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Jewish leaders show support for same-sex marriage

by Alice Leeds and
Rabbi Richard Hirsh

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) announced Mar. 31 that over 120 rabbis and Jewish leaders from all over the country have signed PFLAG's Passover Petition for Marriage Equality. During Passover, when Jewish families celebrate freedom from oppression, PFLAG implored fair-minded citizens across the nation to work for the freedom of gay and lesbian families from the oppressive homophobia and inequality that mark their daily lives. This effort, organized by PFLAG board member Rabbi Emeritus David Horowitz, joined the enduring message of Passover with the hope of equality for gay and lesbian families.

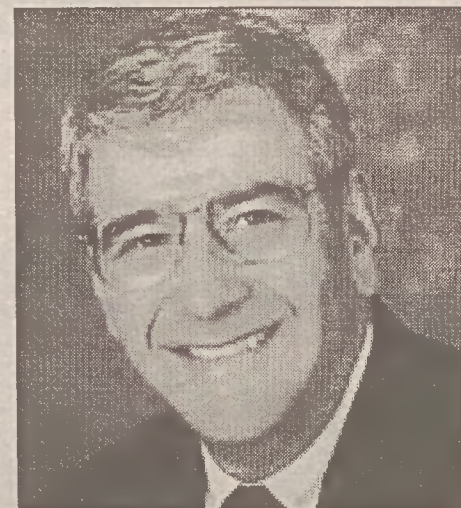
PFLAG's Passover statement read as follows:

"Passover is the Jewish community's celebration of our liberation from slavery. Each year we recall our exodus from bondage and rejoice in our freedom from oppression. We also recognize that we are not entirely free until every human being is free, free from tyranny, free from prejudice, free from discrimination and free to pursue the fullness of life. There is now an attempt to amend the Constitution of the United States of America in such a way that it would preclude basic civil rights from the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members of our community. We, all leaders in the Jewish community, deplore such an attempt and instead urge the president and members of Congress to protect the freedom of all that we might all celebrate our freedom together."

Earlier in March the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association endorsed civil marriage for same-sex couples in Deerfield Beach, Fla.

On Mar. 16, in a unanimous vote, the rabbis attending the convention of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association (RRA) passed a resolution endorsing civil marriage for same-sex couples. The RRA opposes all efforts to bar the legal recognition of marriage for gay men and lesbians.

The strongly worded resolution condemns current discrimination that prevents gay men and lesbians from receiving all of the benefits of civil marriage, including health care coverage and related decision-making, survivor



Rabbi Emeritus David Horowitz joined with PFLAG and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association in endorsing same-sex marriage.

benefits, privileges under immigration and naturalization law, and child custody rights.

The Reconstructionist movement of Judaism has a 20-year history of advocating the inclusion and equality of gay men and lesbians in Jewish life. In 1984, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College became the first Jewish seminary to endorse the ordination of gay and lesbian rabbis. Since 1993, Reconstructionist movement policy has supported rabbis who work with and officiate at weddings for same-sex couples.

Behind the passage of this resolution is the conviction that the fight for social and economic justice is a religious obligation. In its resolution, the RRA protested the attempts to present religious traditions in general and Jewish tradition in particular as uniformly opposed to equality for gay men and lesbians. The resolution declared that the RRA will become a signatory to the Marriage Resolution of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.

U.S. Newswire and wire reports

info: For a list of congregations in the Carolinas area visit the following websites:

Union for Reform Judaism
www.uahc.org

Jewish Reconstructionist Federation
www.jrf.org

GLBT



Charlotte Business Guild

Meeting Date:

Tuesday, May 18, 2004

Program:

Rooftop Party with Singer Christy Snow
Holiday Inn, College and 7th St.
Social 5:30 pm - Dinner & Program 6:30 pm

To Reserve:

Cost \$20

Call 704-565-5075 by 12:00 pm
Monday, May 17, 2004

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