantiated by information from other college settings within Minnesota.
- (14) "ROTC - A Special Issue for Gay and Lesbian College/University Students." Robert Jacobson, U of M Student Senator and Susan Denevan, Student Body President at the UofM, presented information concerning the conflict of policy at the University regarding the ROTC Issue. They also indicated that economic and financial considerations related to the presence of ROTC on the campus.
- (15) "Hate Crimes and Anti-Gay/Lesbian Violence." Patti Abbott, Staff, Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council, presented information concerning the alarming rise of violence against lesbians and gay men in Minnesota, comparing this with national trends. She also spoke about the impact of "Hate Crimes" statutes presently enforced in the State of Minnesota, citing further steps that are needed to reduce or eliminate such violence and harassment.
- (16) "Gay and Lesbian Asian Americans." Hien Nguyen, a student at the University of Minnesota, discussed the invisibility of gay and lesbian Asian-Americans and the pressures placed upon them to fulfill family obligations. He spoke further about the difficulty that is experienced in gay and lesbian Asian Americans attempting to identify and meet one another, as well as insensitive, blind, or unresponsive services for such individuals.

- (17) "Legal Issues Facing Lesbians and Gay Men." Ann Viitala, Staff, Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council, and member of the Task Force, presented a preliminary report by the Legal Committee, citing various statutes that negatively impact lesbians and gay men, restricting their full participation in and contribution to society. An update on the "domestic partner's proposal" was also presented.
- (18) "The New Pacific Academy and the New Decade of Gay and Lesbian Activists." Angukcuaq (Richard LaFortune), a member of the Task Force and participant at the Academy, and Mark Weigle, Academy participant, (both from Minnesota) discussed this training program and the emerging agenda for new gay and lesbian activist leadership. It should be noted that there was significant emphasis upon the strategy of coalition building, especially with other "peace and justice" groups, and Communities of Color, as common ground is sought for issues and strategies.
- (19) "The Upper Midwest Regional Migration of Lesbians and Gay Men to Urban Centers" and "The Development of Gay and Lesbian Neighborhoods and Their Role in Neighborhood Renewal." Dr. Larry Knopp, professor of geography, University of Minnesota at Duluth, told of the pattern in which gay and lesbian people choose or are forced to leave their home areas in order to find a degree of safety and acceptance in urban areas. He went on to discuss how they cluster in specific areas of urban centers and create neighborhoods that are primarily gay and lesbian identified. He cited numerous implications for city planning and neighborhood development.
- (20) "The Gay and Lesbian Economy." Karen Wright, President, Philanthrofund, a Twin Cities Foundation serving the needs of the gay and lesbian community, presented an overview of funding for gay and lesbian programs and services. She spoke of the limited public funding and the role played by private financial organizations. An overview was presented illustrating how gay and lesbian citizens arose to the need of the AIDS Crisis, regarding funding for services and programs, and the subsequent role played by other funders and organizations.
- (21) "African American Lesbians and Gay Men." Juan Jackson, student, University of Minnesota, outlined the difficulties faced by lesbians and gay men in the African American Community, citing the level of homophobia existent there, and the level of racism found within the general gay and lesbian community. He spoke also about the lack of culturally specific services for African Americans, which are also gay and

lesbian sensitive and affirming, and the general competition for funding for much needed programs and services. He cited needs related to HIV infection specifically.

- (22) "Gay and Lesbian Families and Concerns Affecting Their Children." Suzanne Born, attorney at law in Minneapolis, gave an extensive overview of statutes that negatively impact gay and lesbian families, as well as a review of organizational policies that impact adoption, foster placement, custody and other issues related to gay and lesbian parents.

The invitational briefings that were presented to the Governor's Task Force clearly demonstrate a broad range of concerns for lesbian and gay citizens of the State of Minnesota. It should be noted, however, that the Task Force members generally had two reactions to most of the briefings: (1) the presentation raised issues that the Task Force members had not thought about prior to the briefing; and (2) the material presented, just barely began to outline a responsible discussion in those areas. Each presenter gave to the Task Force a set of handouts and bibliography that formed the basis for further study and reflection. The Task Force has found itself almost totally unable to digest this additional material or to use it to sharpen recommendations. They commend this report to the reader as a starting point, with the recommended articles as indicators for further study and learning.

This hectic pace of briefings did not even begin to exhaust the topics that the Task Force had requested. Among areas of concern for which the Task Force was unable to schedule briefings in its schedule were the following:

- o issues of care, treatment, and legal concerns for lesbians and gay men who experienced handicapping conditions;
- o health care, medical, dental and other services, and insurance issues for lesbians and gay men;
- o concerns related to spirituality and religious institutions;
- o media bias related to individuals, organizations, and events related to gay and lesbian communities around the State;
- o issues related to families of origin, as well as relationships and family concerns of gay and lesbian families;
- o the impact of poverty on lesbians and gay men;

- o visibility and needs related to lesbians and gay men of Hispanic origin;
- o the history, culture, and arts of lesbians and gay men, as well as the impact of these individuals on broader arts and culture;
- o impact of federal law on the lives of gay and lesbian people (e.g. immigration).

With the goal of "improving the quality of life for lesbian and gay Minnesotans and the removal of obstacles to their full participation in our society," it will become necessary for those shaping public policy to become knowledgeable of many of the areas briefly touched by the Task Force. This report, therefore, becomes a starting point, with indicators of direction for the responsible reader to pursue.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

OVERVIEW

The locations, schedule and format of the Public Hearings held by the Task Force are described in the introduction to this report. It should be noted that some cities on the preliminary schedule were eliminated and replaced with others based on advice from people in those communities, and that adjustments were made to the four part format on the advice of local coordinators. The Task Force asked that both the public hearing and the meeting with civic leaders be held in a public space, e.g., city hall, county offices.

Civic leaders and citizens from each area of Minnesota told of various kinds of discrimination, harassment, and even physical assault experienced by lesbian and gay Minnesotans, and made a very wide range of recommendations. While concerns were often specific to geographical areas, there were some concerns and some recommendations that were universal. These are summarized below in the paragraph before the synopses of the individual hearings and are not repeated in the city summaries.

Private testimony is not included here to protect the privacy of individuals whose testimony was often unique and could lead to identification and subsequent harassment.

Large numbers of Minnesotans do not know that the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) does not protect persons from discrimination based on sexual orientation. There is also confusion between the MHRA and the local Human Rights Ordinances in Minneapolis and St. Paul that do guard against such discrimination. Some other cities have tried to pass local Human Rights ordinances that include sexual orientation, but these have been defeated.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons testified to the isolation they felt in Minnesota's small cities and rural areas. The passage below, from written testimony sent to the Task Force, is unfortunately an accurate summary of what was heard a hundred times over.

Most gays and lesbians in small communities remain "invisible".... Our community leaders need to be educated that we exist in far greater numbers than they expect....Many of us have talents that could be used for the good of society but are not because we must remain invisible....I would like to say thank you to the Task Force for allowing me to become visible even if it was only for the few minutes it took me to write this letter. Already I am fading back to my normal invisible state--a gay, employed, taxpaying, homeownership

citizen of Minnesota.

Also attested to was the discrimination that gay and lesbian persons experienced within some churches, especially outside the metro area. Such discrimination rarely stopped at the church door, but carried over into the secular, and was a strong influence on community attitudes toward non-heterosexuals. The Task Force heard repeated testimony against including sexual orientation in the MHRA because doing so would give "special protection to those people". Persons in rural areas and small towns were more likely to be told that they could change their orientation with prayer and counseling that often included "aversion therapy", and were more likely to marry in an attempt to "cure" themselves.

The most common complaints of discrimination were in the workplace. Many persons wrote to the Task Force apologizing for not appearing in person saying that if their sexual orientation were known, they would be fired immediately. Persons also shared stories of gay or lesbian colleagues who were fired or had their hours cut back until they were forced to resign. Others described incidents of harassment or warnings such as, "Don't do anything to embarrass us." or "Don't step over the line and we won't have any trouble." or "If you work here you better behave yourself." Incidents of harassment were rarely reported to supervisors not only out of fear of job loss, but also because that might make matters worse.

PUBLIC HEARING AFTERMATH

Somewhat surprising were letters and calls received by the Task Force **after** the hearings in each city. In many cases people wrote to thank the Task Force for coming and explaining that this was the first time that s/he had publicly "come out" in his/her community. Many who did not make any statements said that everyone in town would now assume that they were gay, lesbian, or bisexual simply because they attended the hearings. Some persons apologized for "not having the courage to say something publicly while the Task Force was here," or apologized for not even being able to come to the private testimony for fear of "being found out".

Others wrote to say that since the hearings, harassment of them had increased and that they would have been better off if the Task Force had never come. Persons were in terrible fear of losing their jobs, especially if they were teachers. Some people wrote that they were ordered out of their churches by their pastors. Some reported verbal insults, physical assaults, and threatening messages left on answering machines after they were seen at the hearings. In most cases these incidents were not reported to the police, either

because "they won't do anything" or because the police were seen as homophobic and a part of the problem.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations **in support** of human and civil rights for gay and lesbian given at every hearing were: (1) inclusion of sexual orientation in MHRA, (2) repeal of Minnesota laws controlling private consensual adult sexual behavior, (3) anti-homophobia training for public sector service providers, (4) benefits for domestic partners, (5) expansion of the K-12 curriculum to include human sexuality and non-traditional families, (6) creation of a council or center for gay and lesbians concerns, (7) elimination of bias against a gay or lesbian parent in custody cases.

Some recommendations were common to cities outside the metro area: (1) increased and more equitable funding for AIDS education and prevention, (2) protection against job loss, (3) social services targeted to lesbian and gay persons, (4) an end to discrimination in medical clinics, (5) legal commitment ceremonies, (6) safe meeting places, (7) proper enforcement of the Hate Crimes legislation already enacted.

In some cities people testified **against** human and civil rights for gay and lesbian Minnesotans. The most common objections were: (1) inclusion of sexual orientation in the MHRA would give "special rights and protection" to homosexual persons, (2) churches would lose control over whom they hire, (3) inclusion discriminates against heterosexuals who would be forced to interact (at work or school) with gay and lesbian persons, (4) laws controlling private consensual adult sexual behavior should not be repealed, (5) K-12 curriculum should not include references to homosexuality, (6) private agencies should not be forced to protect gay or lesbian persons.

SUMMARY BY CITY

1. **ROCHESTER**, September 7 -8, 1990. Site: Olmsted County Commissioners' Board Room.

The hearings opened with a press conference organized by the Rochester Host Committee at which 18 reporters questioned the Task Force members present. Rochester television and radio stations covered the hearings on the 5PM and 10PM news. The newspaper also provided coverage.

Civic Leaders Meeting: About 15 city, county, and school officials, the editor of the Rochester Post-Bulletin, and the chief of police attended this meeting. Prior to the hearings the Rochester Post-Bulletin had published a set of comprehensive articles about being gay or lesbian in

Rochester. This series had generated much interest. The g/l community is largely invisible. Many are employed by corporations viewed as "conservative" and therefore remain closeted. Crimes against lesbians or gay men are difficult to pinpoint especially in cases of domestic violence. There is no help for minors struggling with sexuality.

Public Testimony: Over 60 people attended , including one state representative. Although a number of people were there in opposition to any human or civil rights protection for gay or lesbian Minnesotans, the atmosphere at this hearing was one of deep respect, so much so that the legislator present commented about it at the end of the hearing.

Gay/Lesbian Leadership and Private Testimony: These were held at a church. Gay/Lesbian Community Services (GLCS), a volunteer group, provides information, referrals, speakers' bureau, library and support. It is the only comfortable meeting place in Rochester. Lack of funding is a serious problem. They receive calls from persons all over southeastern Minnesota. GLCS would benefit greatly from some public funding.

2. **ALBERT LEA**, September 8, 1990. Site: Albert Lea Technical College.

Civic Leaders Meeting: About a dozen people including three legislators, local officials, educators and pastors attended. Comments indicated that gay and lesbian persons are tolerated in Albert Lea as long as they don't become "visible" i.e., show physical affection in public. It is a difficult place for persons with AIDS or those testing HIV positive. Homosexuality and AIDS must be separated. Parental fears make it very difficult to implement the state mandated curriculum for AIDS education. The Gay/Lesbian Organization (GLO) is very closeted and the community must be more accepting before persons will risk being a part of the GLO.

Public Testimony: About 25 persons attended. Members of the press were also present. Again the tone was respectful. Incidents of discrimination recounted included refusal of medical treatment to a lesbian, a teacher telling students to avoid a gay male student, and persons being told to "watch it" if they wished to remain employed. The recent Minnesota Supreme Court ruling allowing landlords to deny rental to unmarried couples was viewed as having a very negative impact on same sex partners. There was no one testifying against lesbian and gay rights. The Albert Lea Tribune used the hearing as the lead story in its following issue.

Gay/ Lesbian Leadership and Private Testimony: The location of the private hearings was kept secret for fear of harassment of persons testifying. The GLO works closely with

the P-FLAG group of southeastern Minnesota which is based in Austin but serves a very large geographical area, extending as far south as Mason City, Iowa. The key issue here is invisibility because of fear.

P-FLAG hosted the hearings and expressed many concerns for gay and lesbian teenagers and young adults including homophobic attitudes in the educational system.

3. **DULUTH**, September 14-15, 1990 Site: Duluth City Council Chambers

The Civic Leaders and Gay and Lesbian Leaders meetings were combined. About 20 persons attended. Only one non-gay/lesbian civic leader was present and this person actually worked in Superior, Wisconsin. Many concerns surfaced regarding what could be termed a homophobic atmosphere in Duluth. Persons said that one member of the City Council opposed a proposed human rights ordinance and is reported to have said that gay men and lesbians do not deserve to live, and that the mayor had appointed police task force members who are reported to believe that gay men and lesbians should be shot. Fear of losing jobs, housing, and friends is psychologically draining and controls one's life. There was also criticism of the fact that of the 14 original Task Force members, no one was from northeastern Minnesota.

Public Testimony: About 30 persons attended. There was strong support for the non-discrimination clause in the employment contract at UMD, and some people testified that they accepted positions there rather than at other more prestigious schools because of it. However, there was a feeling that the administration does not condemn harassment that continues. An issue here, as in other university communities, was the policy of the Immigration and Naturalization Service that discriminates against foreign nationals on the basis of sexual orientation. People were afraid to return to their own countries for a visit because they could be denied re-entry. Persons with disabilities are denied access to events because of barriers. If persons went to special schools, they often experienced discrimination by the dormitory supervisors. They had little access to information about homosexuality. Society views disabled persons as sexless. The Aurora Lesbian Center received 135 harassing phone calls included death threats. Because of references in these calls to the Ku Klux Klan and Neo-Nazis, the FBI is investigating and local police surveillance has increased.

4. **GRAND RAPIDS**, September 15, 1990 Site: The Blandin Foundation Building

The meeting with Civic Leaders was combined with that of Gay/Lesbian Leadership, scheduled one hour before the public hearing. Over 100 people were already in the auditorium when

the Task Force arrived, including the press. Only one person was identified in a community leadership position. The atmosphere was suspicious and hostile. Shortly after public testimony began, the police had to be called to control an individual present in the auditorium.

Public Testimony: Persons testifying in favor of human and civil rights were repeatedly interrupted by those shouting rude and threatening comments. The members of the Task Force were berated. The chair was accused of bias toward gay or lesbian persons. A Native American Task Force member was told to "go back where he came from." And some persons vowed that the Governor would find out that he could not push "special rights for a minority group." Unique in Grand Rapids was that the most vicious comments were directed at lesbians, and the term "lesbian baby killer" was used repeatedly. Testimony asked that gay men be forbidden to work in food or health related occupations, and one person said that any person who spread AIDS should be prosecuted for first degree murder. Many persons believe that sexual orientation is a choice and that gay men and lesbians could be cured. One gay man responded, "If I had a choice, do you really think I would choose to go through all of this?" Upon leaving the hearing, the Task Force members found their cars "leafletted" with religious tracts. More written testimony was received from this area of Minnesota than from any other, primarily from persons who said they were afraid to be seen anywhere near the hearing site.

5. **ST. PAUL**, September 25, 1990

Site: State Capitol

Civic leaders meeting: Nearly 30 civic leaders attended a luncheon meeting with the Task Force. Representatives from the entire east-metro area were present including five legislators.

St. Paul has recently passed a Human Rights Ordinance. People felt that gay men and lesbians were accepted individually but not as a group. Media is partially responsible for attitudes the public holds regarding lesbians and gay men. Broadcast and print media rarely feature lesbian and gay persons except in negative stories. At this time many reporters feel that being assigned to a gay or lesbian story is a punishment. In the metro area public radio carried an in depth story about the Task Force and the public hearings.

Public Testimony: The hearing was attended by 25 people including a city council member, who testified to the necessity of including sexual orientation in the MHRA. She also briefed the Task Force on the process used in St. Paul. Other testimony concerned the need for a range of mental health services. There is a high suicide rate among gay teenagers. Job discrimination does exist. The hotel and

restaurant workers union receives numerous complaints of harassment of gay and lesbian members. Society loses when people cannot productively participate in the workforce. Lesbian women often take low paying menial jobs because they are less likely to be fired if their sexual orientation becomes known since these jobs are hard to fill. Much of the testimony urged the state to follow St. Paul's lead and pass a human rights statute.

Twin Cities: September 26, 1990. Meeting with Gay and Lesbian Leadership and Private Testimony. Site: Sabathani Center, Minneapolis.

Gay and Lesbian Leadership: This meeting included both Minneapolis and St. Paul leaders. There is little documentation of discrimination. Gay men have been beaten by the police, but have not reported it out of fear. Media is often biased and homophobic. The state Department of Education reportedly has "die fags" on its bulletin boards. A disproportionate number of gay and lesbian young people attempt suicide. Openly gay politicians are often threatened.

6. **MINNEAPOLIS**, September 27, 1990 Sites: Hennepin County Government Center
Minneapolis City Hall

Civic Leaders Meeting: About 40 community leaders from the west-metro area including four legislators attended a breakfast meeting at Hennepin County Government Center. The public is misinformed about the MHRA. In order to effect change, everyone must join together. The corporate sector should be a part of discussions about discrimination, also the churches. Leadership in the Gay Rights movement must include heterosexuals. Rather than asking for domestic benefits, gay and lesbian persons should fight for health care for everyone. Education is critical to success.

Public Testimony: Over 50 people attended the hearing. One City Council member testified to the process and passage of the St. Paul Human Rights ordinance and advised the state to amend the MHRA to include sexual orientation. Members of a gay and lesbian employee organization at US West testified that diversity and pluralism were valued at US West and their relationship with the company was a positive example of how business can take an active role in supporting diversity. The Task Force heard reports of harassment including physical assaults, discrimination in employment and health care. Much testimony, as in St. Paul, centered around gay and lesbian youth. Many gay teenagers are homeless. Finding placements is extremely difficult. Only 10% are placed. These youngsters drop out of school, often use drugs or alcohol, have many health problems and a high

suicide rate. Persons with disabilities face unique problems. They are often very isolated. Society ignores them and thinks disabled people are asexual. Events are often closed to them because of barriers. Even these hearings, except in one instance, were inaccessible to deaf people because there was no funding for interpreters. The tone of the hearing was respectful, but changed to what may best be described as reverent when the Task Force heard testimony from a Native American Elder. He explained the traditional view of homosexuality within Native cultures, where gay and lesbian members are highly regarded and often are the spiritual leaders of the tribe.

