

One Nation Indivisible Initiates Nation-Wide Boycott Of Delta

"Boycott Delta."

That's the message One Nation Indivisible hopes to send to an entire nation.

The Charlotte activist organization, according to clerk Nancy Campbell, voted at its Nov. 10 meeting to pursue a boycott of the airline as its major project during the next few months.

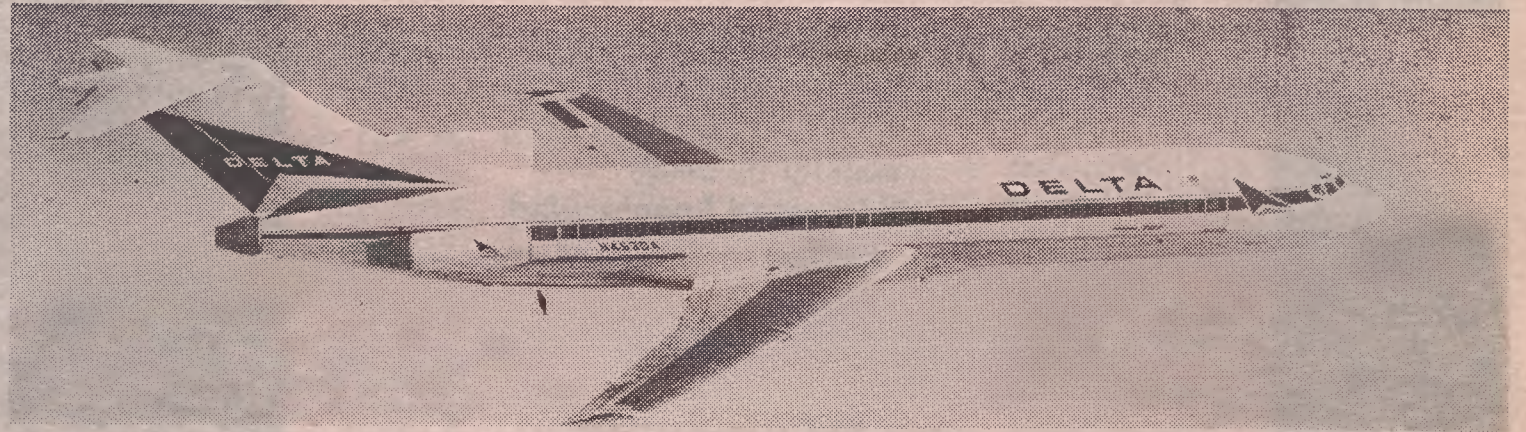
The "Delta plan" and the airline's refusal to transport persons with AIDS are the major reasons, according to Campbell.

In a letter dated Nov. 15 signed by Campbell, the Rev. Art Fleschner and others, ONI said:

"On Nov. 8 the (Charlotte) Observer featured a story reprinted from the Wall Street Journal (that) detailed how Delta Airlines and its insurance underwriters, United States Aviation Underwriters Inc., handled families of persons injured or killed in the Delta Airlines disaster on Aug. 2, 1985. In the article it was called the 'Delta plan, a state-of-the-art blueprint for insurance companies to follow in the aftermath of a disaster.' Families that chose to file suit against Delta were dealt with in a very harsh manner including character assassination, harassment, intimidation and humiliation.

"While the aversion to lawsuits and the need to protect itself on Delta's part is understandable, the tactics used on the bereaved families in the wake of the loss of a husband, wife, child, or other family member is unforgivable. It is very disturbing to see the record of such a fine company as Delta's be tarnished so badly by such gutter tactics. It is equally disconcerting to patrons to realize that in case of disaster we and our families all face the same prospects as did the family of Scott Ageloff, or as did Kathy Ann Reynolds.

"Scott Ageloff's homosexuality made his airfare no less valuable to Delta nor did Kathy Reynolds' controversial behavior lessen the value of her husband's



The Unfriendly Skies?

patronage. In addition, these facts are immaterial to what happened: two people died in a plane crash.

"Scott Ageloff's homosexuality does not change the fact that a son died; Kathy Reynolds' past lifestyle does not change the fact that her husband is dead. Maybe this kind of scrutiny concerning personal lives should be done prior to each person taking a flight on Delta!

"Monetary considerations aside, Delta's and its underwriters' behavior and 'plan' is an atrocity. It goes far beyond the limits of human decency. If human decency and consideration for the loss of a loved one are not to be valued by Delta, it would better benefit patrons to consider flying other airlines."

Campbell said that in the case of Kathy Reynolds, Delta threatened to expose publicly that she had had an abortion before she met and married the husband killed in the crash; and that the parents of Scott Ageloff were threatened with the public exposure of his gayness if they brought suit.

"Their plan is to smother everybody with support and flowers to reduce

claims," Campbell said, "but to start twisting arms if the people decide to file suit. It looks like blackmail to us."

She said ONI will send a press release throughout the country to gay media to invite others to join the boycott.

NGRA Fighting For Insurance Equality

415/863-3624

Call NGRA in San Francisco to report AIDS insurance discrimination or to get helpful information for fighting court cases involving violations of gay person's civil rights.

National Gay Rights Advocates, headquartered in San Francisco, is furiously fighting efforts by the insurance industry to avoid insuring gay men.

According to the NGRA, some insurers have taken these steps:

- Denying coverage to single men in certain cities.
- Denying coverage to men who have had a sexually transmitted disease.
- Denying coverage to men who name a friend or charity as beneficiary.
- Telling employers that if one more employee develops AIDS, the employer will lose group health and life coverage. That's a strong incentive for employers to hire no one they think is gay.
- Refusing to pay AIDS patients' bills under the excuse that AIDS was a

"pre-existing condition" or that needed treatments are "experimental."

■ Writing policies that exclude coverage for AIDS.

■ Requiring single male applicants to take the HTLV-III antibody test even though the test doesn't predict who will get AIDS.

NGRA is a years-old organization formed specifically to carry to court cases that could affect gay men and lesbians. A primary battle now is to fight efforts to exclude gay men from life and health coverage.

Ben Schatz, an attorney, is director of NGRA's AIDS Civil Rights Project and one of the nation's leading gay rights insurance authorities. He is hoping to funnel information to insurance commissioners in all states to prevent excluding gay men from insurance coverage and assure that policies remain fair.

NGRA invites attorneys taking on an AIDS insurance discrimination case to use the organization's law library and computerized information — free of charge. NGRA also requests information about insurance discrimination in order to evaluate it.

NGRA also has opened a second front in the battle with two cases filed with the California Department of Insurance:

■ One case charges a company with issuing discriminatory underwriting guidelines.

■ The other is a complaint against a company that cancelled the health policy of a healthy, single, 39-year-old man who happens to be a hairstylist. "Hairstylist" is on a hit list of professions that some insurance companies are starting to exclude in a shotgun move to eliminate gay people.

NGRA fights cases with a roster of cooperating attorneys across the country who take on cases at no charge. One of NGRA's victories was in 1985 when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned an Oklahoma state law that prohibited teachers from speaking freely on the subject of gayness.

■■■
NGRA's lawyers work for free. But the organization needs funds to pay for court fees, transcripts, briefs, communication, and office administration (which includes maintaining an updated gay rights law library and evaluating AIDS insurance discrimination cases). To help, send checks to National Gay Rights Advocates, 540 Castro St., San Francisco, CA 94114.

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