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OutSmart

HOUSTON'S GAY & LESBIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE



MOMS & DADS GO TO WASHINGTON

MARCH 19 -20, 1996

A project of PFLAG & HRC



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, February 19, 1996

Contact: Kyle Young 713/871-1272

Donna Pinnick 713/630-1114

PARENTS OF GAYS & LESBIANS TO LOBBY FOR ENDA

Currently, there is no federal law prohibiting job discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

On Tuesday, March 19, parents from around the country will meet in Washington, D.C. to change that.

The Houston chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is coordinating "Moms & Dads Go to Washington." The focus of the event is to support the passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), a federal bill introduced last June.

In addition to lobbying representatives, PFLAG has plans for a press conference with the Human Rights Campaign and a candlelight vigil on the steps of the Capitol.

"We want to talk to the public, to touch their hearts and call upon their sense of fairness as Americans," said event coordinator Gail Rickey. "Everyone in our country deserves the right to employment. How can a just society provide any less?"

PFLAG's efforts are being supported by the Human Rights Campaign, the country's largest lesbian and gay political organization. HRC Executive Director Elizabeth Birch says that ENDA is legislation the majority of Americans can agree on.

"People should not be fired from their jobs for a reason that has nothing to do with their abilities," said Birch. "Today in America, it's perfectly legal to fire someone for being gay or lesbian."

Birch says that HRC is excited about working with PFLAG because parents can offer elected officials a unique perspective. Rights for gays and lesbians become family issues.

"Basic to every family is the need for its members to earn a living. Yet for families with gay or lesbian children, that opportunity can be denied," said PFLAG National President Mitzi Henderson, "PFLAG is committed to the passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. It would give our children the same redress for unfair treatment that other workers already have."

"Moms and Dads are going to Washington to secure for our families what every family seeks for their children, the right to earn a living free from the threat of bias and intolerance."

MOMS & DADS GO TO WASHINGTON

We're heading North - we can't be stopped
This bus is full of Moms & Pops,
You ask us why we're on this bus
I'll tell you why we're in this rush.

Houston, Texas - Baton Rouge -
New Orleans, Mobile, too
Mile after mile from South to North,
We can't be stopped
We must go forth.

We're moms and dads and we're on our way.
We've come to speak,
We'll have our say.

We've come to protect our children's rights;
we're rising up to capitol heights.

P-FLAG parents speaking out,
And we've chosen a very difficult route.
Atlanta, Georgia and on to Charlotte
Freedom, Freedom - hear us shout it!

Awesome - Awesome we've just begun!
We love our kids - each daughter and son.

We've come to knock upon some doors,
And see some people called Senators

Greensboro - Durham,
finally D.C.
We demand you set our children free!
Give them the rights
they've been denied!
Only then will we be satisfied.

Jane B. Smith,
A P-FLAG mom

The Bus Riders - Short Biographies

Details Available Upon Request Please Contact Donna Pinnick

Rev. Susan Quinn Bryan

- ♥ Pastor of Sagemont Presbyterian Church in Houston, "an inclusive congregation".
- ♥ Family: husband Jerry Beetz, daughters Darcy, Rebecca, Amy, and Julia.
- ♥ Julia, her lesbian daughter, graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Swarthmore.
- ♥ Message to Rep. Steve Stockman: "Hold to the spirit of the Constitution, to do justice with mercy, and to be more afraid of doing the wrong thing to win votes than of doing the right thing and losing them. History will bear out the truth on this issue."
- ♥ Frequently refers to Desmond Tutu on the church and homosexuals: "We make them doubt that they are the children of God, and that must be nearly the ultimate blasphemy."

Ann Chapman

- ♥ 54, secretary to high school principal
- ♥ Married to H.L. Chapman, principal at an alternative high school.
- ♥ Mother of one daughter and three sons, grandmother of four.
- ♥ Plans to lobby Kay Bailey Hutchison, Phil Gramm, and Greg Laughlin.
- ♥ "When I tell straight friends about a gay friend who lost his job because his boss found out he was gay, they say 'Well, he should sue!' They're astonished when I tell them that gay people have no legal recourse. I think most Americans feel that job discrimination is wrong. It's time to make it illegal."

Terrie Cooney

- ♥ 24, administrative assistant, Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program
- ♥ Native Houstonian, youngest of nine. Graduated from Stephens College, Missouri.
- ♥ Joined PFLAG because "I've seen in my generation a rebirth of narrow minded cynicism, young people speaking from a platform of misdirected hatred and ignorance. I won't have theirs be the only voice heard. My homosexual friends have enriched my life. I'm proud to take a stand for them."
- ♥ Message to Washington: "Anti-homosexual legislation mocks civil rights and alienates and disenfranchises good citizens."

