

Q Notes

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Hundreds gather for statewide conference

N.C. House member honored for his work on bullying bill

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

DURHAM — Over 200 LGBT and straight ally North Carolinians gathered Nov. 3 for a day of networking and education on the campus of Duke University, followed by an evening gala where State Rep. Rick Glazier was honored.

At the first-ever statewide conference and gala hosted by Equality North Carolina (ENC),

participants heard addresses from LGBT leaders and elected officials and attended breakout sessions focused on various aspects of activism and advocacy.

Visiting Alabama Rep. Patricia Todd, the first openly gay person to sit in that state's legislature, gave the opening keynote address and spoke of her experience on the campaign trail, the ups-and-downs, joys and rewards.

"I had spent a long time sitting outside in the audience," she said of the time before her official service to Alabama. "I've spent a lot of hours on a bus and marched in Washington for many, many issues."

Todd said she ran for office because the LGBT community "needed a seat at the table" if change was ever going to occur. Progress in the South is clearly happening, she said, evidenced by her election.

ENC Executive Director Ian Palmquist echoed her positive, forward-thinking views. "As a national movement, we cannot succeed if we write off the South. We have to create change across the entire country." He added, "North Carolina is our best opportunity for progress in the South."

Among the breakout sessions participants could chose from were: creating community

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Gay employment protections pass House

Historic victory marred by trans exclusion

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Nov. 7, the U.S. House passed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) including protections for lesbian, gay and bisexual employees.

The historic 235-184 vote was the first time the bill was able to pass the House since first being introduced more than 30 years ago.

However, the landmark legislative victory is marred by concerns that the bill fails to include protections for transgender employees.

Masen Davis, the executive director of the Transgender Law Center (TLC), expressed disappointment in how the bill was handled.

"Despite tireless efforts to craft and pass a bill to protect all LGBT Americans from discrimination, the final bill was stripped of gender-identity provisions and contained broad religious exemptions," said Davis. "This was not the bill any of us had hoped for."

Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, whose organization led efforts to keep a trans-inclusive ENDA through the "United ENDA" campaign, said he was disappointed in House leadership.

"We are deeply disappointed that House

leadership decided to ignore the position of a vast majority of LGBT organizations, ignore the legal assessment that this bill may not

even provide adequate protections for gays, lesbians and bisexuals and ignore the fact that this vote might make it more difficult to persuade members of Congress to support a fully inclusive bill in the future," he said.

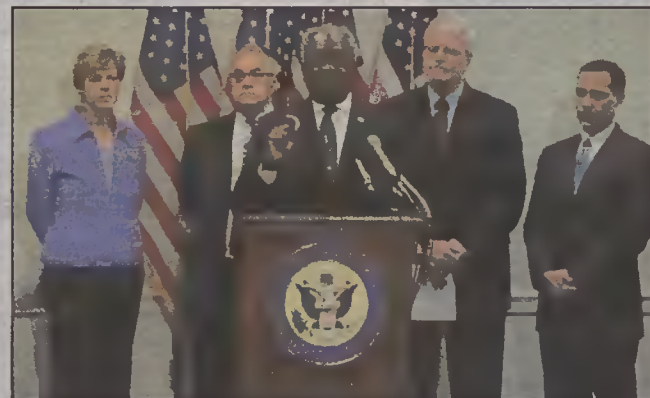
Although Foreman and other leaders had been claiming the majority of LGBT individuals supported a fully inclusive ENDA, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) released on the day of the vote numbers from a survey they conducted on Oct. 26.

According to HRC, 70 percent of those surveyed said they'd rather have an exclusionary ENDA than no ENDA at all.

Journalists Rex Wockner (independent journalist) and Cynthia Laird (*Bay Area Reporter*) raised questions over the HRC survey and asked the organization to release specific information such as exact survey questions, who conducted the survey, the source of participants and the margin of error. HRC has

refused to release any of the information.

In order to become law, ENDA must pass the Senate and be signed by President George



Majority Whip Rep. James Clyburn (D-SC) speaks at a post-ENDA vote press conference attended by ENDA sponsors and HRC President Joe Solmonese.

W. Bush. At press time, a Senate version of ENDA had yet to be introduced and Bush has vowed to veto any version of the bill. Two-thirds of the House and Senate must vote to override a presidential veto.

Members of the Carolinas Democratic Congressional delegation voting against ENDA included Reps. Mike McIntyre and Heath Shuler. Not a single Republican from North or South Carolina voted for the bill. ▀

Barack Obama

Q-Notes examines the candidates — Part two of a multi-part series

by David Stout . Q-Notes staff

Over several issues we're spotlighting the Democratic presidential candidates in preparation for primary season. (Our opening installment on Sen. Hillary Clinton can be read online at www.q-notes.com.) The first Democratic primary occurs in Iowa on Jan. 3. South Carolina holds the earliest in the South on Jan. 26. The North Carolina Democratic primary takes place May 6.

We have made an editorial decision to limit our coverage to the Democrats because, vis-à-vis LGBT issues, the leading Republican candidates range from woefully lacking to openly hostile, or they're Rudy Giuliani, an Iraq war hawk. Either way, the GOP slate is a disappointment and not worthy of consideration in our opinion.

Barack Obama is a name most Americans hadn't heard before the 2004 Democratic National Convention. Then the Illinois state legislator and U.S. Senate hopeful delivered the keynote address at the Boston D-Party, riveting the faithful with his powerful oratory.

At one point he stated, "The pundits like to slice-and-dice our coun-

try into Red States and Blue States; Red States for Republicans, Blue States for Democrats. But I've got news for them, too: We worship an awesome God in the Blue States, and we don't like federal agents poking around in our libraries in the Red States. We coach Little League in the Blue States and yes, we've got some gay friends in the Red States."

The LGBT community swooned along with the rest of America. Literally overnight Obama was the rising star within the Democratic Party.

His standing was cemented in November the same year. He crushed his Republican opponent, receiving 70 percent of the vote, despite the national political climate that allowed the GOP to gain Congressional seats. "Obama for president" became a common refrain in Democratic circles.

United we stand

Barack ("blessed" in Swahili) Hussein Obama was born in Hawaii in 1961 to a Kenyan father (Barack Obama, Sr.) and an American mother. They met while attending the University of Hawaii at Manoa and split when Obama Jr. was two. He stayed with his mother, who later married an Indonesian student, while his father enrolled at



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