7. **MOORHEAD**, October 5-6, 1990 Site: City Council Chambers

Civic Leaders Meeting: About 15 persons attended, representing the county, school board, human rights council, and Moorhead State University (MSU). One legislator attended. City Human Rights Ordinance is vague. A Human Rights Commission exists. City officials will not support an ordinance that goes beyond the MHRA. School board is working on multicultural literacy, according to state Department of Education directive. Title IX (federal) is changing its focus from "equal access" to "human rights". Homophobia may be best addressed as a part of that rather than as a separate issue. The Task Force report should be a widely circulated and well publicized document. MSU has had some unpleasant incidents and one traumatic (to the point of impinging on academic freedom) experience with harassment of gay and lesbian students and faculty. The leadership of the State University system has issued strong statements saying that such harassment will not be tolerated.

Public Testimony: The hearing was attended by 30 people. The tone was respectful. Much of the testimony centered on harassment and assault of lesbian and gay persons, both in Moorhead and Fargo. Such discrimination forces people to leave for larger, safer cities, thus sapping these towns of productive citizens and their tax dollars. Services for gay men and lesbians are concentrated in the cities and they are needed around the state. Although hate crimes legislation was passed, it is not enforced. A woman who spoke on gay rights was followed home, had her car window shot out, and received many threatening messages. The police did not investigate. A lesbian couple was taunted by a group of teenage boys with weapons. The police told them that "Boys will be boys". A parent said that families of gay and lesbian persons are also harassed, especially if they support gay rights.

Immediately after the hearing the Task Force chair appeared on the 5PM television news.

Gay and Lesbian Leaders Meeting and Private Testimony:
These were held at MSU. Ten people met with the Task Force. The gay/lesbian organization is called the 10% Society. It is recognized as a student organization at both MSU and North Dakota State University (NDSU), but not at Concordia College. Concerns include more equitable funding for AIDS education and prevention, a state council on gay and lesbian Minnesotans, services for people outside the metro area.

8. **BEMIDJI**, October 6, 1990 Site: Bemidji State University

The local coordinator was refused use of City Hall for the Task Force visit. The coordinator sent out 42 press releases to announce the meeting and not one was published. The Task Force met with about 20 persons in a round table discussion. There was no formal public hearing. There is no gay/lesbian organization in Bemidji. Many people were meeting each other for the first time. One person commented, "You won't hear any horror stories here. No one is out." Some people felt that the presence of the Task Force was making them too visible. Being out is all right if one is involved in certain disciplines like the arts. Even then junior high aged boys who participated in theatre were so harassed by their classmates that one family left town. The message that lesbians and gay men are not welcome is very strong. A women's group was forced to move its meetings off campus because of harassment. There is very little support for human rights in the area. Only one legislator was deemed supportive. During the 1990 campaign one radio station interviewed each candidate on a call-in show. Without fail, someone would call in to ask the candidate's position on gay rights. No candidate would publicly admit to being in favor because s/he would lose the election. AIDS education which is mandated by the state is carried out. State should mandate anti-homophobia training for all service providers, especially educators. The Task Force later received written criticism from someone who said the chair allowed a few persons to dominate the discussion, and that the Task Force trivialized the concerns of one woman at the meeting.

9. **ST. CLOUD**, October 12-13, 1990 Site: City Council Chambers

Civic Leaders Meeting: About 25 people attended. The mayor disbanded the Human Rights Commission in 1989, reportedly when the Commission said it would ask the City Council to include sexual orientation in the Human Rights Ordinance. The disbanding was attributed to racism and infighting. A new Commission is now in place and is planning to build a coalition that includes gay and lesbian persons to make recommendations. Local minority persons are not satisfied to be invited. They want control. Local activists want change now, want community leaders to take risks. "Community 2000" a group planning future diversity programs is not including

gay or lesbian culture. The schools allegedly are not following the state mandated AIDS curriculum. Homophobia keeps battered women from using shelters, and shelters do not want to help battered lesbians. The private sector could make a big impact by including non-discrimination clauses for lesbian and gay employees in their company policies.

Public Testimony: About 40 people attended the public hearing including the press. Some entire families came to show support for gay and lesbian people. Many persons testified not only about harassment including physical assaults, but also the overwhelming silence in the area concerning homosexuality. As in many other areas of Minnesota, assaults are not reported to the police out of fear of further harassment. In a town near St. Cloud a City Council member allegedly verbally abused his gay neighbor and the Council member's son allegedly threatened to kill him. St. Cloud State University (SCSU) has an active faculty group and also a student group. St. Cloud has received much publicity surrounding the custody case of a seriously injured woman. Her parents were awarded custody and denied her partner all access. The injured woman allegedly did not receive appropriate medical and rehabilitative services. Custody is still being contested. There is no recognition of non-traditional families. Support services are needed for gay and lesbian teenagers and for children of gay and lesbian parents. Social work licensure should include provisions to guarantee sensitivity to lesbian and gay clients. Part of the lottery proceeds should go to homophobia and AIDS education and treatment of persons with AIDS. The press will identify a person as "gay" when sexual orientation is not relevant to the story.

Gay and Lesbian Leaders Meeting and Private Testimony: These were held at SCSU. The leadership had made most of their comments during the public hearing. There was more private testimony in St. Cloud than in any other hearing site.

10. **BRAINERD**, October 13, 1990 Site: St. Cloud State University

Attempts to hold public hearings in Brainerd were unsuccessful. The Task Force met with five persons from Brainerd in St. Cloud. Many of their concerns related to the invisibility and closeted lives gay and lesbian people must live in small communities. Custody of children in a divorce is of particular concern. Lesbian mothers are denied custody even in cases where social workers' opinions recommend it. Children are harassed if mother is "queer". There is a strained relationship between the police department and the battered women's shelter. Rumors circulate that the police would not respond to emergency calls from the shelter. Shelter is viewed as a place where "poor women are

brainwashed". In addition to human rights legislation, there should be legislation to protect women's shelters.

11. **MARSHALL**, November 10, 1990 Site: U of M Law School,
Minneapolis

The Task Force met with eight persons from the Marshall area. Again, the isolation felt by lesbian and gay Minnesotans in rural areas was an important issue. There is a gay/lesbian support group with a mailing list of 60, but only between 15 and 20 come to a meeting. Written testimony was received from a campus minister about the fear that people feel attending such a group. He also noted that the term "homosexual" is "often glibly thrown in with words like murderer and rapist," leaving little doubt about the view of homosexuality. The climate is "unhealthy" for a person who comes out. One young man received death threats. Another student was harassed for defending a gay teacher. Persons who met with the Task Force said they would not have come to either a public or private hearing in Marshall. The people who attend the gay/lesbian support group are from towns other than Marshall. Testimony in every small city said, "It's all right to be out somewhere else, but not here." Visible support, resources, positive role models, and safe meeting places are priorities for persons living away from the metro area.

Findings of Committees and other Supportive Materials

REPORT OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Issues relating to lesbian and gay Minnesotans are a cause of deep concern to the diverse religious and spiritual communities in our state. This concern embraces their relationship with their creator and, in some cases, their eternal salvation. It also extends to questions of community values, legal rights, human relationships, and scientific discoveries. It is expressed in formal statements of religious bodies, in the experiences of persons of widely varying religious persuasions, and in vigorous controversy.

The picture is often chaotic, especially when religious convictions serve as the rationale for differential treatment of sexual minorities both within the religious community (e.g. refusal of ordination) and in secular society (e.g. discrimination in employment or housing). However, there appears to be an emerging consensus in a number of areas.

1. Spirituality and sexuality are closely related.

The controversies surrounding lesbian and gay issues can be seen in the context of a deepening awareness among religious persons that sexual relationships have the potential for placing us in communication with the divine. Proponents and opponents agree that sex is sacred. When it comes to particular issues relating to human sexuality this common conviction leads some to be supportive and others to be appalled.

The vehemence of the rhetoric indicates that something crucial is at stake. Psychologists and theologians point out that the opposite of love is not hate but apathy and lack of concern. Throughout human history religious persons have clashed over issues that are central to their understanding of the world in relationship to the divine. All too often these controversies descended into violence such as execution of heretics, persecution of religious minorities, and genocide.

At times, however, these controversies led to consensus about religious teaching and even development of new religious insights. Witness, for example, the religious controversies over slavery in the nineteenth century and over women's roles in the twentieth century. It appears that in our time sexuality is one of those crucial issues that both divide religious persons and have the potential for future convergence.

2. Being gay or lesbian is not sinful.

The vast majority of people discover their sexual/affectional orientation; they do not choose it. Although many Native American People have always considered same sex orientation a sacred gift, today most people see sexual/affectional orientation as outside the realm of conscious individual choice. It is neither virtuous nor sinful. How we deal with our sexual orientation, both in our own spiritual growth and in our relationships to others, does involve morality. Whether heterosexual, lesbian, or gay, we all face the common challenge of achieving sexual maturity and learning to love.

3. The civil and human rights of lesbian and gay persons should be recognized, protected, and defended.

Greater awareness of the injustices perpetrated against sexual minorities has led more and more religious communities to condemn persecution, harassment, and discrimination directed toward gay and lesbian persons. This is one of the strongest themes in recent statements of religious organizations. (See Appendix to this Religious Community Committee report, attached.) Recognition of our common humanity leads to acknowledgement of basic rights.

Although significant areas of agreement have emerged among religiously oriented Minnesotans, many problems remain. Gay and lesbian persons often experience rejection by their respective religious communities. Still more often, they live in fear of rejection or even persecution by those with whom they worship. "Gay bashing" and its counterpart for lesbians are all too common. More often than not, the most sacred writings of one's religious traditions are used as the club.

Given the fact that religious Minnesotans are predominantly within the Judeo-Christian tradition, the most important source of disagreement among religious persons in this state is the difference of belief in how the Bible is to be approached. Some are convinced that the issues addressed by the authors of the books of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament are the same as the issues addressed today. These people generally adopt a condemnatory stance toward same sex activity and base it on specific scriptural passages.

Others are convinced that the contemporary understanding of sexuality requires Christians and Jews to take another look at those passages in much the same way as they have reexamined the biblical condemnation of charging interest on loans, making oaths, or allowing women to speak in a religious assembly. These people are less likely to begin with condemnation.

This difference in approach to the Bible is far more significant than arguments over particular issues of sexuality. However, for those religious persons and communities whose faith is based on other than biblical traditions, matters are less clear cut, and the intensity of the conflict is less, as well.

Given these realities, the Committee makes the following recommendations to spiritual and religious individuals and communities in Minnesota--Christian, Jewish, Native American, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Earth Religions, etc.--all who recognize a God, a Higher Power, a Spiritual Source of life and meaning:

1. Let us listen.

Members of religious communities need to pay close attention to the lived experience of their gay and lesbian coreligionists. One would think that these people have every reason to reject religion. Yet, they have seen beyond harassment and persecution to a deeper and more fundamental reality in their lives. Their sexuality does not put them at odds with their religious tradition.

We need to listen to their stories without rushing to judgement. We need to learn a new vocabulary for holiness. We need to discern what is authentic in their religious experience and translate that, as far as possible, into our own categories of religious expression. Most of all, we need to recognize their potential for ministry to the entire religious body. By interacting with them in an atmosphere of love and mutual respect we stand to gain a deeper insight into our own sexuality as the embodiment of the Holy.

We also need to pay careful attention to the different spiritual approaches of minority religions in our state. Many non-European, non-Caucasian peoples, historically and in

present day Minnesota, attach great value and significance to community members who manifest qualities recognized as different and special, including varieties of sexual expression and identity. The ability to show respect in accepting the essential difference of another living being is seen as a distinguishing mark of humane thought and spiritual understanding.

MORE SPECIFICALLY WE SUGGEST that religious organizations sponsor listening sessions, perhaps with the assistance of a trained facilitator, in which the members listen to the stories of their gay and lesbian coreligionists and the stories of the parents, families, and friends of sexual minorities.

2. Let us reason together.

In this nation's constitutional form of government we value the contribution of religious persons of every persuasion in determining public policy. This reinforces our traditions of religious liberty and free speech while contributing to deeper understanding and wider acceptance of eventual decisions. The greater the participation of all sectors of society, the greater the variety of positions given serious consideration, the more likely the resulting law or regulation will be good for society. We do not have to fear spirited discussion and vigorous public disagreement as long as certain ground rules are observed.

Participants in a controversy must express their convictions directly and honestly. They must be ready to explain the reasons for their positions. There should be no prior restrictions on the religious arguments put forward for public policy decisions. However, those arguments should not be shielded from public scrutiny or placed beyond question by appeal to transcendent authority.

No one should question another's motives or pose as the ultimate interpreter of an opponent's point of view. Everyone must avoid the temptation to caricature, ridicule, or falsify an opponent's position. Fidelity to one's religious tradition should be coupled with tolerance for other religious views and openness to authentic secular developments.

Each participant in the debate should see oneself as a seeker of truth, not its possessor. The goal should be convergence toward the truth, not victory over an opponent. There must be a willingness to learn from opponents and to admit error when it becomes evident. If these and similar rules are followed, religious exploration of lesbian and gay issues can be a constructive force both within religious groups and in the public forum.

MORE SPECIFICALLY WE SUGGEST that religious and spiritual persons, both individuals and groups, take positions on policy issues related to human sexuality, whether in their own congregations, in their larger religious bodies, or in the public forum. The honest disagreement of committed religious persons can be a powerful force for clarifying issues and reaching consensus. We encourage religious people to speak out and to join in the discussion of these important issues.

3. Let us repent.

Let us reclaim the humanness of our traditional sacred teachings. All of us stand under God's judgement for the harm done to lesbian and gay people in the name of God. We need to name our mistakes and to ask for forgiveness from those we have offended. We need to seek the grace of God's pardon in reconciliation with our lesbian sisters and gay brothers.

MORE SPECIFICALLY WE SUGGEST that religious congregations hold services in which sins against lesbian and gay persons are acknowledged. Gay and lesbian members of the congregation should be present to take part in a symbolic ritual of forgiveness and healing.

Respectfully submitted,

The Religious Community Committee

Rev. CathyAnn Beaty, Minneapolis; Spirit of the Lakes Church.

Fr. Edward Flahavan, St. Paul; Catholic Chaplain, Ramsey County Correctional Facilities, Chair.

William C. Hunt, Somerset, WI; Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities.

Angukcuaq (Richard LaFortune), Minneapolis; American Indian Gays and Lesbians.

Susan Mackay, Minneapolis; Equal Opportunity Employment/Pluralism Business Executive.

Jane McWilliams, Northfield; Homemaker and Community Activist.

Rabbi Stacy Offner, St. Paul; Shir Tikvah Congregation.

Brian Rusche, Minneapolis; Executive Director, Joint Religious Legislative Coalition.

ENDORSEMENT EXCERPTS FOR "HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATION" FROM THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY REGARDING GAY AND LESBIAN INDIVIDUALS:

(1) National Federation of Priests' Councils (March 1974):

"Whereas a significant minority in this country is homosexual in orientation and/or behavior; and whereas gay persons have been the target of severe discrimination by society and in particular by the legal branch and other arms of government....BE IT RESOLVED that the National Federation of Priests' Councils....express its opposition to homosexuality as such being the basis of discrimination in employment, government service, housing and child rearing involving natural and adoptive parents."

(2) National Assembly of Religious Brothers (June 1977):

"BE IT RESOLVED that the National Assembly of Religious Brothers (NARB) support gay men and women in their struggle for human rights and dignity."

(3) National Coalition of American Nuns (1974):

(Resolution) "It is immoral and should be illegal to discriminate against any person because of his or her sexual preference."

(4) The National Assembly of Religious Women (1988):

"NARW believes that women and men, regardless of their sexual orientation or practice must be treated with equal dignity and respect both within the church and before the law. Each person must be guaranteed the same opportunity for access to civil rights as every other person within society, without fear of discrimination."

(5) Archbishop John R. Roach, Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis (February 1978):

"....The Catholic Community recognizes and affirms the human dignity of homosexuals as persons, and accordingly calls for the protection of their basic human rights....Both the Christian Tradition and our American nation are committed to the inviolable dignity of the human person. Some persons find themselves to be homosexual in orientation through no fault of their own. It is a matter of justice, when, due to prejudice, they must suffer violation of their basic human rights. Like all persons, they have a right to human respect, stable friendships, economic security, and social equality. Social isolation, ridicule and economic deprivation of homosexual behavior is not compatible with basic social justice. Consequently, both religious and civic leaders must seek ways to assure homosexuals every human and civil right which is their due as persons....."

(6) Bishop Paul F. Anderson, Diocese of Duluth (April 1980):

"To deny basic human rights to any individual is contrary to what our system stands for. No human being should be excluded from protection of human rights....It is in the spirit of the Gospel and in the tradition of the social teaching of the Catholic Church that I urge you to express concern for people who experience life on the forgotten fringes of society, and to pass this ordinance so that basic human rights will not be denied any citizen of Duluth."

(7) Priests' Senate of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis (1978):

"BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Priests' Senate of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, go on record as endorsing and supporting the present Human Rights Ordinance of St. Paul and supporting human and civil rights for all persons, regardless of affectional and sexual preference. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the Priests' Senate of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, call upon our brother priests and all Catholics in the archdiocese, especially those in St. Paul, to support the present Human Rights Ordinance of St. Paul."

(8) Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland, Archdiocese of Milwaukee (March 1981):

"....in good conscience support this legislation insofar as it bans discrimination because of sexual orientation in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations....it has also been consistent with Catholic teaching that homosexuals should not be deprived of their basic human rights..."

(9) The Lutheran Church in America; Social Statement...."Sex, Marriage, and Family"
(June 1970):

"However, they (homosexuals) are often the special and undeserving victims of prejudice and discrimination in law enforcement, cultural mores, and

congregational life. In relation to this area of concern, the sexual behavior of freely consenting adults in private is not an appropriate subject for legislation or police action. It is essential to see such persons as entitled to understanding and justice in church and community."

"The Lutheran Church in America calls upon the church, both as a corporate body and as individual members, to witness to the civic community in behalf of just laws and policies affecting sex, marriage, and family, and in behalf of legislation that will improve the economic and social conditions which influence the lifestyles of people."

(10) Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom, Minnesota Synod of The Lutheran Church in America (February 1978):

".... I believe that we must be in the forefront of those who speak for the rights of every citizen in the community, regardless of their personal relationship with the organized Church."

"The issue is the civil rights of homosexuals. It must be clearly established that we are not dealing with the question of homosexuality, but with the basic rights of some people who are homosexuals. I would encourage you to support the maintenance of a strong civil rights law that gives equal rights to homosexuals. This is consistent with the support of our Church for the basic rights of all people."

"....The Lutheran Church in America shares the opinion of most major denominations in expressing pastoral care and understanding for homosexuals. A part of that care should include a concern for their basic human rights."

(11) Bishop Harold R. Lohr, Red River Valley Synod of The Lutheran Church in America (April 1983):

"....we are talking about justice and freedom, not about approval or disapproval of a lifestyle. Our nation is one that was formed with the intention that people should have equal rights before the law. As you well know, we have some frightening examples of how such idealism has been violated in practice."

"I support legislation that acts against discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, familial status, or affectional or sexual orientation. I am equally affirmative about legislation that will provide sanctions against people who exercise violence against others in any of these categories."

(12) Minnesota Synod Convention, The Lutheran Church in America (June 1978):

"Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED: that the Minnesota Synod publicly declares the injustice done by the recent repeals of civil rights ordinances as related to homosexual people; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call for the responsible use of all the scripture in the discussion of human rights; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the church call upon city and state governments to take measures to ensure that the human rights of all people are protected...."

(13) Minnesota Synod Convention, The Lutheran Church in America (June 1983):

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Minnesota Synod wishes to reaffirm its support for such legislation and to add its collective voice to those of other religious bodies and leaders advocating that such legislation be adopted which specifically; (a) adds lesbian women and gay men to the list of protected classes in the Minnesota State

Human Rights Statute; (b) repeals statutes which impose criminal constraints upon the private sexual behavior of freely consenting adults, thereby eliminating arbitrary enforcement and entrapment procedures encouraged by such statutes; and (c) increases protection for lesbian women, gay men, and other minorities from harrassment, threats, and assaults by increasing the penalties against criminal action in those areas."

