

After meeting with McIntyre, gay constituents report no progress

Wilmington congressman distances himself from 'Family'-backed anti-gay Uganda legislation but makes no public statement

by Matt Comer :: matt@goqnotes.com

WILMINGTON — LGBT activists in this coastal town are reporting zero progress made with U.S. Rep. Mike McIntyre after their face-to-face meeting with him in early February.

McIntyre, a Democrat who represents the 7th Congressional District stretching from south of Wilmington and north into parts of Fayetteville, has a zero rating on the Human Rights Campaign's 2008 Congressional Scorecard and has voted against LGBT interests in employment, marriage, hate crimes and adoption.

Ryan Lee Burris, a Wilmington activist who planned the meeting with McIntyre, reported the congressman said he would not support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, a *Defense of Marriage Act* repeal or a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" repeal.

Burris said the group also asked McIntyre about his support of the Uniting American Families Act, a bill to end discrimination against LGBT bi-national couples, and a bill to provide domestic partner benefits to federal employees. McIntyre said he was not familiar with either issue and Burris said he was able to provide him with more information on the topics.

Additionally, Burris said the group asked McIntyre about his affiliation with "The Family," or "The Fellowship," a conservative American group with ties to proponents of an anti-homosexuality bill in Uganda. The bill, currently under debate in that nation's parliament, would impose the death penalty for certain crimes and life or long-term imprisonment for others. The bill also

criminalizes advocacy on behalf of LGBT people and requires those who know of an LGBT "offender" to report that person to law enforcement or face monetary fines or up to three years imprisonment.

In late 2009, both McIntyre and fellow North Carolina Congressman Heath Shuler were connected to the group.

During the meeting, McIntyre told the five constituents that he denounced the proposed legislation in Uganda. Asked to make a public statement on the issue, McIntyre directed the constituents to his legislative director Blair Milligan.

"I have personally called and e-mailed Blair and have not gotten any response about the issues we spoke about, or the public statement," Burris wrote in a rundown of the meeting's discussions emailed to area and LGBT media on March 3.

Burris said he is certain McIntyre will not be an ally to the LGBT community.

"Bottom line is that we need to get Congressman McIntyre out of office, he is not going to help us with any of the issues that we're requesting his help with, and his track record shows it," Burris wrote. "I'm not opposed to holding protests at his local office, to help raise awareness of his lack of support."

At press time, McIntyre press secretary Dean Mitchell had yet to return *qnotes'* call for comment on Burris' and the constituents' meeting with the congressman or for comment on "The Family" and anti-gay legislation in Uganda. ::

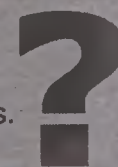


LGBT activists and constituents met with Rep. Mike McIntyre on Feb. 8. (left-right) James Elks, Ryan Scott, Ryan Lee Burris, McIntyre, Tab Ballis and Greg Mccaw.

Photo Credit: Tab Ballis

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