

November elections that same-sex marriage hurt Democrats because it was "too much, too fast, too soon."

Feinstein joins former Pink Brick winners President George W. Bush and talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger. Her inclusion with such obvious foes made the selection surprising to many.

James Hormel, a gay philanthropist and U.S. ambassador to Luxembourg under President Clinton, told The Associated Press, "I don't really think this is a big deal. On the other hand, I find it curious that this constituency, which is struggling so hard to end its second-class citizenship in this country, would turn on somebody who has in many ways been a major supporter."

Marriage amendment defeated

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The Democrat majority in the Minnesota Senate shut down an April 7 Republican bid to force a vote on a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. While the measure was being argued, thousands of gays and their supporters rallied against the proposed amendment out on the Capitol lawn.

Sen. Michele Bachmann (R-Stillwater), the chief proponent of the ban, said the need for an amendment is paramount because judges around the country are finding that same-sex couples have the right to marry. When her attempt to secure a vote was rebuffed Bachmann railed against her Democratic colleagues.

They countered that Bachmann is pushing the amendment for personal gain. Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson said she has been using the issue as a springboard to the congressional campaign she

announced several months ago.

The proposed amendment, which would also bar recognition of civil unions, was passed earlier this month in the Republican-held House.

International >

Gay marriage bill clears hurdle

OTTAWA, Canada — An attempt to gut the Liberal government's bill to legalize same-sex marriage was defeated April 12. Conservative leader Stephen Harper's proposed amendment to the legislation would have limited marriage to opposite-sex couples but allowed for civil unions.

All but four Conservative MPs supported the change — joined by a sizable number of Liberals who oppose their party's support of gay marriage. The amendment was defeated 164-132 because nearly all members of the two smaller parties, the New Democrats and Bloc Quebecois, voted against it.

The marriage bill is likely to face additional legislative hurdles as Conservatives vow to continue their fight, but most analysts expect the measure to survive. Liberals say they want the legislation passed by May, but if their minority government falls and elections are called before then, the bill will die on the House floor. Voter polls indicate Conservatives would take control of the government if elections were held now.

Homophobic bullying starts early

CARDIFF, Wales — A study of bullying in British schools reveals that boys as young as

nine frequently use anti-gay and female-identified terms "to establish their masculinity." Dr. Emma Renold of Cardiff University says that young boys often use the words "gay" and "girl" to insult other boys.

Renold's report, released in conjunction with Stonewall Cymru, the Welsh LGBT rights group, declares that efforts to combat homophobia and bullying must begin at an earlier age than previously thought necessary.

"These are key findings because it is very much time to make the link between gender and sexuality in bullying in the schools," said Dr. Alison Parkin, Stonewall Cymru director. "What Emma is saying is that gender and sexuality are connected within the school environment and it seems there are still very narrow ways of being a boy and being a girl."

She added, "Any intervention that is done in school must begin in the early primary years."

Royal wedding sparks gay protest

WINDSOR, England — Prince Charles married his longtime mistress Camilla Parker Bowles April 9. Prior to the ceremony thousands gathered in front of the nearly 400-year-old Guildhall where the ceremony was set to be held. Among the throng was Britain's best-known gay activist, Peter Tatchell (pictured).

He was carrying a sign that read, "Charles can get married twice. Gays cannot get married once" — a jab at Britain's civil unions law that takes effect in December. The sign was easily seen by the television audience watching at home. Once police noticed the message Tatchell

was removed.

He was escorted to a designated area — out of camera view — that had been set up for protestors, which included conservative Anglicans angered by the royal marriage of two divorcees and anti-monarchists. Tatchell and his group, Outrage, have blasted the British government for failing to follow the lead of Holland, Belgium and Spain in giving same-sex couples full marriage rights.



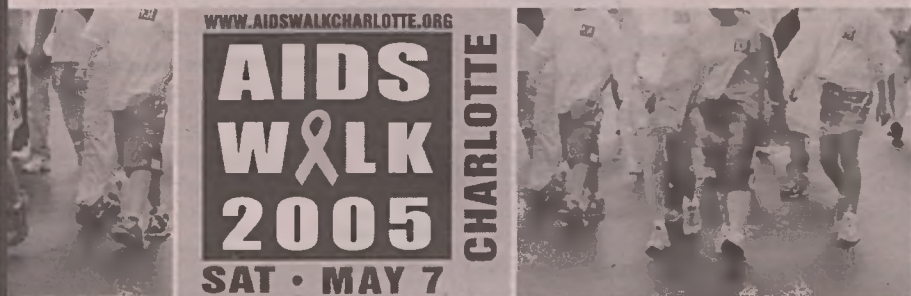
Gay marriage ban loophole

SYDNEY, Australia — Last year Parliament passed a law defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman, closing the door to same-sex marriage. Professor George Williams, a constitutional law expert, says that's not the case because the legislation failed to prohibit gay marriages allowed under state laws.

In response, Greens Party member Nick McKim plans to introduce a pro same-sex marriage bill in the Tasmanian state parliament. "I believe [Prime Minister] John Howard wanted to end the debate about gay marriage in Australia and we're overjoyed that he has in fact ensured that the debate will continue at a state level."

He added, "We've been very explicit in our drafting and there will be no legal requirement on any person, particularly any minister of any church, to marry a gay couple. There will be no legal requirement on any church to host a marriage for a gay couple. We are not about creating division in our society."

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