(14) Bishop Robert S. Wilch, Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod, The Lutheran Church in America (April 1981):

"...Along with the Bishops and leaders of other denominations I put my name on the following statement:

"We support equal protection of the law for all people, including full civil rights for persons of homosexual orientation. We support the recently passed Milwaukee ordinance banning discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation because it is consistent with such full legal protection and full civil rights for all people. As pastoral leaders in the community we ask for our constituencies to join us in this effort."

(15) The American Lutheran Church; A Statement on: "Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior" (1980):

"...Laws express society's recognition that sexual behavior affects not only the participants but also the health, strength, and survival itself. Christians must beware, however, of equating sin with crime....Their concern must be for laws that foster justice, mercy, equality of opportunity, and the protection of basic human rights."

"Truth, mercy, and justice should impel members of congregations of The American Lutheran Church to review their attitudes, words, and actions regarding homosexuality. Christians need to be more understanding and more sensitive to life as experienced by those who are homosexual. They need to take leadership roles in changing public opinion, civil laws, and prevailing practices that deny justice and opportunity to any persons, homosexual or heterosexual. We all need recognition and acceptance as human beings known to and loved by God."

(16) Bishop Elmo Agrimson, Minnesota Southeastern District, The American Lutheran Church (February 1978):

"...I think the ordinance as it now stands is a good one. It well defines what have long been held in America as central basic human rights....I do not think that we should impose the complexities of religious and moral interpretation upon the issue of homosexuality in guaranteeing day to day human rights for a person seeking housing, employment, education and public accommodations. Amending the ordinance could become repressive, unloving and haphazard in application....The American Lutheran Church has been specific in a commitment to uphold the rights of individuals regardless of the religious preference or lifestyle."

(17) Bishop A. C. Schumacher, Southern Wisconsin District, The American Lutheran Church (April 1981):

"...you may use the following which is the statement which the Wisconsin Conference of Churches asked jurisdictions which care to support the Bill to so authorize. Our District Council concurs and asked me to indicate such support:

'Our District Council has authorized me to indicate support for Assembly Bill #70 (which grants human rights protection to lesbians and gay men--clarification added.)'"

(18) The Episcopal Church, General Convention (1976):

"....homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection of the laws with all other citizens" and the Convention further called upon "our society to see that such protection is provided in actuality."

"It is the sense of this General Convention that homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church."

(19) Bishop Robert M. Anderson, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota (March 1978):

"As your Bishop, with the advice and counsel of other clergy and lay people, I want to add my voice with other church leaders and make a clear public commitment to uphold the present Ordinance. The Ordinance is a good one and defines well the basic human rights that we all cherish as American citizens." (made in reference to the maintenance of the Saint Paul Human Rights Ordinance that included lesbians and gay men as one of the protected classes.)

"....In any case, this is a highly emotional issue that tends to create heated controversy and deep misunderstanding and hurt on all sides. There will be the tendency to confuse the human rights issue with moral and theological issues....it seemed proper to me that I take a firm stand for the civil rights of all our citizens."

(20) Bishop Robert P. Varley, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota (November 1981):

"....the area of Gay Rights is a pressing issue....with legislation pending for 1982 there is a real need for input to support this legislation on the part of Church leaders."

(21) Commission on Social action and Advocacy, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota (February 1981):

The Study Group on Homosexuality issued a report to the full Commission urging their support for (a) the inclusion of lesbians and gay men in the Minnesota Human Rights Act as a protected class; and (b) the repeal of existing Minnesota Statutes relating to sodomy, fornication, and adultery. Both recommendations were APPROVED by the Commission at their meeting on 19 February 1981.

(22) Sexuality Task Force, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota (February 1982):

From the Final Report of the Sexuality Task Force: "There remain several matters of injustice in the lives of homosexual persons, ranging from the abuse of civil rights to Minnesota Statutes (e.g. #609.293) which are grossly unfair. We recommended that the Commission on Social Action and Advocacy be charged to convey such issues to all Episcopalians, and that this diocese publicly do whatever is possible to support equal justice for all."

(23) Bishop Charles T. Gaskell, The Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee (February 1981):

"Our position on matters of non-discrimination because of sexual orientation reflects the traditional moral theology of this branch of Christendom, known as the Episcopal Church. And in our own Diocesan Councils in recent years we have affirmed the principle of non-discrimination in resolutions passed with regard to the pastoral approach to our brethren of this orientation. Please know that this bill has the fullest support, both of the Bishop of the Diocese and its constituency."

(2 4) Bishop William C. Wantland, The Episcopal Diocese of Eau Claire (March 1981):

"...the Church calls on all of us to protect the civil rights of all persons, regardless of sexual orientation....quoting the House of Bishops in their 1977 statement: "With dismay and with shock we note the deprivation of civil rights and the development of mass hysteria in parts of the country directed against people known as homosexuals. The same Gospel which persuades us that homosexuality is not an acceptable practice for Christians also compels us to treat every person of any sexual orientation as a child of God, entitled to our pastoral concern and guaranteed his or her civil rights."

"In the light of this clear moral imperative, we urge your support....as a proper statement of Gospel teaching, consonant with the moral theology of Our Lord's Church, and acceptable to the proclaimed doctrine of the Church."

(2 5) The United Methodist Church; from The Book of Discipline (1976):

"Homosexuals no less than heterosexuals are persons of sacred worth, who need the ministry and guidance of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship which enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. Further, we insist that all persons are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured."

(2 6) Bishop Wayne K. Clymer, the Annual Conference of Minnesota, the United Methodist Church (February 1978):

"...I think that it is not necessary for me to reiterate the position of the United Methodist Church on this issue. The practice of homosexuality is rejected as normative sexual relations. But that is not at issue. It is exceedingly dangerous procedure to deny the civil rights of persons on the grounds that we disapprove of their manners. This is not only a violation of democracy; it is an affront to Christian respect for persons."

(2 7) Bishop Emerson Colaw, The Annual Conference of Minnesota, The United Methodist Church (1983):

"In most facets of society, they (homosexuals) have been persecuted...attacks on homosexuals have been used for fundraising appeals. I believe, however, that the Church must work to protect their legal and civil rights, because no group has more rights than those assured to the least minority. And if society can take away the rights of the gay and lesbian, then they can take away your rights and mine. We do assure them (homosexuals) of our commitment to their civil rights, and an openness to dialogue as we search for the mind of Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit."

(2 8) Statement by "Concerned United Methodist Clergy of Saint Paul" (April 1978):

"You are not being asked to vote on whether you support a homosexual lifestyle. The present ordinance does not condemn or promote the homosexual viewpoint. The issue before you is Civil Rights. The question you will be asked to decide is whether

or not persons who are qualified for jobs or education or housing shall be discriminated against on the basis of "affectional or sexual preference".

(29) Bishop Marjorie S. Matthews, The United Methodist Church, Wisconsin Area (April 1981):

"...as an elected Bishop assigned to the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church, I personally support the proposed legislation (which would extend human rights protection to lesbians and gay men), and urge its consideration by members of the Wisconsin State Legislature."

(30) The United Church of Christ; A Statement Reaffirming an Earlier Statement (1975):

"There is, in the United States, a significant minority of persons whose civil liberties, and whose right to protection under the law, are systematically and routinely violated. Discrimination related to affectional or sexual preference in employment, housing, public accommodations, and other civil liberties, has inflicted an incalculable burden of fear into the lives of persons in society and in the church whose affectional or sexual preference is towards persons of the same gender."

"Public revelation of even a single experience often results in the presumption that a person is same-gender oriented and thus subject to social sanctions including violations of her or his civil liberties. Even the civil liberties of persons whose affectional or sexual preference is a well-guarded secret is vulnerable."

"In faithfulness to that biblical and historical mandate, we hold that, as a child of God, every person is endowed with worth and dignity that human judgement cannot set aside. Denial and violation of the civil liberties of the individual and her or his right to equal protection under the law defames that worth and dignity and is, therefore, morally wrong. Our Christian faith requires that we respond to the injustice in our society manifested in the denial and violation of the civil liberties of persons whose affectional or sexual preference is toward persons of the same gender."

"...recognizing that a person's affectional or sexual preference is not legitimate grounds on which to deny her or his civil liberties, the Tenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ proclaims the Christian conviction that all persons are entitled to full civil liberties and equal protection under the law."

"Further, the Tenth General Synod declares its support for the enactment of legislation at the federal, state and local levels of government that would guarantee the civil liberties of all persons without discrimination related to affectional or sexual preference."

"Further, the Tenth General Synod calls upon the congregations, Associations, Conferences, and Instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ to work for the enactment of such legislation at the federal, state, and local levels of government, and authorize the Secretary of the United Church of Christ to commend the Pronouncement to the Conferences for distribution by them to their respective state legislators and representatives in the Congress of the United States."

(31) Rev. Francis X. Pirazzini, Conference Minister, Minnesota Conference, The United Church of Christ (February 1978):

"...the issue at stake in St. Paul is not the nature of homosexuality...the issue is one of civil rights and the recognition that the denial of the civil rights of homosexuals is rooted in prejudice. Quite apart from the Christian belief in the inestimable value of every person, there either is justice for all or there is justice for

none. The preservation of democracy demands the defense of the basic human rights for all persons....It is never easy to stand for love and justice when fear and ignorance motivate persons to take unloving and just positions."

(32) Rev. Murdale C. Leysath, Conference Minister, Minnesota Conference, The United Church of Christ (March 1983):

"National level agencies in the UCC have been consistent in their support of civil rights for all persons, including homosexuals. We are on record by those bodies in regard to employment opportunity "forbidding discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disabilities." "As a member of the United Church of Christ I support these actions and urge the Minnesota Legislature to pass the current legislation being considered on civil rights for gay and lesbian persons."

(33) Rev. Ralph P. Ley, Conference Minister, Wisconsin Conference of The United Church of Christ (April 1981):

"While we may not condone or support some of the activities of certain sexual preferences or lifestyles, we do firmly insist on civil liberties and equal protection under the law for all citizens."

"The Commission of Social Concerns of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ has reaffirmed this stance of our denomination and urges the enactment of legislation that provides this civil liberty and equal protection under the law for all citizens of Wisconsin."

(34) United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America; 190th General Assembly (1978):

"Therefore, the 190th General Assembly (1978) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America offers the presbyteries the following directive guidance:

'13. Calls upon United Presbyterians to work for the passage of laws that prohibit discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations based on the sexual orientation of a person.' "

(35) Rev. Donald R. White, Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (April 1978):

"Whatever may be the moral position of any Christian, Jew, or non church participant on homosexuality as a lifestyle, the issue before you is simply human rights. There are two basic moral principles that have been handed down to us by our national forebears: (a) No religious or moral point of view ought to be established and required of us all. (b) Each and every citizen ought to be accorded equal protection under the law."

"It seems certain to me as a Christian minister and as an American citizen that the civil rights of homosexuals must be protected and that the St. Paul Human Rights ordinance, prohibiting discrimination in many ways, including and in this case especially affectional or sexual preference, must be continued. Too many have sacrificed too much in our national history to permit the rights of homosexuals to be abrogated by either our inaction or our confusion about the issue...."

(36) Rev. Carl R. Simon, Executive Prebyter, The Presbytery of Milwaukee, The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (March 1981):

"Vigilance must be exercised to oppose federal, state, and local legislation that discriminates against persons on the basis of sexual orientation and to initiate and support federal, state, and local legislation that prohibits discrimination against persons on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, and public accommodations."

(37) Rev. Verne E. Sindlinger, Executive Presbyter, The Winnebago Presbytery, The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (August 1981):

"....the national judicatory of my denomination has taken the strong stand in support of legislation which would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation of individuals in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations."

"In addition to expressing the position of the United Presbyterian Church, I am expressing my own personal support for this legislation and requesting that you support it with your voice and your vote."

(38) The Church of The Brethern; Study Document (1980):

"Likewise, homophobia (irrational fear of or condemnation of homosexuals) is destructive of persons whom God Loves. Homosexuals are human beings. Each of them is unique. They ought not be stigmatized as a group and attacked en masse. Hostile attitudes in society and in the church create irrational fears, contempt, injustice and discrimination. Homosexuals are entitled to jobs, housing and other human rights."

(39) The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), General Assembly (October 1977):

"Therefore BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, October 21-26, 1977, while neither approving nor condemning homosexuality, urge the passage of legislation on local, state, and national levels which will end the denial of civil rights and violation of civil liberties for reasons of sexual orientation or preference, and calls upon its members to advocate and support the passage and maintenance of such legislation."

(40) The Reformed Church in America; Study Document (1978)

"Approval of the homosexual orientation or acts is not a prerequisite to firm support of basic civil rights for homosexual persons. While we cannot affirm homosexual behavior, at the same time we are convinced that the denial of human and civil rights to homosexuals is inconsistent with the biblical witness and Reformed theology."

(41) The Society of Friends (Quakers); Yearly Meeting Minutes:

"We affirm our belief that God embraces all persons regardless of sexual orientation; we affirm that we welcome to our meetings for worship and to all occasions for fellowship attenders who are gay and lesbian; and we affirm that we welcome and encourage full membership in our Meeting for lesbians and gays who are or wish to become Friends. We do this without regard to whether such persons choose to speak to any or all of us of their sexual orientation. Further, we commit ourselves to educating ourselves and others in the Religious Society of Friends about the condition of those who are lesbian and gay in a society that is frequently hostile to them and about prejudice

toward and discrimination against people who are lesbian and gay in the Religious Society of Friends and in society at large." (Minneapolis, 1990)

"...wishes to express its deep sense of outrage at the injustice being perpetrated against homophiles and homophile establishments." (1973-Pacific)

"We urge Friends to put new energy into the struggle to end oppression, often unconscious, that is imposed on people because of their sex or their sexual orientation....The myths about bisexuality and homosexuality, the myths that perpetuate deep rooted discrimination, need to be dispelled...." (1973-Baltimore)

"Although we neither approve nor disapprove of homosexuality, the same standards under the law which are applied to heterosexual activities should also be applied to homosexual activities."

"Since persons who engage in homosexual activities suffer serious discrimination in employment, housing, and the right to worship, we believe that civil rights laws should protect them. In particular we advocate the revision of all legislation imposing disabilities and penalties upon homosexual activities." (1973-Philadelphia)

"Homosexual and bisexual people in this society are subject to serious discrimination in many areas....Civil rights should be extended to protect homosexuals and bisexual people just as they now protect other groups which suffer discrimination. We urge Friends and Friendly organizations to work for appropriate legislation." (1974-Illinois)

(42) Unitarian Universalist Association:

"The Associated Universalist Ministers of Minnesota affirm the democratic principle of equal rights for all persons. We oppose repeal of any portion of St. Paul's Human Rights Ordinance. This ordinance forbids discrimination in employment, public accommodations and services, education, and housing, on the grounds of race, creed, religion, color, sex, national origin or ancestry, affectional or sexual preference, age or disability. We hold that such discrimination is unconstitutional, immoral, and destructive of inherent human rights and dignity." (Minnesota-1978)

"We as Unitarian Universalist ministers in the Milwaukee area, affirm our support for legislation that would ban discrimination in housing, employment, and public funding on the basis of sexual or affectional orientation." (Milwaukee-1981)

(43) The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (November 1977):

"BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection of the law. We oppose discrimination against homosexuals in the areas of opportunity, including employment and housing. We call upon society to see that such protection is provided in actuality."

"Be it further resolved that we affirm our belief that private sexual acts between consenting adults are not the proper province of the government and law enforcement agencies."

(44) Rabbi Leigh Lemer, Mount Zion Temple, Saint Paul (March 1983):

"I favor legislation which would make it a criminal act to discriminate against persons on the basis of sexual preference. This is a logical and necessary extension of civil rights which our society must undertake to do today."

(45) Rabbi Norman M. Cohen, Temple Bet Shalom, St. Louis Park (March 1983):

"As a rabbi and religious leader, I feel compelled to lend my support to those who are making serious efforts to help effect legislative action in favor of human rights, against violence, and to protect the personal privacy of every individual."

"My tradition, Judaism, exhorts all human beings to do whatever is humanly possible to protect the dignity and value and quality of human life. Appropriate legislation can do more toward that end than many other vehicles combined."

(4 6) The National Council of Churches of Christ:

"Therefore every person is entitled to equal protection under the law. For this reason the National Council of Churches of Christ has endeavored to ensure for all persons regardless of race, class, sex, creed, or place of national origin, their full civil rights. To this list the Governing Board now adds affectional or sexual preference. Discrimination based on any of those criteria is morally wrong. Many persons, including some of the members and pastors of some of our churches, have been and are being deprived of their civil rights and full and equal protection of the law because of their affectional or sexual preference."

"THEREFORE:

(1) The Governing Board reiterates the Christian conviction that all persons are entitled to full civil rights and equal protection and to the pastoral concern of the church.

(2) The Governing Board urges its member churches and their constituencies to work to ensure the enactment of legislation at the national, state, and local levels that would guarantee the civil rights of all persons without regard to their affectional or sexual preferences."

(4 7) The Minnesota Council of Churches: "Statement on Ministry To and With Gay and Lesbian Persons (September 1982):

"BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Minnesota Council of Churches publicly go on record urging that legislation be introduced into the Minnesota State Legislature which would provide human rights protection for lesbians and gay men in all the categories in which protection currently exists for other groups, and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: The Minnesota Council of Churches utilize available channels and vehicles to encourage the adoption of such legislation, and the placement of such legislation on the agenda for the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition and Minnesota IMPACT."

Source: WINGSPAN , A Ministry of St. Paul Reformation Lutheran Church,
100 North Oxford Street, St. Paul, MN 55104. Phone (612) 224-3371,
December, 1983; Revised by Religious Community Committee,
Governor's Task Force on Lesbian and Gay Minnesotans, January, 1991.

STATEWIDE CENTER FOR GAY AND LESBIAN CONCERNS

Throughout the period of "city visitations" and "briefings," the Task Force heard repeatedly about discrimination against lesbians and gay men. Such acts of discrimination occur within a wider context in which "it is felt to be acceptable behavior to harass lesbians and gay men, damage or destroy their property, or encourage or enact violence against them. Negative attitudes and beliefs against lesbian and gay men appear to run deep and, while these attitudes have little basis in fact, they nevertheless form a solid basis from which prejudice is enacted in a host of ways. That lesbians and gay men have had to remain invisible in order to avoid such actions against them, has only complicated the problem. Many citizens of this state believe that they do not know gay or lesbian people, or that such people are only to be found in larger cities. At best then, these citizens then respond to issues for lesbians and gay men, as though such concerns either do not exist, or are the "problems" of others.

The lack of awareness, prejudice, and hostility toward citizens of Minnesota who are gay or lesbian is quite pervasive and requires several broad areas of endeavor in order to overcome it. While citizens around the state, as well as the state's elected and appointed leadership, bear some significant responsibility in overcoming such a situation, their efforts must parallel those of gay and lesbian people themselves. To facilitate such a partnership, it is necessary to assist the gay and lesbian communities or the state in the formation of a "statewide center with regional expressions" to help plan such a campaign to "win the hearts and minds" of all citizens of Minnesota, thereby enabling lesbians, gay men, and members of their families to take their place in this society.