Don DeCamp (Wife, Donna)

- ♥ 58, retired from IBM, now travels as a senior sales engineer for LDDS Worldcom
- ♥ Married Donna five years ago, family includes five daughters, one son-in-law, a "daughter-in-love" and a granddaughter.
- ♥ "My primary concern is for Diana's (step-daughter) safety and the unforeseen results of bigotry within American society."

Donna DeCamp (Husband, Don)

- ♥ 53, after successful corporate career became diaconal minister of programming & administration of Canterbury United Methodist Church.
- ♥ For years worked full-time, raised a family and earned a degree at night.
- ♥ Plans to lobby Kay Bailey Hutchison, Phil Gramm, Ken Bentsen
- ♥ "As we are all called "human beings" our daughter has a right to "be" herself as fully as she can, and this right should not be denied her by any other human being."

Mary Lou Kurtz

- ♥ Married, with a son, 31, and a daughter, 34, both heterosexual.
- ♥ Plans to meet with Bill Archer to explain that "straights need to come out of the closet and voice their support for their gay friends and neighbors."
- ♥ "How many heterosexuals fear for their jobs if they divulge their orientation? None! That's not true in the gay community, and I find that extremely unfair and unjust."
- ♥ Doesn't support ENDA for the sake of her own children. Both are heterosexual. She supports ENDA, and joined PFLAG, because it's the right thing to do.

Penny Leuchtag

- ♥ 39, graduate of South Texas College of Law
- ♥ Mother of three biracial children.
- ♥ Message to Washington: "Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is not only wrong, it's irrational. It doesn't make sense, and it's not good public policy, to exclude people from the workforce based on biases about race, gender, or sexual orientation."

Linda Markert (Husband, Ken)

- ♥ 49, holds a degree in education, is a part-time music teacher, formerly owned and operated family business.
- ♥ Married to Ken, 47, mother of Luke, 24, and John, 18, gay.
- ♥ Very active in church affairs, with particular interest in music.
- ♥ Residents of Victoria, Texas, where Linda and Ken are starting a new PFLAG chapter.
- ♥ Plans to tell Greg Laughlin, "Listen to the truth. Work for justice for our children."

Ken Markert (Wife, Linda)

- ♥ 47, in financial services, after 20 years of owning and operating a dry cleaning chain.
- ♥ Former teacher, with a degree in education.
- ♥ Plans to tell Greg Laughlin "It's time to learn the truth and be guided by it."
- ♥ "I've been part of the problem most of my life. Now I have a chance to become part of the solution. If we, as parents, are willing to speak out against the myths and hatred, there is a chance for our gay children to live productive lives without fear of discrimination."

Edna Martin

- ♥ 71, retired nurse, now Mary Kay Cosmetics consultant.
- ♥ Family: husband Frank, 84, his six children, and her four, including oldest daughter, who is lesbian and a retired teacher.
- ♥ "I joined PFLAG to first help my daughter be accepted for the fine person she is, and then to help me bring about the changes in society that need to happen."
- ♥ Plans to lobby Bill Archer and Kay Bailey Hutchison.
- ♥ "I want to reach the ears and hearts of our government representatives and make them understand that our gay children deserve the same rights, privileges and protections under the law as people who are not gay."

Myrtle Meaux

- ♥ 54, once retired, now a loan processor for Nation's Banker's Mortgage.
- ♥ World traveller, now a Houston resident, originally from rural Louisiana.
- ♥ Mother of two daughters, Suzan, 32, and Yvonne, 31. After joining PFLAG on her

own, she coaxed Yvonne out of the closet about three years ago.

- ♥ Why go to Washington? "To show America that we parents stand behind our gay and lesbian children, and want equal rights for them. I want ENDA passed to give my lesbian child the same protections under the law that my heterosexual child has."

Gail Rickey (Husband, Pat)

- ♥ 54, taught high school for 10 years, freelance writer for 14.
- ♥ Chair of PFLAG Houston's advocacy committee
- ♥ Family: husband Pat, two daughters, Susan, 27, and husband David, and Patricia, 30, and her partner, Gwen.
- ♥ Who to lobby? My choices are Phil Gramm, Kay Bailey Hutchison, and Jack Fields.
- ♥ "Americans believe in enabling people to take care of themselves. How can we allow the jobs of literally millions of people to be jeopardized simply because of their sexual orientation? As a country we seek to teach our children responsibility. How can we as a society be so irresponsible as to endanger the jobs of the gays and lesbians who are our children, our sisters and brothers, our aunts and uncles, our neighbors, our co-workers, our friends?"

