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April 19 Letters to the Editor

By
Saturday, April 19, 2008 - Bangor Daily News

Drop gay focus

Doesn't the Christian Civil League of Maine have anything better to do with its time? The majority of Maine citizens have made it clear they won't discriminate. Now it appears that the league wants to ban adoptions by gay couples.

There are lonely and hurt children out there who need the love and protection of caring adults whether they are gay or straight. That so-called Christian organization must have resources that could be better used to help fight child abuse and neglect instead of working to prevent loving people from caring for children who need permanency.

The church I attend recently donated to help new immigrants as they settle into this country and sent funding to fight world hunger. There are many ways religious organizations can help people here in Maine. The state is lacking the funds to repair our roads. There is no need to divert any of our tax dollars to work on a referendum to discriminate against people. Maine won't discriminate.

Perhaps the league should rethink its goals and priorities.

Al Larson
Orono

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Rise to fight referendum

Maine citizens must gear up yet again to fight and defeat the latest referendum from Michael Heath and the Christian Civic League of Maine. If passed, it would not only ban same-sex marriages and civil unions and prohibit adoption of children by same-sex couples, it would again make vulnerable homosexual or perceived homosexual men and women to eviction, firing from jobs, attack, beatings and death.

Presumably, Heath would defend this referendum by stating homosexual behavior is a sin, which he would define, I believe, as repellent to or forbidden by God. That definition suggests homosexuality is a choice. The scientific evidence is well established, however, that homosexuality is not a choice but is inherent in the individual.

Many people define sin quite differently as any act which causes harm to other people, animals, plants or the planet. By this definition, Michael Heath and the Christian Civic League of Maine are guilty of sin. They would cause harm to roughly 10 percent of the population.

How can anyone do that? How can anyone choose to harm people who cause no harm to him? We live in a country in which the Constitution vows to "secure the blessings of liberty" to all citizens. In the Old Testament, the basic rule is "Do unto others as you would that they do unto you."

This referendum will harm all Mainers, who must again add this struggle to those already imposed on us. Yet we cannot live with ourselves unless we safeguard laws that ensure safety and freedom to all.

Ann Fogg
Monroe

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No more discrimination

I'm 21 years old and have identified myself as gay since I was 14 and in eighth grade. In 2005, I spoke before the Legislature's Judiciary Committee in order to help pass LD 1196, the anti-discrimination bill.

We succeeded and it meant a great deal to someone like me, who was harassed and threatened every day in high school,

by students as well as some teachers just because of who I am, how God made me. Laws protecting us are not "special" — they are necessary in a world still filled with prejudice.

Only a few years ago my principal at Belfast Area High School threatened to "evacuate the classroom and have [me] arrested" simply because I wore a T-shirt that said, "It's OK to Be Gay." I was suspended for a week. I nearly committed suicide and the experience left me with severe depression and anxiety disorders, among other trauma.

I don't want to see that happen to another gay or lesbian youth. LD 1196 protects all Mainers and makes our state a more welcoming, friendly place to live, where everyone is respected for who they are. That's the way life should be. Michael Heath's referendum is pure bigotry, part of a small-minded agenda that would have gay youth such as myself strung up in the public square.

Adam Flanders

Belfast

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Expand sportsmen's fees

I think it is a great idea for backcountry recreationists to help pay for the same game warden services as sportsmen. The increasing license fees always fall on the sportsmen. And, at the same time there are more and more regulations and restrictions, not to mention the chance of no doe permits, because of this year's hard winter.

Even a small motor boat requires one fee and an additional fee for the motor. It is getting to the point where I am losing interest as a Maine sportsman. I own a canoe and kayak and would not have a problem paying a reasonable, yearly fee for licensure. Maybe this revenue would prevent the fee for sportsmen going up every year, plus pay for wardens services and fuel.

I am glad that I purchased a lifetime hunting and fishing license for my son when I did. Hopefully he will not be burdened with increasing boating fees every year. Isn't it about time that the sportsmen get treated fairly?

Essek Smith

Bangor

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No sick day bill

On April 7, the Maine House of Representatives voted to refuse to adopt the Labor Committee's recommendation to enact the paid sick days bill, LD 1454, "An Act to Care for Working Families." If you support the idea of a guaranteed minimal number of paid sick days for employees, I urge you to ask your House representative how he or she voted on this issue. A roll call is listed on the Legislature's Web site. If your representative does not support paid sick days, and you do, remember this vote when he or she asks for your vote this summer.

Although some of us are not directly affected by this legislation, we all have families, friends and neighbors who are. Currently nearly half of all full-time private sector workers lack paid sick days, and 86 percent of employees in some of Maine's most important industries — food and public accommodation — are not entitled to a single paid sick day. Because no paid sick leave is guaranteed in Maine, workers will continue to go to work when they are sick, rather than risk their job. Consequently they risk harming the health of others as well as their own.

While LD 1454 has been defeated this time, let's continue to press our legislators on this issue.

Bethany Brophy

Orono

Bonnie Laughlin

Bradley

Abigail Hamel

Bangor

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Family's privacy violated

It is abhorrent and unconscionable for the BDN to print a photo of a family grieving and obviously in pain (the photo of the Robertson family appeared on the front page of the April 12-13 edition).

This type of photo often appears on the front page. Wouldn't it be kinder to allow these families their dignity and their right to grieve in private? Are there no professional ethics in journalism?

L. Jessica Brooks

Thomaston

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