The statewide center, and regional expressions, must have the full support of state government and be funded at an adequate level in order to begin its work. Such work will generally focus on undoing some situations which are harmful to lesbians and gay men (e.g. establishment of statewide human rights protection, repeal of the state's sodomy statute, elimination of violence against lesbians and gay men, and the full recognition of their relationships). On an equal level, it will be important for this center and statewide network to develop new programs and services which meet the needs of lesbians and gay men, as they were so clearly stated during various hearings. An enormous educational effort will be required in support of all work undertaken by the statewide center and its network.

If the primary goal of this statewide center and regional network is seen as eliminating discrimination against gay and lesbian people, and enabling them to live more fully productive and contributing lives, as citizens of this state, then one must recognize that the basic issue is frequently helping others learn to understand and affirm those lesbians and gay men who are in their midst. Breaking the barriers of invisibility and silence is an enormous undertaking, which requires not only leadership, but also appropriate resources. While leaders in both the gay and lesbian communities, as well as the broader community, have made important contributions, much more needs to be done. It is now necessary for state government to help establish a vehicle which can appropriately bring about such broad change. A "statewide center and regional expressions" is a vehicle which could appropriately identify and chart a course towards social change, as needs to affect lesbians, gay men, and their families.

Leo Trudway
Task Force Member

Participant Handout

DEFINITIONS

Lesbian: A woman or young woman who forms her primary loving and sexual relationships with other women; a woman or young woman who has a continuing affectional, emotional, romantic, and/or erotic preference for someone of the same sex. Some lesbians prefer to call themselves "lesbian" and use the term "gay" to refer to gay men; others use the term "gay" to refer to both gay males and lesbian females.

Gay male: A man or young man who forms his primary loving and sexual relationships with other men; a man or young man who has a continuing affectional, emotional, romantic, and/or erotic preference for someone of the same sex.

Bisexual: A woman or young woman, a man or young man who forms primary loving and sexual relationships with members of both sexes; someone who has a continuing affectional, emotional, romantic, and/or erotic preference for people of both sexes.

Heterosexual: A heterosexual is someone who has a preferential erotic attraction to the other sex, and who usually (but not necessarily) engages in overt sexual relationships with people of the other sex.

Homosexual: A clinical and technical term that is not generally used by lesbian and gay people to refer to themselves or their community. For example, Congressman Barney Frank refers to himself as gay, or openly gay, not admittedly homosexual or a practicing homosexual.

Fag, Dyke, Faggot, Lezzie, Homo, Queer, Fairy, Fruit, Cocksucker, Pansy, and Sissy are all insulting terms to lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. They are equivalent to **Wop, Gook, Nigger, Cunt, or Retard** as insulting terms for Italian people, Asian people, Black People, Women, or People with mental disabilities.

Being Out or Out of the Closet: A term which means being open and public about being lesbian, gay, or bisexual. A **Closetted** person hides the fact that they are lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Some people are "out" in some settings (for example, with friends) and not "out" in other settings (for example, at work or with family).

Lover, Partner, and Significant Other are terms that lesbian, gay and bisexual people use to identify those people with whom they have romantic or sexual relationships.

(Source: A Guide To Leading Introductory Workshops on Homophobia. Cooper Thompson, "The Campaign to End Homophobia," Cambridge, MA. 1990)

"WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE GAY LIFESTYLE?"

Supportive Data for Responses to Individual Items

1. Gay people can ordinarily be identified by certain mannerisms or physical characteristics.

Gays come in as many different shapes, colors and sizes as do heterosexuals. Only a very small percentage can be identified by stereotypic mannerisms and characteristics. In fact, many heterosexuals portray a variety of the so-called gay stereotypic characteristics. Some members of different subcultures may tend to mimic or imitate specific behaviors in an effort to "fit in". (Note: Discuss how members of "popular" subcultures tend to "look alike" and "act alike"; such as: members of fraternities and sororities; "administrators"; athletes; "Punkers" and "New Wavers"; etc.)

2. In a gay relationship one partner usually plays the "husband"/"butch" role and the other plays the "wife"/"femme" role.

This is an old pattern that was evident in some gay relationships when gays had only the traditional heterosexual relationship as a model. Today, most gays work to develop relationships based on the principles of equality and mutuality where they are loved and appreciated for "who they are", not for the roles they are supposed to play. There is no right or wrong way that prescribes how to divide roles between partners. Often gays perform preferred tasks and share those that are less desirable (i.e., laundry, cleaning, paying bills, etc.)

3. We do not know what causes homosexuality.

This is by far one of the more controversial issues for gays. It is not yet known what specifically causes either homosexuality or heterosexuality. Some believe it is predetermined genetically or hormonally. Others maintain that all humans are predisposed to all variations of sexual/affectional behavior and "learn" a preference or orientation. Clearly, much further research is needed in this area.

Caution:

Some people may ask the question of causation in an attempt to "find a cure". It may be more helpful to de-emphasize the importance of exploring the causation issue by citing how homosexuality has existed in cultures around the world for centuries. It has been a constant part of societies throughout history. The question, therefore, may not be what "causes" it, but how can we come to better understand and accept all of the complexities of homosexuality.

4. Most gay people could be cured by having really good sex with a member of the opposite sex.

There are no "cures". Many gays have had satisfying heterosexual experiences in their lifetime. According to the Kinsey research, some gays/bisexuals are comfortable being sexually active with heterosexuals as well.

Gays who out of desperation or fear, choose to enter a heterosexual relationship "to get cured" may cause undue misery and pain to themselves and their partners. Most gays would never choose to be sexually active with members of the other sex and would resent and challenge the inference that heterosexuals have a corner on the market of "good sex".

5. The majority of child molesters are gay.

Over 90% of child molestation is committed by heterosexual men against young girls. The overwhelming majority of homosexuals have no interest in pre-adolescent children.

6. Most gay people regard themselves as members of the opposite sex.

Most, if not all gays, are comfortable with their femaleness or maleness. Being gay must not be confused with being transsexual, where one feels trapped in the body of the wrong sex and, therefore, may seek surgery to "rectify" the matter.

7. Homosexuality is not "natural"—that is, it does not exist in nature, therefore, that proves that it is dysfunction.

From a scientific point of view, it is "natural". Any animal, including humans, is capable of responding to homosexual stimuli. Research suggests that homosexuality is almost universal among all animals and is especially frequent among highly developed species. There has been evidence of homosexuality in all human cultures throughout history. In fact, one anthropological study of non-Western cultures found that 64% of their sample considered homosexuality "normal and socially acceptable" for certain members of the society.

8. Gay people should not be teachers because they will try to convert their students to the gay lifestyle.

Homosexual "conversion"/seduction is no more common than is heterosexual seduction. Most gay teachers live with the fear that they will be fired immediately if they are "found out". Most, if not all, gays have no desire to "convert" students. Unfortunately, their efforts to provide support for younger gays may be misconstrued and misrepresented. If, in fact, the data are correct that suggest that sexual orientation is established by age 3-6, then contact with teachers would have no effect on students.

9. Gay people have made a conscious decision to be gay.

(Refer to #3 for the issue of causation).

While researchers continue to disagree on the specific "causes" of homosexuality, they mostly agree that there is some sort of predisposition or genetic relationship involved. The "decision" may not be whether one is going to be gay or not, but rather whether one is going to acknowledge the existence of personal homosexual feelings and behaviors. "Coming out" is a very complex and difficult process. It may take a long time for many gays to "choose" to accept their homosexuality as a valid and normal lifestyle. Those who struggle with their gay identity may suffer enormous anxiety, pain, and anger as they work to rectify the inherent incongruence between societal messages and their own feelings and preferences.

10. There are very few "bisexuals"; most people are either completely homosexually or heterosexually oriented.

The pioneering studies of Dr. Alfred Kinsey and his associates are most frequently cited on this question. This data suggested that, in fact, few people are either predominantly heterosexual or homosexual. Most people fall somewhere on the continuum between these two ends of the scale, and thus have the capacity to experience both affectional and sexual feelings for members of both sexes.

11. **There are some significant differences between the lifestyles of gay men and lesbians.**

Ideally, there should be no inherent or "prescribed" differences in intimate relationships of any kind; however, current societal pressures on all men and women often result in distinct differences. All men, not just gay or straight, are typically "expected" to be "macho" and allowed to engage in more short-term relationships than women. Consequently, it may be more difficult for gay men to develop and maintain long-term and stable monogamous relationships. In addition many women are socialized to believe that long-term monogamy is "right". Those who maintain that "people are people regardless of gender" may in fact believe that once societal sex role stereotypes are discarded, then everyone will feel more free to choose from among a variety of lifestyles. Until this happens all gay men and lesbians suffer from the predominance of heterosexual sex roles in a society where few gays have chosen to provide alternative role models for the "public eye".

12. **Homosexuality is a type of mental illness and can be cured by appropriate psychotherapy.**

In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.

In 1975 the American Psychological Association went further to state that, "Homosexuality, per se, implies no impairment in judgement, stability, reliability, or general social or vocational capacities."

Most, if not all, psychiatrists have had little real success in their attempts to "cure" gays through psychotherapy.

13. **One homosexual experience as an adolescent will play a large part in determining whether a person will be homosexually-oriented as an adult.**

Many young boys and girls (far more than 10% of our population) have homosexual experiences in their childhood as part of the natural exploration of one's sexuality. If this statement were true, then the percentage of gays in the population would be far greater than 10%.

Note:

Further resources on myths and facts are available in the appendix:

1. "Commonly Asked Questions About Homosexuality"
2. "20 Questions About Homosexuality: A Political Primer"

Prepared for the workshop "Opening Doors to Understanding and Acceptance", presented at ACPA, Boston, 1985.

(Source: Opening Doors To Understanding and Acceptance: A Facilitator's Guide to Presenting Workshops on Lesbian and Gay Issues. Kathy Obear, "The Human Advantage," Amherst, MA)

Participant Handout

INFORMATION ABOUT LESBIAN, GAY, AND BISEXUAL PEOPLE

- 1. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual people cannot be identified by certain mannerisms or physical characteristics.** People who are lesbians, gay, or bisexual come in as many different shapes, colors, and sizes as do heterosexuals. In fact, many heterosexuals portray a variety of the so-called lesbian and gay mannerisms.
- 2. Most lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are comfortable with being their biological sex; they do not regard themselves as members of the other sex.** Being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not the same thing as being transsexual, where a person feels that they are the wrong biological sex.
- 3. The majority of child molesters are heterosexual men, not lesbian, gay, or bisexual women and men.** Over 90% of child molestation is committed by heterosexual men against young girls. The overwhelming majority of lesbians and gay men have no interest in sexual activity with children.
- 4. Sexual experiences as a child are not necessarily indicative of one's sexual orientation as an adult.** There is a huge difference between sexual activity and sexual attraction.
- 5. Many, and perhaps most, lesbian, gay, and bisexual people have early heterosexual experiences, but are still lesbian, gay, or bisexual; many avowed heterosexuals have had sexual contact, including orgasm, with members of their own sex, but are still heterosexual.**
- 6. Some lesbian, gay, and bisexual people know at an early age -- sometimes as soon as 7 or 8 years old -- that they are attracted to their own sex.** Some people learn much later in life, in their 60's and 70's. Some research indicates that sexual orientation is determined between birth and age 3. And, having said all that, no one knows what causes sexual orientation.
- 7. It is impossible to convert heterosexuals to being homosexual.** Based on what is known about sexual attraction, this is simply not possible, nor is it possible to convert homosexuals to being heterosexual.

8. Although homosexual "seduction" does occur, it is far less common than heterosexual "seduction", and, in fact, it may be even less common due to the fact that heterosexuals may react with hostility to sexual advances from members of their own sex. This misinformation, together with the misinformation about molestation, is the basis for attempts to keep lesbians and gay men from working with children.

9. **Homosexuality is not a type of mental illness and cannot be "cured" by appropriate psychotherapy.** Although homosexuality was once thought to be a mental illness, the American Psychiatric Association and American Psychological Associations no longer consider homosexuality to be a mental illness. Some people believe that it is homophobia that needs to be cured.

10. Most psychiatric and psychological attempts to "cure" lesbians and gay men have failed to change the sexual attraction of the patient, and instead, have resulted in creating emotional trauma. Many lesbians and gay men have known heterosexuals who tried to convert them to being heterosexual, without success.

11. **Lesbian, gay, and bisexual people have the same range of sexual activity - from none to a lot - as heterosexuals do.** Some lesbians, gay, and bisexual people are celibate, some have been in monogamous relationships for decades, some have had several lovers across a lifetime, and some have many sexual partners in any given period of time.

12. If you think about all the heterosexuals you know, they, too, fall across a spectrum of sexual activity and types of relationships. What is different is that we have gotten more information about the sexuality of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people and little information about the diversity and depth of their relationships.

13. For example, the only "homosexual" stories generally covered by the mainstream media are sensational ones -- bath house raids, a gay man accused of molesting school boys, or a case of lesbian battering -- while the everyday lives of most lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are effectively kept secret or never discussed in a matter-of-fact way.

14. Many people accuse lesbian, gay, and bisexual people of "flaunting" their sexuality when they talk about their partner, hold hands or briefly kiss one another in public. And yet these are activities that heterosexual couples do all the time -- in fact, some heterosexual couples do much more than this in public. Who's flaunting their sexuality?

15. **There is no definable "gay lifestyle."** In fact, there is no standard heterosexual lifestyle. Although some people might like to think that a "normal" adult lifestyle is a heterosexual marriage with 2 children, less than 7% of all family units in the United States consist of a mother, father, and two children living together.

16. Think of all the heterosexuals you know. How many have similar "lifestyles?"

17. Although there are many widely held stereotypes about people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual, the most accurate generalization might be this: lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are different from one another in the same way that heterosexual people are different from one another.

18. People who are lesbian, gay, and bisexual work in all types of jobs and they live in all types of situations. They belong to all ethnic and racial groups. They are members of all religious, spiritual, and faith communities. They have different mental and physical abilities. They are young, middle-aged, and old.

19. Whatever is generally true about heterosexual people, is probably true about lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, with two important exceptions: their sexual attraction is different, and lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are affected by homophobia in powerful and unique ways.

20. Each day, they must face oppression because of their sexual attraction. This affects decisions about jobs, family, friends, and housing virtually all aspects of what most people would consider "everyday" living.

21. Sometimes the oppression escalates into acts of verbal and physical violence. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force received reports of 7,248 incidents of anti-gay violence and victimization in 1988 in the United States; actual levels are presumed to be much higher. In surveys of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, 52% to 87% have been verbally harrassed, 21% to 27% have been pelted with objects, 13% to 38% have been chased or followed, and 9% to 24% have been physically assaulted.

22. Despite all of this, many lesbian, gay, and bisexual people live proud, fulfilled lives. Many are committed to educating others about homophobia as well as caring for themselves and other members of their communities.

(Source: A Guide To Leading Introductory Workshops on Homophobia. Cooper Thompson, "The Campaign to End Homophobia," Cambridge, MA. 1990)

HOMOPHOBIA

In the clinical sense, homophobia is defined as an intense, irrational fear of same sex relationships that become overwhelming to the person. In common usage, homophobia is the fear of intimate relationships with persons of the same sex.

Below are listed 4 negative homophobic, and 4 positive levels of attitudes toward Gay and Lesbian relationships/people. They were developed by Dr. Dorothy Riddle, a psychologist from Tucson, Arizona.

HOMOPHOBIC LEVELS OF ATTITUDE:

- Repulsion** - Homosexuality is seen as a "crime against nature". Gays are sick, crazy, immoral, sinful, wicked, etc., and anything is justified to change them (e.g., prison, hospitalization, negative behavior therapy including electric shock).
- Pity** - Heterosexual chauvinism. Heterosexuality is more mature and certainly to be preferred. Any possibility of becoming straight should be reinforced and those who seem to be born "that way" should be pitied, "the poor dears".
- Tolerance** - Homosexuality is just a phase of adolescent development that many people go through and most people "grow out of". Thus, Gays are less mature than straights and should be treated with the protectiveness and indulgence one uses with a child. Gays and Lesbians should not be given positions of authority (because they are still working through adolescent behaviors).
- Acceptance** - Still implies there is something to accept, characterized by such statements as "You're not a gay to me, you're a person." "What you do in bed is your own business", "That's fine as long as you don't flaunt it."
- Denies social and legal realities. 84% of people believe being gay is obscene and vulgar and 70% still believe it is wrong even between consenting adults.
- Ignores the pain of invisibility and stress of closet behavior. "Flaunt" usually means say or do anything that makes people aware.

POSITIVE LEVELS OF ATTITUDE:

- Support** - Basic ACLU approach. Work to safeguard the rights of Gays and Lesbians. Such people may be uncomfortable themselves, but they are aware of the climate and the irrational unfairness.
- Admiration** - Acknowledges that being Gay/Lesbian in our society takes strength. Such people are willing to truly look at themselves and work on their own homophobic attitudes.
- Appreciation** - Value the diversity of people and see Gays as a valid part of that diversity. These people are willing to combat homophobia in themselves and in others.
- Nurturance** - Assume that Gay and Lesbian people are indispensable in our society. They view gays with genuine affection and delight and are willing to be Gay advocates.

(Source: Opening Doors To Understanding and Acceptance: A Facilitator's Guide to Presenting Workshops on Lesbian and Gay Issues. Kathy Obear, "The Human Advantage," Amherst, MA)

Participant Handout

HOMOPHOBIA

Homophobia: The fear of feelings of love for members of one's own sex and therefore the hatred of those feelings in others.

Heterosexism: The belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving and thereby its right to dominance.

(Audre Lorde, "Scratching the Surface: Some Notes on Barriers to Women and Loving," in Sister Outsider, The Crossing Press, 1984)

Homophobia refers to the many ways in which people are oppressed on the basis of sexual orientation. Sometimes, homophobia is intentional, where there is a clear intent to hurt lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. Homophobia can also be unintentional, where there is no desire to hurt anyone, but where people are unaware of the consequences of their actions.

There are four distinct but interrelated types of homophobia: personal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural. Institutional and cultural homophobia are often referred to as **heterosexism**.

1. **Personal homophobia** is prejudice. It is the personal belief that lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are sinful, immoral, sick, inferior to heterosexuals, or incomplete women and men. Prejudice towards any group is learned behavior; people have to be taught to be prejudiced.

Personal homophobia is sometimes experienced as the fear of being perceived as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, out of the fear that one will be treated as if they were sinful, immoral, sick, or inferior. This fear can lead to trying to "prove" one's heterosexuality. Anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation or preference, can experience personal homophobia; when this happens with lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, it is sometimes called "internalized homophobia."

Many people believe that there is a positive correlation between sexual orientation and sex roles, that lesbians are masculine and gay men are feminine. There is absolutely no basis for this belief, but it persists. Consequently, many people spend a lot of energy and time trying to fit prevailing cultural images of what it means to be female or male as a way of avoiding being perceived as lesbian or gay.

2. **Interpersonal homophobia** is the fear, dislike, or hatred of people believed to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual. This hatred or dislike may be expressed by name-calling, verbal and physical harassment, and individual acts of discrimination.

Lesbians, gay, and bisexual people are regularly attacked for no other reason than their assailants' homophobia. Most people act out their fears of lesbians and gay men in non-violent, more commonplace ways. Relatives often shun their lesbian and

gay family members; co-workers are distant and cold to lesbian and gay employees; lesbians and gay men are in some states legally prevented from becoming foster parents and attempts have been made to fire lesbian or gay teachers.

3. **Institutional homophobia (or heterosexism)** refers to the many ways in which government, businesses, churches, and other institutions and organizations discriminate against people on the basis of sexual orientation. These organizations and institutions set policies, allocate resources, and maintain unwritten standards for the behavior of their members in ways which discriminate.

For example, most religious organizations have stated policies against lesbian, gay, and bisexual people holding offices; most schools fail or refuse to allocate funds and staff for lesbian, gay, and bisexual support groups; and most businesses have norms for social events which prevent lesbian, gay, and bisexual employees from bringing their same sex partners while heterosexual employees are encouraged to bring their opposite sex partners.

4. **Cultural homophobia (or heterosexism)** refers to social standards and norms which dictate that being heterosexual is better or more moral than being lesbian or gay, and that everyone is heterosexual or should be. While these standards are not written down as such, they are spelled out each day in television shows and print advertisements where virtually every character is heterosexual and every sexual relationship involves a female and a male; or in the assumption made by most adults in social situations that all "normal" children will eventually be attracted to and marry a person of the other sex.

Often, heterosexuals don't realize that these standards exist, while lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are acutely aware of the standards. The feeling which results is one of being an outsider in the society.

(Source: A Guide To Leading Introductory Workshops on Homophobia. Cooper Thompson, "The Campaign to End Homophobia," Cambridge, MA. 1990)

LEGAL ISSUE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Legal Issues Committee met from September through November, 1990 to examine the impact of the laws of the State of Minnesota on Lesbians and Gay men. Two significant factors were immediately apparent. First, many statutory rights, and responsibilities, depend on the marriage status of an individual. Second, other than in the criminal statutes, the laws ignore the issues of the Lesbian and Gay Community. The Legal Committee focused on specific statutory changes which, if enacted, would dramatically change and improve the lives of all Lesbian and Gay Minnesotans.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Minn. Stat. § 72A.20 (Insurance) prohibits discrimination in insurance on the basis of sex or marital status, and permits insurers to take marital status into account in defining eligibility for dependent's benefits.

Recommendation: Add sexual orientation and family partner status to the prohibited discriminatory bases and delete the language permitting marital status to be taken into account to determine dependent's benefits.

2. Minn. Stat. § 176.111 (Workers' Comp) sets forth who is eligible for workers' comp benefits in the event of a death. Presently, spouses are presumed to be dependents and are, therefore, entitled to compensation. (An injury that does not result in death is not compensable to spouses).

Recommendation: Amend the statute to provide for compensation to family partners as well as spouses.

3. Minn. Stat. § 259.21 et seq. (Adoption) allows for adoption of a child by a "step-parent" - the spouse of one of the natural parents - without termination of that natural parent's parental rights, and without requiring that the child first be "placed" by the Commissioner of Human Services or a licensed child-placing agency.

Recommendation: Amend the law to specifically allow such adoptions by a same-sex partner of the natural parent.

4. The income tax statutes provide a preferred tax status for married couples.

Recommendation: Amend the tax statutes to provide the same preferred status to same sex couples.

5. Minn. Stat. § 340A.801 (Dram Shop) allows for a civil suit by a spouse who incurs an injury in person, property or means of support by an intoxicated person as a result of a dram shop illegally providing intoxicating beverages.

Recommendation: Amend the law to allow a family partner to sue as well.

6. The Minnesota Human Rights Act, Minn. Stat. Chapter 363, does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Recommendation: Add "sexual or affectional orientation" as a protected class under the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

7. Minn. Stat. § 471.61, subd. 1, relates to benefits provided by governmental units to their employees. The statute defines "dependents" as a spouse and unmarried children. The

statute has been cited as a bar to providing family benefits to unmarried government employees in committed relationships. Conflicting opinions have been issued about whether the law technically is such a bar.

Recommendation: To eliminate the question of the impact of the statute on domestic partner benefits, amend the law to include family partners.

8. Lesbian and gay families are not recognized by the state of Minnesota, and are not given the same benefits and protections that other families are given.

Recommendation: Create a mechanism for recognition of alternative family relationships, and amend Minn. Stat. § 517.01 to permit same sex couples to marry, if they choose.

9. The State does not provide a mechanism for dissolving same sex relationships regardless of the legal status of such relationships.

Recommendation: Amend Minn. Stat. § 518.06 (Dissolution) to remove language regarding "a husband and wife" and substitute "the parties to the marriage contract," and otherwise permit the provisions of Chapter 518 to apply to same sex relationships.

10. Same sex couples are not recognized in the Uniform Probate Code or probate proceedings.

Recommendation: Amend Minnesota Statutes Chapters 524 and 525 to recognize and protect family partners and their dependents.

11. Minn. Stat. § 573.01 (Wrongful Death) permits a civil suit by a "surviving spouse and next of kin" in the event of a

wrongful death.

Recommendation: Amend the wrongful death statute to specifically allow such a suit by a family partner.

12. Minn. Stat. § 609.293 (Sodomy) prohibits carnally knowing any person by the anus or by or with the mouth. Such acts, if consensual and engaged in by adults in private, are misdemeanors punishable by up to a year in prison or a fine of up to \$3,000.00, or both.

Recommendation: Repeal Minn. Stat. § 609.293.

13. Minnesota has enacted good legislation on hate crimes during the past three legislative sessions. Some improvements can be made in the enforcement of the laws.

Recommendations:

a. Draft uniform documents to be submitted to and utilized by reporting agencies, to improve compliance with Minn. Stat. § 626.5531, subd. 2 (data collection).

b. Monitor compliance with the law requiring bias crime training for police officers.

c. Draft model training materials on prosecution of bias crimes and make them available to all cities and counties in the state.

PROPOSED STATUTORY CHANGES

INSURANCE

Minn. Stat. § 72A.20 DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEX OR MARITAL STATUS

Subd. 16. Refusing to insure, refusing to continue to insure,

refusing to offer or submit an application for coverage, or limiting the amount of coverage available to an individual because of the sex, sexual orientation, ~~or marital or family partner~~ status of the individual. ~~however, nothing in this subsection prohibits an insurer from taking marital status into account for the purpose of defining persons eligible for dependents' benefits.~~

TORT RECOVERY

In the area of tort recovery and related claims, changes have been proposed in the worker's compensation, dram shop and wrongful death statutes. Loss of consortium is a product of the common law and therefore no Minnesota statutes could be amended with respect to this issue. The proposed changes in each of these areas give the same rights of recovery to family partners and their dependents as to spouses.

Recommendation: Amend the statute to provide for compensation to family partners as well as spouses.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The changes proposed would give to a family partner the same rights of recovery as a spouse in worker's compensation death claims. Only death claims are addressed since they are the only claims in the worker's compensation scheme which legislate recovery for the spouse of the worker.

Minn. Stat. § 176.111 Dependents, allowances.

Subd. 1. Persons wholly dependent, presumption. For the purposes of this chapter the following persons are conclusively presumed to be wholly dependent.

(a) spouse or family partner, unless it be shown that the spouse or family partner and decedent were voluntarily living apart at the time of the injury or death.

Subd. 3. Persons wholly supported. A wife, husband, spouse or family partner, child, ~~mother~~, ~~father~~, parent, ~~grandmother~~, ~~grandfather~~, grandparent, grandchild, sister, brother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, wholly supported by a deceased worker at the time of death and for a reasonable time prior thereto are considered actual dependents of the deceased worker and compensation shall be paid to them in the order named.

Subd. 6. Spouse, no dependent child. If the deceased employee leaves a surviving spouse or family partner and no dependent child, there shall be paid to the spouse or family partner, weekly workers' compensation benefits at 50 percent of the weekly wage at the time of the injury for a period of ten years, including adjustments as provided in section 176.654.

Subd. 7. Spouse, one dependent child. If the deceased employee leaves a surviving spouse or family partner and one dependent child, there shall be paid to the surviving spouse or family partner for the benefit of the spouse or family partner and the child 60 percent of the daily wage at the time of the injury of the deceased until the child is no longer a dependent as defined in subdivision 1. At that time there shall be paid to the dependent surviving spouse or family partner weekly benefits at a rate which is 16-2/3 percent less than the last weekly workers' compensation benefit payment, as defined in subdivision 8a, while

the surviving child was a dependent, for a period of ten years, including adjustments as provided in section 176.645.

Subd. 8. Spouse, two dependent children. If the deceased employee leaves a surviving spouse or family partner and two dependent children, there shall be paid to the surviving spouse or family partner for the benefit of the spouse or family partner and children 66-2/3 percent of the daily wage at the time of the injury of the deceased until the last dependent child is no longer dependent. At that time the dependent surviving spouse or family partner shall be paid weekly benefits at a rate which is 25 percent less than the last weekly workers' compensation benefit payment, as defined in subdivision 8a, while the surviving child was a dependent, for a period of ten years, adjusted according to section 176.645.

Subd. 9a. Remarriage of spouse. A surviving spouse or family partner who remarries and is receiving benefits under subdivisions 6, 7, or 8 shall continue to be eligible to receive weekly benefits for the remaining period that the spouse or family partner is entitled to receive benefits pursuant to this section.

Subd. 10. Allocations of compensation. In all cases where compensation is payable to the surviving spouse or family partner, for the benefit of the surviving spouse or family partner and dependent children, the commissioner, compensation judge, or workers' compensation court of appeals or district court in cases upon appeal shall determine what portion of the compensation applies for the benefit of dependent children and may order that

portion paid to a guardian. This subdivision shall not be construed to increase the combined total of weekly government survivor benefits and workers' compensation beyond the limitation established in subdivision 21.

Subd. 14. Parents. If the deceased employee leaves no surviving spouse or family partner or child entitled to any payment under this chapter, but leaves both parents wholly dependent on deceased, there shall be paid to such parents jointly 45 percent of the weekly wage at the time of the injury of the deceased. .

Subd. 15. Remote dependents. If the deceased employee leaves no surviving spouse or family partner or child or parent entitled to any payment under this chapter, but leaves a grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, mother-in-law, or father-in-law wholly dependent on the employee for support, there shall be paid to such dependent, if but one, 30 percent of the weekly wage at the time of injury of the deceased, or if more than one, 35 percent of the weekly wage at the time of the injury of the deceased, divided among them share and share alike.

Subd. 21. . . . The combined total of weekly government survivor benefits and workers' compensation death benefits provided under this section shall not exceed 100 percent of the weekly wage being earned by the deceased employee at the time of the injury causing death; provided, however, that no state workers' compensation death benefit shall be paid for any week in which the survivor benefits paid under the federal program, by themselves, exceed 100 percent of such weekly wage provided, however, the

workers' compensation benefits payable to a dependent surviving spouse or family partner shall not be reduced on account of any governmental survivor benefits payable to decedent's children if the support of the children is not the responsibility of the dependent surviving spouse or family partner.

For the purposes of this subdivision "dependent" means dependent surviving spouse or family partner together with all dependent children and any other dependents. For the purpose of this subdivision, mother's or father's insurance benefits received pursuant to United States Code, title 42, section 402(g), are benefits under a government survivor program.

ADOPTION

An increasing number of Lesbian and Gay couples have children or wish to have children. The proposed changes to the adoption statutes would allow a non-biological parent to establish a legal relationship with the natural parent's child or children.

The proposed changes do not specifically address the issue of a same sex couple adopting a non-biological child as a couple. Nothing in the present statute or proposed changes prohibit a same sex couple from adopting although this appears to be the policy of private adoption agencies, County adoption units, and the Department of Human Services. The following policy statement could be added to Minn. Stat. § 259.22 to rectify this situation: "Nothing in this statute prohibits two unmarried persons of the same or opposite sex from applying to adopt a child or children."

Minn. Stat. § 259.21 Subd. 7. Petitioner. "Petitioner" means a person with spouse or family partner if there be one, petitioning for the adoption of any person or persons pursuant to sections 259.21 to 259.32. ~~In the case of adoption by a stepparent, the parent who is the stepparent's spouse shall not be required to join the petition.~~

Minn. Stat. § 259.22 Petition. Subd. 2. No petition for adoption shall be filed unless the child sought to be adopted has been placed by the commissioner of human services, the commissioner's agent, or a licensed child-placing agency. The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply if (a) the child is over 14 years of age;

(b) the child is sought to be adopted by a stepparent;

(c) the child is sought to be adopted by a natural parent and his or her family partner;

~~(e)~~(d) the child is sought to be adopted by a relative related by blood or marriage within the third degree;

~~(d)~~(e) the child has been lawfully placed under the laws of another state while the child and petitioner resided in that other state; or

~~(e)~~(f) the court waives the requirement of placement in the best interests of the child or petitioners.

Minn. Stat. § 259.29 Effect of adoption.

Subd. 1. Upon adoption, the child shall become the legal child of the ~~adopting persons~~ Petitioners and they shall become the legal parents of the child with all the rights and duties between

them of natural parents and legitimate child. By virtue of the adoption the child shall inherit from the adoptive parents or their relatives the same as though the child were the natural child of the parents, and in case of the child's death intestate the adoptive parents and their relatives shall inherit the child's estate as if they had been the child's natural parents and relatives. After a decree of adoption is entered the natural parents of an adopted child shall be relieved of all parental responsibilities for the child, except where the natural parent is a Petitioner and they shall not exercise or have any rights over the adopted child or the child's property. The child shall not owe the natural parents or their relatives any legal duty nor shall the child inherit from the natural parents or kindred ~~except as provided in subdivision 1a.~~ except where the natural parent has joined in the Petition.

~~Subd. 1a. Notwithstanding any other provisions to the contrary in this section, the adoption of a child by a step-parent shall not in any way change the status of the relationship between the child and the child's natural parent who is the spouse of the petitioning step-parent.~~

If a parent dies and a child is subsequently adopted by a step-parent who is the spouse of a surviving parent, or a family partner of a surviving parent, any rights of inheritance of the child or the child's issue from or through the deceased parent of the child which exist at the time of the death of that parent shall not be affected by the adoption.

TAX

Proposed changes have been drafted in the state income tax laws to provide equal tax benefits for all married couples, not just those which fit the definitions of 'husband' and 'wife'. Note that the proposed changes are not intended to apply to couples who choose family partner status but only to those couples who actually marry. This minimizes conflict with federal tax laws. The changes proposed would provide equivalent tax treatment to the parties to a "marriage contract" as that term would be defined in Minn. Stat. § 517.01, as amended by proposal of the Committee.

Changes in federal tax law were deemed to be beyond the scope of this Committee or the Task Force.

Recommendation: Amend the tax statutes to provide the same preferred status to same sex couples.

Minn. Stat. § 290.01 Subd. 31. Married. The term "married" shall mean being a party to a marriage contract as defined by Minn. Stat. § 517.01, as amended.

Minn. Stat. § 290.0802 Subtraction for the elderly and disabled.

Subd. 3. Restrictions married couples. Except in the case of ~~a husband and wife~~ parties to the marriage who live apart at all times during the taxable year, if the taxpayer is married at the close of the taxable year, the subtraction under subdivision 2 is allowable only if the taxpayers file a joint federal ~~and~~ state income tax returns for the taxable year.

Minn. Stat. § 290.38 Returns of married persons. Parties to

a marriage ~~A husband and wife~~ must file a joint Minnesota income tax return if they filed a joint federal income tax return. If a joint return is made the tax shall be computed on the aggregate income and the liability with respect to the tax shall be joint and several provided that a ~~spouse~~ party who is relieved of a liability attributable to a substantial underpayment under section 6013(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended through December 31, 1987, shall also be relieved of the state tax liability on the substantial underpayment. If the ~~husband and wife~~ parties to the marriage have elected to file separate federal income tax returns they must file separate Minnesota income tax returns. This election to file joint or separate returns must be changed if they change their election for federal purposes. In the event taxpayers desire to change their election, such change shall be done in the manner and on such form as the commissioner shall prescribe by rule.

The determination of whether an individual is married shall be made under provisions of section 7703 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended through December 31, 1987, and under the provisions of Minn. Stat. § 517.01, as amended.

Minn. Stat. § 290.93 Declaration of estimated tax.

Subd. 2. Joint declaration. A joint declaration may be made by ~~husband and wife~~, the parties to a marriage, in which case the liability with respect to the estimated tax shall be joint and several. No joint declaration may be made if they are separated under a decree of legal separation or if they have different

taxable years. If a joint declaration is made but a joint return is not made for the taxable year, the estimated tax for such year may be treated as the estimated tax of either ~~the husband or wife~~ party or may be divided between them.

DRAM SHOP

As amended by the Committee's proposal, the dram shop statute would allow recovery for a "family partner" as well as a spouse or any other party injured in their means of support as a result of a dram shop illegally providing intoxicating beverages. Recommendation: Amend the law to allow a family partner to sue as well.

Minn. Stat. § 340A.801 CIVIL ACTIONS

Subd. 1. Right of action. A spouse or family partner, child, parent, guardian, employer or other person injured in person, property, or means of support, or who incurs other pecuniary loss by an intoxicated person or by the intoxication of another person, has a right of action in the person's own name for all damages sustained against a person who caused the intoxication of that person by illegally selling alcoholic beverages. All damages recovered by a minor under this section must be paid either to the minor or to the minor's parent, guardian, or next friend as the court directs.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Amendment of the State Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation has long been a goal of the Lesbian and Gay community in Minnesota. The definition proposed by the Committee is a

composite of definitions already used in Minneapolis and St. Paul ordinances plus the one proposed in Senator Spear's bill to amend the Act. In addition to the definition, the Human Rights Act would require amendment to include the words "sexual orientation" wherever the protected classes appear in the statutes.

Recommendation: Add "sexual or affectional orientation" as a protected class under the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Minn. Stat. § 363.01 DISCRIMINATION

Subd. 42. Sexual or affectional orientation means having, or being perceived as having an emotional, physical, or sexual attachment to another person without regard to the sex of that person, or having or being perceived as having an orientation for such attachment, or having or being perceived as having a self image or identity not traditionally associated with one's biological maleness or one's biological femaleness.

Recommendation: To eliminate the question of the impact of the statute on domestic partner benefits, amend the law to include family partners.

INSURANCE FOR MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES

Minn. Stat. § 471.61, subd. 1, relates to benefits provided by governmental units to their employees. The statute defines "dependents" as a spouse and unmarried children. The statute has been cited as a bar to providing family benefits to unmarried government employees in committed relationships. Conflicting opinions have been issued about whether the law technically is such a bar.

Recommendation: To eliminate the question of the impact of the statute on domestic partner benefits, amend the law to include family partners.

Minn. Stat. § 471.61 Group insurance, protection for officers, employees, retired officers and employees. Subd. 1 . . .

The word "dependents" as used in this subdivision means spouse or family partner and ~~minor~~ unmarried children under the age of ~~18~~ 19 actually dependent upon the employee.

COHABITATION

The Committee recommends repeal of the "anti-Marvin" statutes because of the conflict which would arise as a result of the proposed amendments to Chapter 518 governing dissolution of relationships. Regardless of the legal status of the relationship, the need to resolve custody, visitation, support, property division and maintenance exists. The State should provide a forum for resolution of such disputes when alternative dispute resolution mechanisms have failed.

Repeal Minn. Stat. § 513.075 Cohabitation; property and financial agreements.

~~If sexual relations between the parties are contemplated, a contract between a man and a woman who are living together in this state out of wedlock, or who are about to commence living together in this state out of wedlock, is enforceable as to terms concerning the property and financial relations of the parties only if:~~

- ~~(1) the contract is written and signed by the parties, and~~
- ~~(2) enforcement is sought after termination of the~~

relationship.

Repeal Minn. Stat. § 513.076 Necessity of contract.

~~Unless the individuals have executed a contract complying with the provisions of section 513.075, the courts of this state are without jurisdiction to hear and shall dismiss as contrary to public policy any claim by an individual to the earnings or property of another individual if the claim is based on the fact that the individuals lived together in contemplation of sexual relations and out of wedlock within or without this state.~~

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The community needs a formal structure for entering into, recognizing, maintaining, and when necessary, dissolving their relationships. The following proposed statutory changes address these issues.

The Committee believes there is a significant division within the Lesbian and Gay community on the issue of marriage versus domestic partner legislation. As the far reaching recommendations of this report demonstrate, the concept of marriage and the rights which arise out of a marriage relationship permeate the laws of our society. For that reason, if for no other, the subcommittee believes that Lesbian and Gay couples should have the option to formalize their relationships with a marriage contract.

The Committee also recommends that a state wide registry of Domestic Partnerships or, more inclusively, Alternative Family Status, be provided for couples and their children, straight or gay, who wish to legalize their relationships in this manner. This

gives rise to a policy decision as to whether a registration procedure should convey all of the benefits conveyed by marriage. Recommendation: Create a mechanism for recognition of alternative family relationships, and amend Minn. Stat. § 517.01 to permit same sex couples to marry, if they choose.

MARRIAGE

Minn. Stat. § 517.01 MARRIAGE A CIVIL CONTRACT

Marriage, so far as its validity in law is concerned, is a civil contract between ~~a man and a woman~~ two persons, to which the consent of the parties, capable in law of contracting, is essential. Lawful marriage may be contracted only when a license has been obtained as provided by law and when the marriage is contracted in the presence of two witnesses and solemnized by one authorized, or whom one or both of the parties in good faith believe to be authorized, so to do. Marriages subsequent to April 26, 1941, not so contracted shall be null and void.

Minn. Stat. § 517.22 Alternative Family Status.

Subd. 1. "Alternate Family" means two adults and their dependents, if any, provided the adults sign an affidavit filed with the Court Administrator of the District Court for any county indicating that:

- 1) They are in a relationship of mutual support, caring and commitment; and
- 2) They are not married or legally separated; and
- 3) Neither family partner is currently registered in an alternative family with a different family partner and, if either

partner has previously been registered as a family partner in an alternative family, at least six (6) months have elapsed since the effective date of termination of that registration; and

4) Both are 18 years of age or older; and

5) Both are competent to contract; and

6) They are occupying the same dwelling unit as a single, nonprofit housekeeping unit, whose relationship is of permanent and distinct domestic character; and

7) They are not in a relationship that is merely temporary, social, political, commercial or economic in nature; and

8) Both agree to notify the City Clerk of any change in the status of their alternative family relationship.

Subd. 2. "Family partner" means those adults in a registered alternative family.

Subd.3. "Dependent" means one who lives with a registered alternative family and is:

1) A biological or adopted child of a family partner; or

2) A dependent of one of the family partners, as dependent is defined under IRS regulations; or

3) A ward of a family partner as determined by guardianship or power of attorney.

Subd. 4. "Mutual support" means that the family partners contribute mutually to the maintenance and support of the alternative family throughout its existence.

Minn. Stat. § 517.23 Registration

a) The Court Administrator of the District Court shall

register as alternative families those persons who state, in an application which shall be verified, that they meet the requirements contained in Minn. Stat. § 517.22 and pay a registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) to cover record keeping and other costs related to such registration.

b) The Court Administrator of the District Court shall provide each alternative family with a registration certificate, but no registration shall be made nor certificate issued, before the third working day after the date of the application.

c) Registration as an alternative family is terminated on the 30th day after the Court Administrator of the District Court receives and files written notice of termination from one or both family partners. The Court Administrator of the District Court shall notify a nonfiling partner at his/her last known address, by certified mail, or any notice of termination.

DISSOLUTION

Recommendation: Amend Minn. Stat. § 518.06 (Dissolution) to remove language regarding "a husband and wife" and substitute "the parties to the marriage contract," and otherwise permit the provisions of Chapter 518 to apply to same sex relationships.

Minn. Stat. § 518.06 DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE; LEGAL SEPARATION; GROUNDS; UNCONTESTED LEGAL SEPARATION

Subd. 1. A dissolution of marriage is the termination of the marital relationship between ~~a husband and wife~~ the parties to the marriage contract. A decree of dissolution completely terminates the marital status of both parties. A legal separation is a court

determination of the rights and responsibilities of ~~a husband and wife~~ the parties to the contract arising out of the marital relationship. A decree of legal separation does not terminate the marital status of the parties. A dissolution of a marriage shall be granted by a county or district court when the court finds that there has been an irretrievable breakdown of the marriage relationship.

A decree of legal separation shall be granted when the court finds that one or both parties need a legal separation.

Defenses to divorce, dissolution and legal separation, including but not limited to condonation, connivance, collusion, recrimination, insanity, and lapse of time, are abolished.

Subd. 3. If one or both parties petition for a decree of legal separation and neither party contests the granting of the decree nor petitions for a decree of dissolution, the court shall grant a decree of legal separation.

Subd. 4. The provisions of this chapter regarding child custody, visitation, support, property division and maintenance shall also apply to dissolving any relationship between two adults who have lived together for a minimum of twelve months.

UNIFORM PROBATE CODE

Minnesota Statutes Chapters 524 and 525 should be amended to include the words "or family partner" each place the word spouse appears in a statute. Corresponding changes should also be made to protect the child or children in the alternative family. The Committee did not have a member with significant expertise in this

area to propose specific statutory changes.

TORT

Changes have been proposed in the wrongful death statute to allow recovery for a "family partner" as well as a spouse or next-of-kin arising out of the wrongful death caused by a negligent party.

Minn. Stat. § 573.02 ACTION FOR DEATH BY WRONGFUL ACT

Subd. 1. . . . The recovery in the action is the amount the jury deems fair and just in reference to the pecuniary loss resulting from the death, and shall be for the exclusive benefit of the surviving spouse or family partner and next of kin, proportionate to the pecuniary loss severally suffered by the death. The court then determines the proportionate pecuniary loss of the persons entitled to the recovery and orders distribution accordingly. . . .

If an action for the injury was commenced by the decedent and not finally determined while living, it may be continued by the trustee for recovery of damages for the exclusive benefit of the surviving spouse or family partner and next of kin, proportionate to the pecuniary loss severally suffered by the death. . . .

Subd. 3. Upon written petition by the surviving spouse or family partner or one of the next of kin, the court having jurisdiction of an action falling within the provisions of subdivisions 1 or 2, shall appoint a suitable and competent person as trustee to commence or continue such action and obtain recovery of damages therein. . . .

CRIMINAL STATUTES

Repeal Minnesota Statutes, section 609.293.

~~Subd. 1. Definition. "Sodomy" means carnally knowing any person by the anus or by or with the mouth.~~

[Subd. 2 through 4 were repealed in 1977.]

~~Subd. 5. Consensual acts. Whoever, in cases not coming within the provisions of section 609.342 or 609.344 [nonconsensual criminal sexual conduct] voluntarily engages in or submits to an act of sodomy with another may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than one year or to payment of a fine of not more than \$3,000, or both.~~

HATE CRIMES IMPLEMENTATION ISSUE

The statutes do not need any specific amendments but experience since they were enacted has demonstrated uneven application and other implementation issues.

Minn. Stat. § 626.5531 Reporting of crimes motivated by bias.

Draft uniform data collection documents to be submitted to and utilized by reporting agencies, to enable compliance with Subdivision 2 of the statute.

Minn. Stat. § 626.8451 Training in identifying and responding to crimes motivated by bias.

Monitor P.O.S.T. Board involvement and compulsory compliance with mandatory bias crime training by peace officer's training schools, both pre-service training and in-service training. Providing adequate funding for the training programs.

Minn. Stat. § 8.34 Bias-motivated crime prosecution training.

Identify model prosecutor programs for duplication and distribution to all regions in the State.

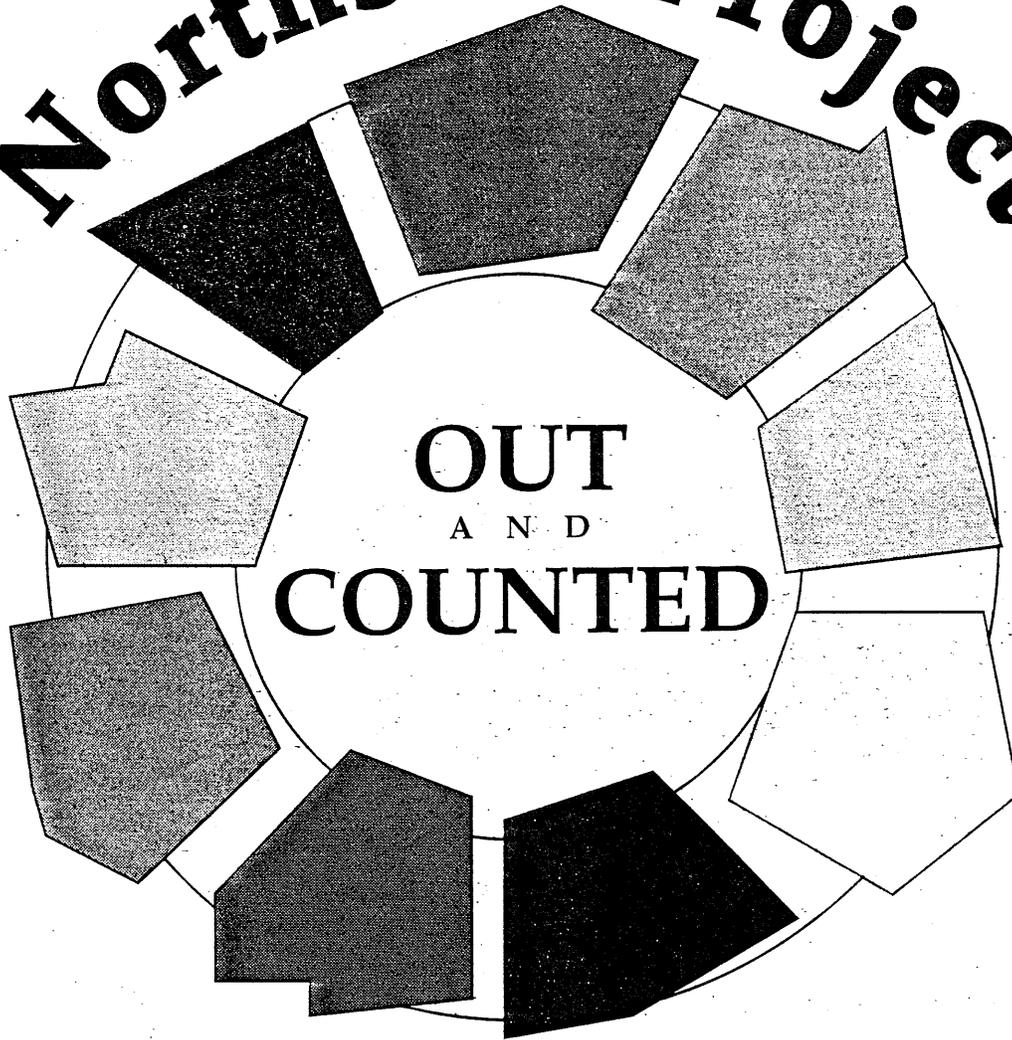
Minn. Stat. § 609.2231 subd. 4 Assaults motivated by bias.

Disseminate information regarding bias crime penalty enhancement to "enforcers" through trainings noted above or through other means.

Respectfully submitted,
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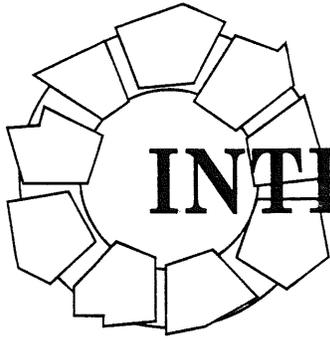
Northstar Project



A Survey of the Twin Cities
Gay & Lesbian Community

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The Northstar Project was initiated to provide the first portrait of the Lesbian and Gay population in the Twin Cities metro area and to assess the needs of this community.

Sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council (GLCAC), the project is the first of its kind in the state. One of its accomplishments has been to conduct a formal survey that offers a glimpse into the lives, challenges, and dreams of men and women who belong to a diverse minority group, their common link being their sexual identity.

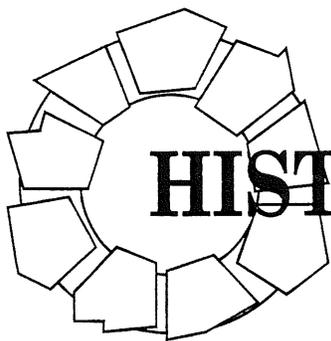
The intended result of this survey is to:

- Increase understanding of Gay men and Lesbians within their community as well as in the broader community.
- Identify needs and priorities within the Lesbian and Gay community.
- Document the nature of Gay and Lesbian relationships, families, and the "coming out" process.
- Document the existence and extent of discrimination and abuse that occurs in the Lesbian and Gay community.

Survey response was overwhelming. Of the 8500 surveys distributed, 1864 (21.9%) were completed and returned -- this extensive participation represented the largest voluntary involvement of its kind by any Gay and Lesbian community in the nation.

The survey results are not intended to portray a complete picture of this community, nor are they meant to compare it to the broader community. It was assumed that this survey would constitute the first overview of the Gay and Lesbian community, with the results being used as the basis for programs and change, as well as to pinpoint areas for further study.

In producing and distributing this report, GLCAC hopes to inform and impact educational institutions, public policy-making bodies, funding organizations within the public and private sector, and service efforts that affect the lives of Gay men and Lesbians in the seven-county metropolitan area.



HISTORY & METHODOLOGY

ORIGIN

The idea for the Northstar Project was an outgrowth of a needs assessment that was successfully conducted within the Boston Gay and Lesbian community. The project was initiated when Brian Coyle, an openly Gay member of the Minneapolis City Council, called for a similar survey in the Twin Cities area.

EARLY EFFORTS

A core group of activists laid the groundwork for the survey during the summer of 1984. Other people were recruited as needed and eventually a 25-member board was selected to coordinate the effort. This group established the working structure for the project which included vigorous efforts to include underrepresented groups, especially people of color.

This project was a joint effort between Twin Cities Lesbians and Gay men. Efforts were made to have men and women equally represented. To insure that each person was heard, all policy decisions were made by consensus.

MISSION STATEMENT

The board of directors formed the mission statement which focused on the following elements:

- The project was to be a grassroots effort that included both men and women from the Gay and Lesbian community. The primary goal was to conduct the needs assessment; the secondary goals were to build teamwork and develop leadership within this community.
- The project members were committed to address the needs of all members of the Lesbian and Gay community, especially

those less visible or disadvantaged because of age, race, poverty, ill health, isolation, and other factors.

- The goal of the survey was to provide accurate information about various components of the Gay and Lesbian community. This information could then be used to institute public policies, formulate recommendations for action, and foster cooperation and understanding within the broader community.
- The survey results were to be distributed to Lesbian and Gay organizations as well as mainstream organizations, so that both groups could understand the diverse needs and make responsive and responsible plans to meet those needs.
- The overall effort was aimed at removing and/or avoiding obstacles within the system that adversely affect Gay and Lesbian people.

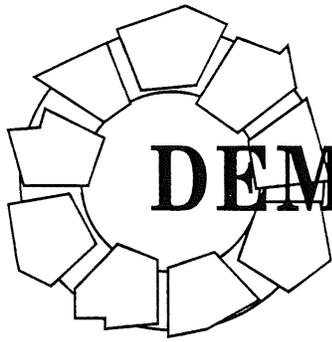
SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey questions were formulated, reviewed, revised, and compiled by writers, researchers, and marketing experts from both the Lesbian and Gay community and the broader community. More than 200 people volunteered their time, effort, and skill. There were no provisions for staffing or funding. The Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council (GLCAC) agreed to assist in conducting the survey and tabulating the results.

The survey was conducted between October and December of 1987. With the help of social service agencies, educational institutions, community organizations, and informal networks, GLCAC distributed over 8500 questionnaires throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan

area. Announcements in the local Gay and Lesbian press facilitated the outreach effort. Volunteers spent a weekend surveying Lesbians and Gay men in common social gathering places such as restaurants, coffee houses, and bars. Surveys were also mailed if requested; individuals then provided their own postage and envelopes for the return. Respondents were not asked to provide their names in order to maintain their privacy.

The Hennepin County Data Processing Department entered the data and ran the necessary computer analysis. A team of GLCAC staff and board members worked with statisticians and communications specialists from the Lesbian and Gay community to compile the results and produce this final report.

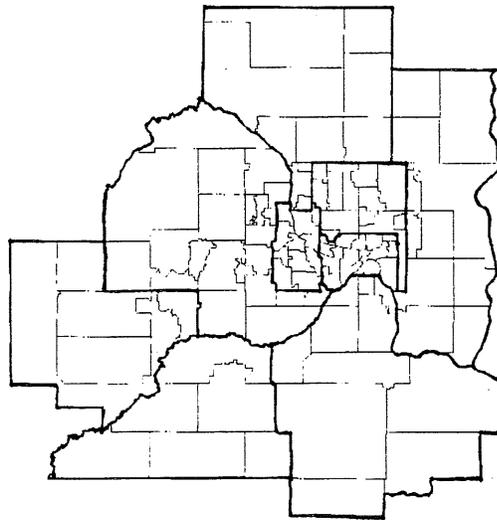


DEMOGRAPHICS

This section summarizes selected information to present a demographic profile of the Gay men and Lesbians who responded to the survey. If significant, the disparities between the men and women are also reported.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

While the original intent was to survey Lesbians and Gay men in the Twin Cities area, respondents were from other areas of Minnesota as well.



Anoka	0.4%
Carver	0.6%
Dakota	1.1%
Hennepin	67.6%
Ramsey	22.8%
Scott	0.3%
Washington	0.4%
Outstate Minn.	3.0%
Other	3.8%

Figure 3.1
Geographical
Representation

SEXUAL IDENTITY

Of the 1864 people who returned the completed survey, 49% were Lesbian, 44% were Gay men, and 7% were bisexual (4% women and 3% men).

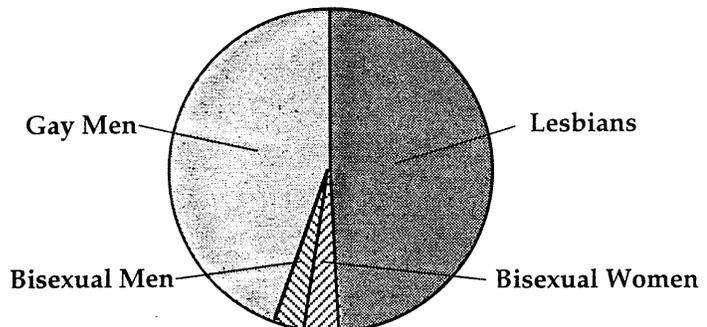


Figure 3.2 Sexual Identity

RACIAL/ETHNIC BACKGROUND

92% of the respondents were White, with the remaining 8% being represented by almost equal numbers of African-Americans (2%), Hispanics (2%), Native Americans (2%), Asian Americans (1%), and Other (1%). The survey figures closely parallel the seven-county metro area figures.

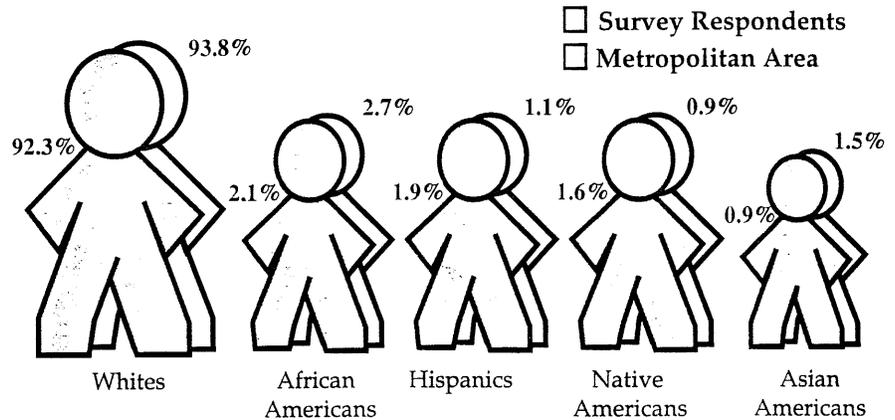


Figure 3.3 Racial/Ethnic Identity

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

21% reported having an advanced degree (anything beyond a bachelor's degree), 59% at least a college degree, and 23% at least some college credit. 61% of Lesbians said they have completed undergraduate degrees, and 21% have finished advanced degrees. Comparatively, 56% of Gay men have undergraduate degrees, and 20% have graduate degrees. Of the 31 survey respondents who had completed some high school, 22 were under 18 years of age and were still attending.

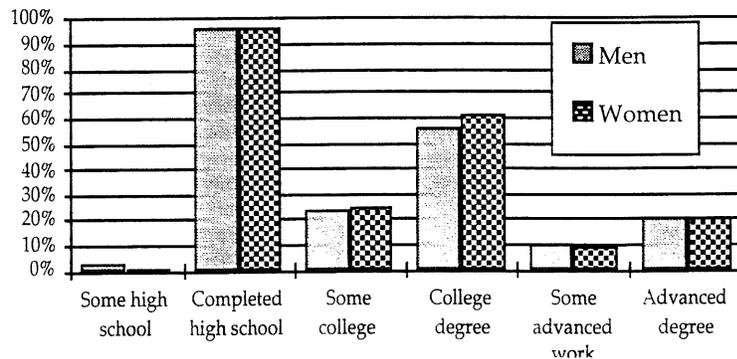


Figure 3.4 Educational Levels

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

73% of the respondents said they were employed full time and 12% were employed part time. The rest were students (6%), unemployed (4%), and retired (1%). 52% of those unemployed said they were so by choice.

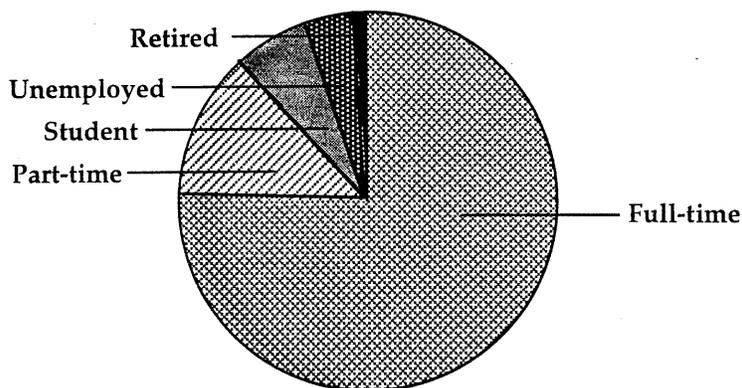


Figure 3.5a Employment Status

OCCUPATIONS

The largest means of employment was business (33%), followed by social services (11%), health care (11%), education (9%), arts or entertainment (8%), law or government (7%), and religion (1%). The remaining 14% listed their occupation as "Other."

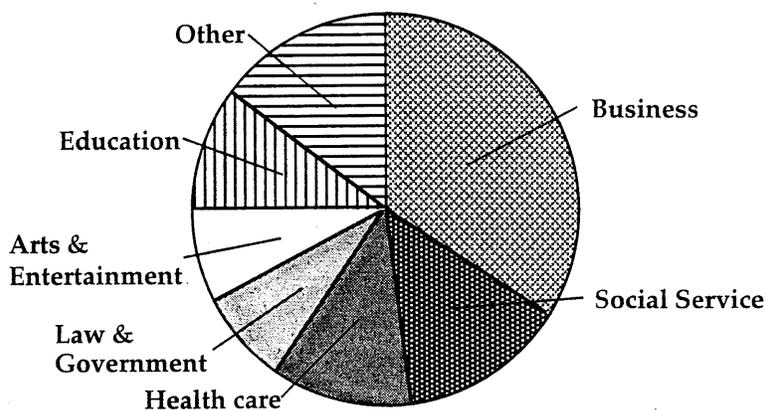


Figure 3.5b Occupations

Although not shown in this figure, 26% of the women were employed in business, compared to 40% of the men. More women than men work in health care (14% versus 7%) and in education (11% versus 8%).

INCOME

23% of the respondents reported their income as less than \$10,000 a year, 24% reported making more than \$30,000, and the remaining 53% fell somewhere in between. Less than 1% of respondents said they received some form of financial assistance.

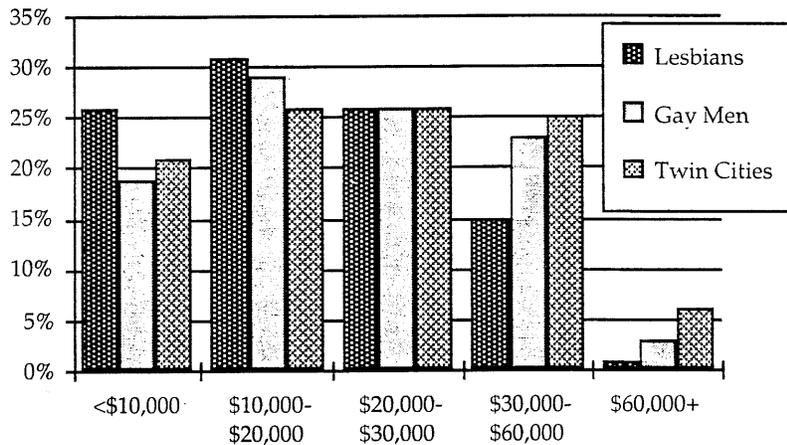


Figure 3.6 Income Distribution

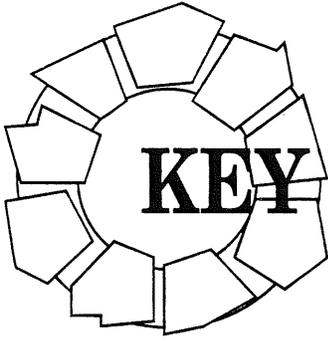
Survey results indicated a disparity between income levels for Lesbians and Gay men. More women (26%) than men (19%) earned under \$10,000 a year and more men (26%) than women (16%) earned more than \$30,000.

DISABILITY

Slightly more than 5% of the respondents reported having some form of disability. Types of disabilities included AIDS, limited mobility, heart and lung diseases, mental illness, sight, speech and hearing impairments.

MOBILITY

The average length of time respondents said they had lived at their current address was four years. 59% reported living in the same place for less than two years.



KEY FINDINGS

This section summarizes the key findings of the survey conducted by the Northstar Project. These findings pinpoint the significant experiences, concerns, and priorities of Gay men and Lesbians who responded to the questionnaire. (To see the complete statistical breakdown, refer to the Survey Data.)

SEXUAL IDENTITY

52% of the respondents said they were conscious of their sexual identity before they were 13 years old. The range of first awareness was from 3 to 51 years old with the average age being 14.

96% of the respondents said they are comfortable or very comfortable with their sexual identity. 78% said they are "out" (open about their sexual identity) to at least some of their friends or co-workers. Within their families, 49% are out to their siblings, 44% to their mothers, and 31% to their fathers.

On average, more Lesbians than Gay men were out. 57% of the women and 48% of the men had confided in co-workers. 88% of the women and 74% of the men had told friends. Family members were less likely to know. 52% of the women and 40% of the men had told their mothers. 59% of the women and 45% of the men had told brothers and/or sisters. 37% of the women and 28% of the men had told their fathers. Only 2% of the women and 4% of the men had told no one.

73% of the respondents said they had their first same-sex sexual experience before age 22. 40% had their first experience before age 18; this included 58% of the men and 25% of the women. Others reported a first experience as follows: 33% between 19-22 years of age, 18% between 23-29, 5% between 30-35, and 2% after age 36. 2% reported not having a same-sex sexual experience at all.

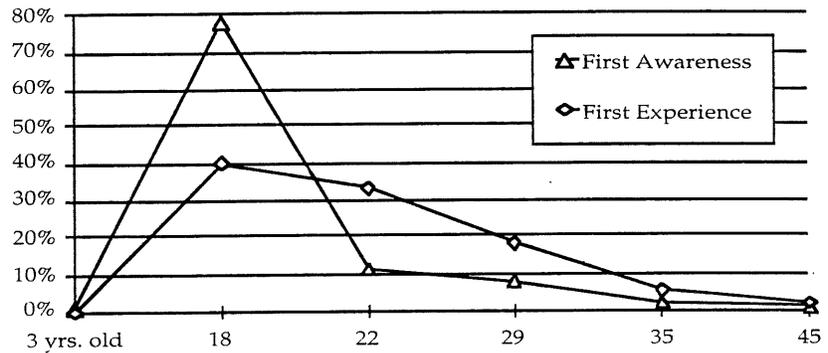


Figure 4.1 Age and Sexual Identity: Awareness/Experience

COSTS OF BEING LESBIAN OR GAY IN SOCIETY

76% of the respondents said they have experienced at least one significant social, economic, or psychological cost for being Gay or Lesbian. These costs also varied between men and women.

- **ABUSE** -- While the most commonly reported cost was emotional abuse (39%), 10% had experienced physical abuse, and 7% sexual because they were Lesbian or Gay. Twice as many Gay men (15%) as Lesbians (7%) reported being physically abused. It was unclear from the survey whether attackers were relatives, friends, or strangers. 10% of the men and 5% of the women had been sexually abused.
- **REJECTION** -- The second most commonly reported costs were rejection by friends, family, church or synagogue -- in that order. 43% of Lesbian respondents had been rejected by friends, 39% by their families, and 18% by a religious institution. Comparatively, fewer Gay men were rejected. 31% of men were rejected by friends, 27% by their families, and 24% by their church or synagogue.

- SUICIDE -- 27% of the respondents reported considering suicide, with 7% reporting actual suicide attempts. Within this group, more Gay men (35%) than Lesbians (23%) had indicated suicidal thoughts or actions.
- HARASSMENT -- 20% of Gay men and 5% of Lesbians reported being harassed by police.
- EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION -- 11% reported threats of job loss because of their sexual identity. 7% said they lost their jobs for this reason, 5% said they were denied employment, 6% denied promotion, and 1% reported being demoted. Of those denied promotions based on their sexuality, 63% were men.

NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS

64% of the women and 40% of the men said they currently have one lover or partner. (89% of these women and 80% of these men describe their relationship as being committed and monogamous.) Nearly twice as many Lesbians (55%) live with a partner than do Gay men (31%). 30% of female and 53% of male respondents do not have a lover or partner.

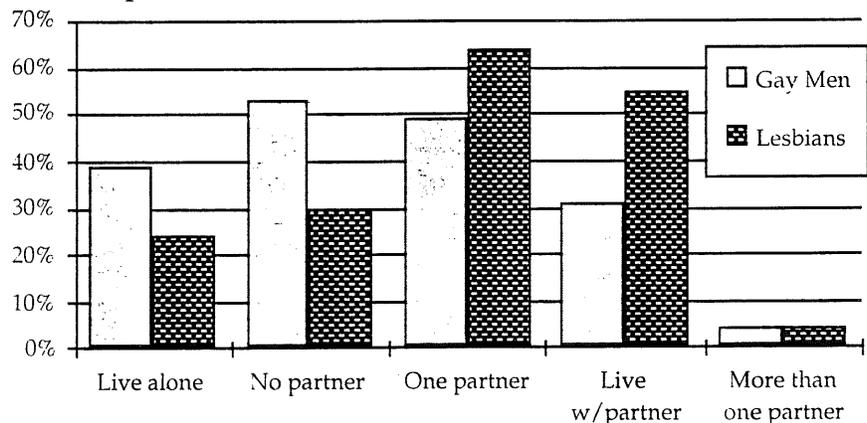


Figure 4.2 Relationships

19% of the respondents have been in heterosexual marriages and 20% have children. Of those with children, 60% of the women and 33% of the men have full or joint custody. Of the non-custodial parents, 19% of the men and 13% of the women said their sexual identity influenced the custody decision. No provision was made in this survey question for respondents to say how the decision was influenced.

AIDS

According to the Minnesota Department of Health, 87% of persons with AIDS in Minnesota have contracted the disease through male-to-male sexual activity. Survey evidence suggests that Twin Cities Gay men have acted quickly and effectively to the challenges presented by the disease. It also appears that educational efforts have had a positive impact in encouraging sexual behavior change in the following ways:

- 91% of the men believe they are receiving adequate information about AIDS. The main sources were newspapers, the Minnesota AIDS Project (MAP), and television.
- 99.6% of the men said they know what is meant by "safe sex" techniques. As for using these techniques, 55% of the men said they do all the time and 24% most of the time. 15% said it did not apply to them.
- 93% of the men said they have changed their sexual habits, behavior, and/or attitudes because of AIDS.
- 57% of the men have tested for the presence of the AIDS virus (HIV). Of that group, 12% have tested positive.

98% of the women stated they knew what was meant by the term safe sex. 59% of the respondents said such practices do not apply to their sexual activity. 39% of Lesbians have changed their sexual habits, behaviors, and/or attitudes because of AIDS. At the time of the survey, public health information did not indicate that Lesbians were at risk of HIV infection during woman-to-woman sexual contact. 18% have been tested for the HIV virus; fewer than 1% tested positive.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

The survey results showed a high level of political awareness and involvement through the following:

- 83% of the respondents said they voted in the 1984 presidential election.
- 40% of the respondents said they contribute time or money to political campaigns or candidates.
- 26% respondents attend precinct caucuses; 9% regularly, and 17% occasionally.
- 57% of the respondents consider themselves Democrats (DFL), 28% Independents, 8% Other, and 7% Republicans (IR).
- 91% of the respondents said that a candidate's support of Lesbian/Gay issues was important. 93% of Lesbians and 88% of Gay men consider a candidate's understanding of and/or cooperation with the Gay and Lesbian community important in their voting decisions. 54% of female and 45% of male respondents consider a candidate's support of the community "extremely important" in their voting decisions.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

When asked to rank which issues were personally important to them, respondents identified the legal, community, and economic concerns first, followed by personal issues.

1. Legal issues included passage of human rights legislation, anti-violence, divorce and custody, and repeal of sodomy laws.
2. Economic issues included support of Gay/Lesbian-owned businesses and finding employment where it is safe to be openly Lesbian/Gay.
3. Personal issues included coming out to friends, families, and co-workers.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

The following pertains to physical health care:

- 9% of the respondents had been treated inappropriately by a physician or other health care professional.
- 17% of the respondents said they avoided seeking any physical health care at all because they feared or mistrusted providers. An additional 8% said they did not seek this care because they were afraid of being "found out."
- 66% of the respondents prefer a Gay- or Lesbian-identified health-care provider. 31% said it does not matter.
- 31% of the respondents have not informed their health care provider about their sexual orientation. 35% have not provided accurate information regarding their sexual activities.

- 53% of the respondents reported having a private physician, while 24% belong to an HMO. Between 4%-7% use other forms of health care, such as community health clinics, student health services, chiropractic care, or the emergency room.

The following pertains to mental health care:

- 8% of the respondents had been treated inappropriately by a chemical dependency counselor or other mental health professional.
- 16% of the respondents said they avoided seeking any mental health care at all because they feared or mistrusted providers. An additional 5% said they did not seek this care because they were afraid of being "found out."
- 67% of the respondents prefer a Gay- or Lesbian-identified provider. 31% said it does not matter.
- 70% of the respondents reported seeing a therapist or counselor at some time in their lives. 12% said they were hospitalized for mental-health treatment.
- 59% of the respondents said they explored issues relating to their sexual identity while they were in therapy. 14% of the respondents had the same orientation as their counselor. 11% did not.
- 21% of the women and 15% of the men said they have received treatment for chemical dependency or substance abuse. 28%

belong to self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Al Anon, and Overeaters Anonymous.

- 75% of Lesbians and 62% of Gay men reported they had experienced some form of violence, the causes of which were not stated. 27% had been physically abused, 24% sexually, and 11% had been abused by a spouse. 7% had been raped by a stranger, and 12% by someone they knew. 15% reported incest. 22% of the women and 17% of the men indicated they had been in a physically violent Lesbian or Gay relationship.

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

More Gay men and Lesbians consider themselves "spiritual" rather than identifying with a particular religious tradition.

- 83% of the respondents said they consider themselves spiritual beings; more women than men fall into this category (85% versus 81%).
- 48% of the respondents identify with a specific religious tradition; more men than women fall into this category (53% versus 44%).

CORRELATION OF INCOME, AGE AND GENDER

The relationship between income, age of first sexual experience, gender, and previous marriage suggest that Lesbians and Gay men who lived as heterosexuals long enough to become established in society may have received some benefits from their perceived heterosexual status in terms of income, employment, and education.

The respondents who reported higher annual incomes (over \$30,000) tended to be older, White, and male. This sub-group of respondents was well-educated (undergraduate or graduate degrees) and employed full time, usually in business. They were more likely to have been married previously, and if they had children, they shared custody. These individuals were also more politically involved. They were registered voters who attended precinct caucuses, voted regularly, and supported political candidates with time and money. They were less likely to report any costs for being Gay or Lesbian, and if they did, emotional abuse was the most problematic, with suicide issues, rejection by family and friends, and job loss being the least problematic.

The respondents who reported lower incomes (less than \$7,000 a year) were far more likely to be young, female, and people of color. They had less education (high school or some college) and were more often students, unemployed or employed part-time, disabled, and recipients of public assistance. They usually had their first same-sex sexual experience before age 18, and did not practice safe sex. Fewer were tested for AIDS, but if they were, they were more likely to test positive. Fewer saw a Gay or Lesbian therapist and were less open about their sexual identity. More had been hospitalized for mental health treatment or chemical dependency.

PEOPLE OF COLOR

While this group of respondents (8% of the total) are included in the overall data analysis, the following information was compiled to more accurately portray their experiences and concerns. Respondents included: 39 African-Americans, 30 Hispanics, 24 Native Americans, 16 Asian-Americans, and 18 identified as Other. The following results are descriptive of their differences and similarities to Whites and other people of color.

- EDUCATION -- More Asian Americans (29%) and Hispanics (14%) reported being

students. Native Americans and African-Americans had the highest level (10%) of technical education completion. Of the total respondents, 12% of Asian-Americans had completed an advanced degree and 47% had completed their undergraduate coursework. 33% of African Americans had completed some undergraduate work, an additional 39% held undergraduate degrees, and another 8% had finished advanced degrees. 97% of Hispanics had finished high school, 25% had completed some college training, another 25% had completed their undergraduate studies, and 9% had graduate degrees. 89% of Native Americans had completed their general education requirements, 21% had gone on to college, 26% more had finished an undergraduate degree, and another 4% had advanced degrees.

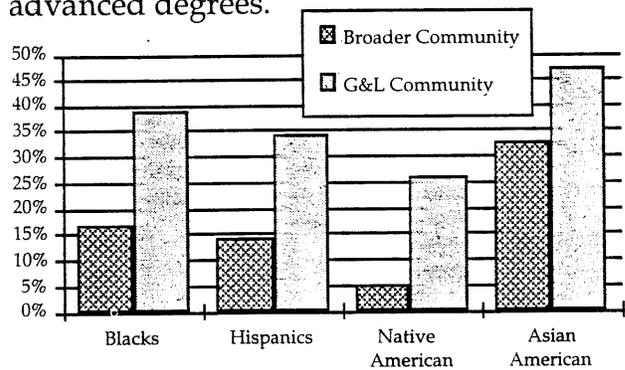


Figure 4.3 Hold 4-Year College Degrees

- **INCOME LEVEL** -- Asian-Americans reported the highest percentage (31%) of income over \$30,000. 20% of Hispanics, 24% of Asian-Americans, 28% of Native Americans, and 44% of African Americans in the Gay and Lesbian community rely on some form of public assistance. 31% of

African Americans, 35% of Hispanics, 25% of Asian Americans, and 55% of Native Americans have incomes under \$10,000. Those who reported incomes between \$10,000 and \$20,000 included: 35% of African Americans, 25% of Hispanics, 31% of Asian Americans, and 30% of Native Americans.

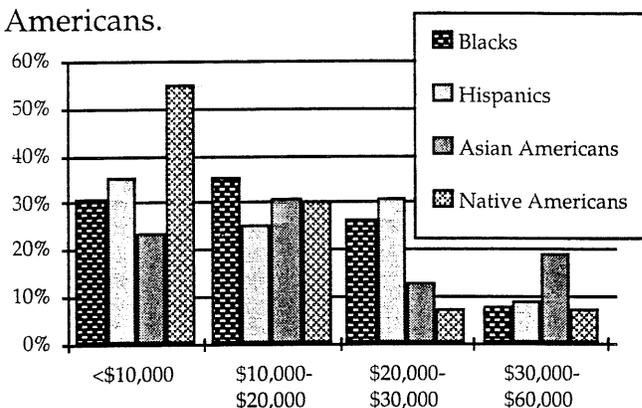


Figure 4.4 Income Levels

- **EMPLOYMENT STATUS** -- Only 3% of respondents reported being unemployed. Of those, 66% were Native Americans and 33% were Hispanics. 72% of African Americans and Hispanics had full-time jobs, compared to 65% of Asian Americans and 63% of Native Americans.
- **SEXUAL IDENTITY** -- For people of color, initial awareness of their sexual identity occurred between the ages of 5 and 51. The average age was 13. 10% of African Americans and Asian Americans, 13% of Hispanics, and 15% of Native Americans were conscious of their sexual identity by the time they were 5-6 years of age.

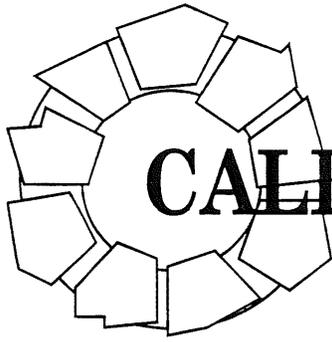
47% of the respondents reported having a same-sex sexual experience before the age of 18 and 35% between the ages of 18-22. 89% said they were either comfortable or very comfortable with their sexual identity.

4% of respondents were out to no one, and 23% were out to everyone they knew. More people of color had told their mothers (38%) and siblings (34%), than had told their fathers (20%). 63% were out to friends and 30% to co-workers.

- NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS -- 43% of respondents had one lover or partner. 28% lived with that person. 46% describe themselves as not having a lover. 3% have more than one sexual partner.
- AIDS -- None of the respondents cited any of the survey's listed sources (such as newspapers and TV, friends and physicians, MAP or state agencies) as their primary channel for accurate AIDS information. 58% of respondents said they have changed their sexual habits as a result of AIDS. African Americans showed the highest degree of change (66%). 13% of people of color said personal behavior changes weren't necessary since they weren't at risk of HIV infection.

Of those who felt safe-sex techniques were applicable to their relationships, 58% of Asian Americans, 54% of African Americans, 40% of Native Americans and 35% of Hispanics always used such practices. 19% of the respondents said they used safe-sex techniques most of the time.

- ABUSE -- 27% of people of color reported sexual abuse and 20% reported physical abuse.
 - POLITICAL ACTIVITY -- 68% of people of color within the Gay and Lesbian community reported being registered, and that they voted in the 1984 presidential election. These individuals, however, do not indicate being actively involved in precinct caucuses. 19% support political candidates with money, and 12% with time.
 - HEALTH ISSUES 55% of people of color reported seeing a psychological counselor or therapist. 17% had been in a treatment program for chemical dependency and/or abuse problems. Native Americans were more likely to have been in treatment (40%) and hospitalized (30%) for mental health reasons than other persons of color. Almost no African-Americans (2%) said they attended self-help programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Al Anon. Native Americans and Asian Americans reported a higher use (18%) of such programs, with the highest being among Hispanics (22%).
 - RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY 72% of these respondents consider themselves "spiritual," but only 39% are affiliated with a particular religious tradition.
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CALL TO ACTION

Gay men and Lesbians form a minority community with distinct cultural traditions, capabilities, and concerns. Individually and collectively, however, these men and women have not received the same liberties, rights and benefits granted to other persons in our society. Their experiences and needs must be recognized, respected, understood, and addressed by the broader community. As with all minorities, they have needs which can and should be addressed within their own community. At the same time, they have need for affirmation and assistance from society as a whole.

Addressing these personal and societal issues is a both an individual and a joint responsibility for the Lesbian and Gay community and the broader community. All need to work together to establish visibility, heighten awareness, increase understanding, achieve acceptance, and attain realistic goals. The following recommendations are offered with suggested tasks for each community whenever possible and appropriate.

GAY & LESBIAN IDENTIFIED SERVICES

More than 50% of survey participants indicated a need or preference for health and social services that are specifically Gay or Lesbian identified. Approximately 40% of respondents said business and community centers that were supportive of Lesbians and Gay men were extremely important. Listings and descriptions of these services need to be expanded so that more individuals can use them, and also so service providers and business owners can create their own networks to support each other better.

LESBIAN & GAY YOUTH

50% of Gay men and Lesbians said they were aware of their sexual identity before the age of 13. 58% of the men and 25% of the women had their first same-sex

sexual experience before the age of 18. Given these statistics, it is clear that the majority of Lesbians and Gay youth are dealing with issues of sexual identity during adolescence, just as heterosexual youth do. If not adequately dealt with, these issues may lead to self-damaging behaviors, such as suicide, eating disorders, and chemical dependency.

Institutions, organizations, and individuals who deal with youth -- schools, churches, youth groups, counseling services, etc. -- need to be aware of this situation and develop the understanding and skills to work appropriately and sensitively with the gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth they may be serving. Moreover, young people themselves can play a particularly important role in reducing isolation by forming social, support, or advocacy groups with their peers. Gay and Lesbian-oriented agencies can assist by providing information, telephone help-lines, drop-in counseling services, and mentorship programs.

GAY & LESBIAN FAMILIES

Given that 65% of women and 40% of men are in a same-sex primary relationship and that 20% of Gays and Lesbians have children, it is clear that the social definition of "family" needs to be broadened. All community organizations -- including employers, service providers, schools, churches, foundations, and government agencies -- must find ways to accommodate this expanding definition. These groups should seek training and consult with Lesbian and Gay agencies so they can expand traditional definitions of family to include same-sex couples, with or without children. These organizations should then extend their services to these family units, making adjustments as necessary to fit the needs that may be unique to these families.

DIVORCE & CHILD CUSTODY

The traditional approach to child custody cases is to "act in the best interests of the child." Sexual identity should not, by itself, be a consideration in custody decisions. It must be assumed that Gay men and Lesbians can be good

parents. Programs need to be developed to educate the legal community and legislative representatives about the integral role Lesbian and Gay parents can and do play in their children's lives.

RESPONSE TO AIDS

88% of Gay male respondents indicated they have altered their sexual behavior dramatically in response to the AIDS crisis. This fact should be widely acknowledged. Since Gay men remain at greatest risk for HIV infection, individual and group efforts are still needed to maintain, establish, and expand education programs and support services to persons with AIDS.

Also, since 61% of Lesbians did not think safe-sex practices were applicable to their lifestyles, more research needs to be undertaken which documents the nature and probability of HIV virus transfer during woman-to-woman sexual contact. Once those findings are complete, outreach education programs need to be initiated.

OPENESS ABOUT SEXUAL IDENTITY

Even though 96% of respondents are comfortable with their sexuality most or all of the time, on the average, only half are out to co-workers and family members. Despite the very real discrimination and rejection felt by Lesbian and Gay men -- which does vary from person to person -- the perceived risk associated with coming out can be greater than the actual repercussions.

There need to be accessible mechanisms in place to help Gay men and Lesbians deal with possible negative results that stem from the coming out process, such as stress, job loss, personal injury, and rejection. Support groups, social events, counselors, and other measures are needed to encourage and facilitate the coming out process so it is self-affirming instead of self-damaging.

DEALING WITH DISCRIMINATION

Because 76% of Lesbians and Gay men have experienced some form of discrimination, they need to be familiar with existing legal and administrative remedies that address these grievances, and then be ready to challenge any processes that are not open to them. It is crucial for both the Gay and Lesbian communities and the broader community to cooperate on reducing homophobia and heterosexism, as well as creating substantive avenues for handling claims of discrimination. This includes establishing or improving grievance procedures; working to repeal legislation that is enforced selectively, such as sodomy laws; and passing legislation that guarantees Lesbians and Gay men the same protection afforded to heterosexuals in the areas of human and civil rights, domestic partnership, child custody, protection from domestic abuse and hate crimes, and equitable treatment by police.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

11% of Gay men and Lesbians have experienced harassment and other mistreatment by some police officers. More visible channels to report harassment are needed within the broader community. Mechanisms, such as police review boards, need to be put in place to increase police accountability. Membership on these boards should include Lesbians and Gay men. Law enforcement agencies should participate in awareness training to be more sensitive to Gay and Lesbian issues. Efforts should be made to recruit Lesbians and Gay men into the field of law enforcement and to support those currently employed.

VIOLENCE

69% of Gay men and Lesbians have experienced some form of physical violence. On average, 36% felt the violence related to their sexual identity. These individuals need to be able to report these crimes without fear of being ignored, ridiculed, or subjected to further injury. The Lesbian and Gay community and social service agencies need to work together to eliminate such violence. Law enforcement officials should intervene promptly and

use all legal means to ensure prosecution for offenders and appropriate punishment of those who are convicted.

CIVIL RIGHTS

Gay men and Lesbians are the only minority group whose legal rights are not protected in Minnesota. The Governor's Executive Order for state employees and the Minneapolis and St. Paul civil rights ordinance are positive steps. A statewide human rights statute should be passed that includes Lesbians and Gay men and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual identity/orientation.

EMPLOYMENT

18% of Gay men and Lesbians have experienced either subtle or overt job-related discrimination. Employers should add sexual orientation to their non-discrimination policies and then enforce these measures.

EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Unlike legally married heterosexual couples, same-sex couples do not have the same access to health, pension, and other employment benefits. Such benefits should be made available to Gay and Lesbian couples on the same basis as heterosexual couples and family units.

FUNDING

A range of strategies are necessary to effectively address the social costs experienced by the majority of Lesbian and Gay men who responded to the survey. Such strategies include training, direct services, individual advocacy, systems change, and community organizing. Private and public funders who seek to serve the needs of the community as a whole -- and particularly those of disenfranchised groups -- should include the needs of Gay men and Lesbians in their funding priorities and decision-making practices.

POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

Elected officials, policy makers and the broader community need to recognize and understand the issues and concerns of Lesbian and Gay citizens. Public officials must also be aware that their positions on these political issues are key to Gay and Lesbian voting decisions.

83% of Lesbians and Gay men are currently involved in the political process. They need to stay active in partisan, bi-partisan, and non-partisan activities. In order for their unique issues to not be overlooked or underplayed, they should continue to form coalitions with like-minded individuals and groups to achieve common goals. More training should be offered on how the political process works, including the art of campaigning, fund-raising, and strategizing.

LESBIAN & GAY INPUT

Gay men and Lesbians should be actively recruited and should volunteer to serve in staff positions and on task forces, review boards, advisory committees, governing bodies, and focus groups. Like every other minority group, members of this community have valuable experiences and unique perspectives to share. This input may be especially helpful to law enforcement agencies, health care providers, social services organizations, businesses, and recreational programs that may need to sensitize their personnel about Lesbian and Gay issues.

AWARENESS TRAINING

Mainstream agencies and organizations should provide training for their staff, boards, and volunteers that will help them become aware of -- and sensitive to -- the needs and issues of Gay men and Lesbians. Because of the high incidence of violence and risk of suicide (26% had such thoughts), special attention should be given to prepare the staffs of advocacy services, telephone help-lines, crisis intervention centers and those working in mental health units, safe houses, or shelters.

ROLE OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

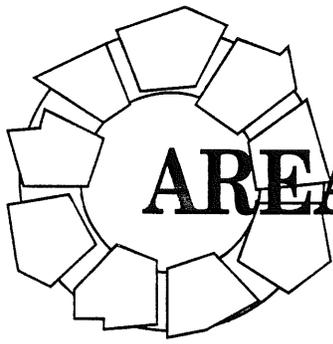
While 83% of Lesbians and Gay men consider themselves spiritual, only 48% are affiliated with a particular religious tradition. Some mainstream churches have begun to re-examine their positions on homosexuality and have made significant changes, yet many have not accepted members of this community. Progressive religious institutions have made positive changes, such as welcoming Gay men and Lesbians into their congregations; ordaining Lesbian and Gay clergy; recognizing and counseling same-sex couples in a positive and caring manner; establishing or sponsoring special interest and/or support groups for Gay men, Lesbians, their families and friends; and running hospices for AIDS patients. These changes should be adopted by all religious institutions with additional remedies being explored.

CONTINUING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

As with any other group, the demographic profile and needs of the Gay and Lesbian community continually change. It is therefore recommended that a needs assessment be conducted at least every five years.

OTHER RESEARCH METHODS

Data collection should not be limited to surveys and questionnaires. Other valuable sources of information should be explored, such as focus groups, community roundtables, open forums, panels, question and answer sessions, and other cooperative efforts within and outside the Lesbian and Gay community.



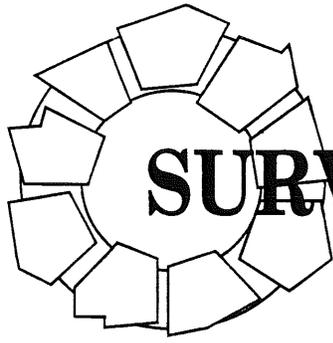
AREAS TO STUDY FURTHER

The Northstar Project is the first attempt to analyze the needs of Lesbians and Gay men in Minnesota. It provides a starting point and should not be considered a comprehensive study.

Survey results revealed that in order to understand the particular concerns and characteristics of the Gay and Lesbian community and its members, further outreach and assessment programs need to be instituted. Key areas requiring further investigation include:

- Experiences of groups within or related to the Gay and Lesbian community:
 - bisexuals
 - transgender individuals
 - people of color
 - individuals with disabilities
 - parents
 - families
 - seniors
 - youth
- Influence of sexual identity/orientation on child custody cases.
- Impact of openness about sexual orientation on employment and income.
- Scope and degree of discrimination, and outlets to mediate such charges.

- The extent and types of violence experienced by Lesbians and Gay men.
 - Tracking HIV infection among Lesbians, as well as assessment of risks and modes of virus transmission during female-to-female sexual contact.
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SURVEY DATA

This section contains a portion of the data used to generate this report. The complete statistics are available from the Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1 lists the percentage of total respondents (1864) who described themselves as having the following characteristics.

AGE

Under 18	1.2%
18-22	6.4%
23-29	30.9%
30-35	26.5%
36-45	28.4%
46-55	5.5%
56-65	0.9%
Over 65	0.2%

EDUCATION

Some High School	1.7%
High School Diploma	7.0%
Some College/University	23.5%
Undergraduate Degree	28.1%
Some Technical Training	3.0%
Technical Training Degree	6.1%
Some Graduate School	9.5%
Advanced Degree	20.7

EMPLOYMENT

Full time	73%
Part time	12.3%
Unemployed	4.3%
Student	5.6%
Retired	0.8%
Other	4.1%

RACE

African American	2.1%
Hispanic	1.9%
Asian American	0.9%
Native American	1.6%
White	92.3%
Other	1.2%

INCOME

Under \$7,000	12.4%
\$7,000-\$10,000	10.8%
\$10,000-\$15,000	14.5%
\$15,000-\$20,000	15.6%
\$20,000-\$30,000	25.6%
\$30,000-\$60,000	18.8%
\$60,000-\$100,000	1.6%
Over \$100,000	0.4%

COSTS

Table 3 lists the percentage of respondents who had experienced various types of discrimination as a result of their sexual identity/orientation.

TYPE OF DISCRIMINATION

Emotional abuse	39%
Rejection by friends	34%
Rejection by family	31%
Suicidal thoughts	27%
Rejection by church/synagogue	20%
Threat of job loss	12%
Mistreatment by police	12%
Physical abuse	11%
Inappropriate health care	10%
Inappropriate mental health care	9%
Actual job loss	8%
Sexual abuse	7%
Other	7%
Suicide attempt	7%
Denied promotion	6%
Forced to move	5%

Denied employment	5%
Denied religious vocation	4%
Blackmail	3%

ABUSE

Table 3 lists the types of abusive experiences reported and how these figures differ between Lesbians and Gay men.

<u>TYPE/TOTAL/LESBIANS/GAY MEN</u>			
Emotional abuse	54%	61%	45%
Physical abuse	27%	33%	21%
Sexual abuse	24%	31%	17%
Incest	15%	22%	8%
Acquaintance rape	12%	16%	8%
Stranger rape	7%	7%	6%
Not applicable	31%	25%	38%

RESOURCES

Table 4 shows how available resources were ranked in order of importance. This ranking was created by the mean response rating (1=extremely important; 2=somewhat important; 3=marginally important; 4=not important).

<u>RANK/ITEM/MEAN SCORE</u>		
1	Newspapers and Magazines	1.35
2	Bookstores	1.57
3	Lesbians and Gay men working together for social and political changes	1.60
4	Films	1.63
5	Counseling Programs	1.69
6	Gay/Lesbian Pride Week	1.76
7	Music	1.81
8	Helpline/Hotline	1.84
9/10	Library/Theater	1.85
11	Restaurants	1.88
12/13	AIDS Vigils/Take Back The Night	1.89
14	Community Center	1.93

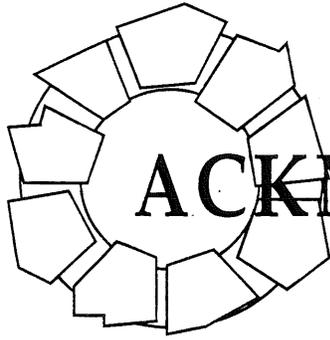
15	Lesbians/Gay United Way Programs	1.95
16	Visual Arts	1.96
17	Bars	1.99
18	Social and Athletic Clubs	2.01
19	Television Shows	2.05
20/21	Chemically Free Social Center/Business District	2.12
22	Dance	2.13
23	Radio	2.13
24	Religious Groups	2.23
25	Bathhouses	3.43

KEY ISSUES

Table 4 shows the issues reported as personally important. This ranking was created by the mean response rating (1=extremely important; 2=somewhat important; 3=marginally important; 4=not important).

RANK/ITEM/MEAN SCORE

1	Passage of statewide human rights bill	1.30
2	Passage of city /county human rights ordinance	1.37
3/4	Passage of anti-violence legislation; protection of lesbian/gay parents in custody and divorce settlements	1.41
5	Support of lesbian/gay-owned businesses	1.42
6	Repeal of state sodomy statute	1.42
7	Passage of domestic partnership law/ordinance	1.44
8	Coming out to friends	1.59
9	Coming out to family	1.74
10	Coming out to significant persons at school/work	1.91
11	Finding a job where it is safe to be out	2.02



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Northstar Project represents a unique partnership among Lesbians, Gay men, bisexuals, transgender individuals, and members of the heterosexual community. It is a testimony to their vision, their time and effort, and -- perhaps most importantly -- their ability to work together.

The Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council would like to express their warmest appreciation to the participants who responded to the survey, and to those individuals who helped in many and varied ways to develop the document you are now holding.

This project extended over a five-year period and involved hundreds of people. Our thanks to all of you!

In addition, the GLCAC would like to thank the following organizations for their support, without which this project would not have been possible.

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