Pat Rickey (Wife, Gail)

- ♥ 55, holds a Ph.D. in Physics, and is a research physicist for Exxon.
- ♥ Joined PFLAG to talk to other parents, and finally got mad about lack of acceptance for his lesbian daughter, Trish. "Now I'm trying to change the world."
- ♥ "My daughter is a wonderful, caring productive citizen who deserves every right I enjoy. The possibility of her being fired simply because of her sexual orientation is a tragedy of major proportions."

Rev. Dr. Don Sinclair (Wife, Kathy)

- ♥ 66, Pastor for forty five years, last ten at Bering United Methodist. Holds Doctorate in Ministry, specializing in Family Life.
- ♥ Family: wife Kathy, four sons and four grandchildren. Youngest son Stanley, a music student at the University of Houston, murdered at age 20 in 1979.
- ♥ Plans to meet with Kay Bailey Hutchison, Phil Gramm, Sheila Jackson Lee.
- ♥ "I want to make society good enough for my son to live in."

Kathy Sinclair (Husband, Don)

- ♥ Retired from 20 years teaching 1st grade.
- ♥ "We have to get middle America's attention about the seriousness of the social injustice, the hate language, and the resultant gay bashing. I'm going to Washington to demonstrate my serious intention to stop the hate and secure equal rights for our gay/lesbian citizens."

Irv Smith (Wife, Jane)

- ♥ 61, retired from Sonat Exploration.
- ♥ Family includes wife Jane, 60, Amy 29, Gary, 33, and Gary's partner Paul, 31.
- ♥ Plans to meet with Tom Delay
- ♥ "We simply want lesbian and gay Americans to have the same rights as any other American citizen."

Jane Smith (Husband, Irv)

- ♥ 60, education degree, taught first grade before raising family.
- ♥ Plans to lobby Tom Delay, Phil Gramm, Kay Bailey Hutchison.
- ♥ "I just want them to understand that all our children deserve fair treatment. Not special rights. Equal rights."
- ♥ "No one should have to fear that an overheard conversation, a slip of the tongue, a chance meeting at a party, means the loss of your job, your insurance, everything. We know so many people who have to hide their sexual orientation. ENDA simply means fair treatment for everyone."

Sherry Stephens

- ♥ 53, intermediate school teacher, teaches Texas History.
- ♥ A native Houstonian now living in Pasadena with her three "granddogs".
- ♥ Mother of two gay sons, ages 33 and 30, neither out at work.
- ♥ Plans to meet with Ken Bentsen to say: "I want my children to have an equal place in society - right next to yours."
- ♥ "I hope we in PFLAG will be instrumental in making changes that guarantee **all** people the ability to enjoy the rights and privileges guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution."

Susan Upchurch

- ♥ 50, co-president, PFLAG Houston
- ♥ Family: Doug, 28, graduated from Baylor, Donna, 26, still in college.
- ♥ "Doug came out, after a long struggle at 25. He invited me to hear him speak at PFLAG meeting, and we've been there ever since."
- ♥ Plans to meet with Kay Bailey Hutchison, Phil Gramm, Tom Delay.
- ♥ Message to Washington: "It's time for gay and lesbian Americans to be protected at a federal level from discrimination. And we've got to have stronger federal laws punishing hate crimes."

Blake Weisser (Husband, Gordon. Both flying from Houston to Washington, D.C. to meet the bus.)

- ♥ 77, an inactive real estate broker
- ♥ Family: husband Blake, 4 children, 10 grandchildren, 1 granddaughter
- ♥ Her daughter, then married with 3 teenage sons, came out 11 years ago.
- ♥ Hopes that "Everyone will see us as we are - proud parents who love their children and are determined to make the world a safer place for them."
- ♥ Message to Gene Green and Kay Bailey Hutchison: "We claim our children! We will do battle for them to have equal rights."

Gordon Weisser (Wife, Blake. Both flying from Houston to Washington D.C. to meet the bus.)

- ♥ 69, geophysicist, retired from Exxon in 1986, now teaches and consults for oil companies.
- ♥ "PFLAG is a loving concerned group that has given a new dimension to my life."
- ♥ Message for Gene Green and Kay Bailey Hutchison: " My lesbian step daughter is a wonderful person - I respect her very much, and I'm proud of her accomplishments. It's time to come out positively for our gay and lesbian children."

Kathy Whitmire

- ♥ Not the ex-mayor of Houston. Artist, works in acrylics. Also works for Nieman-Marcus.
- ♥ Family: husband Henry, and son Hank, harpist for *The Fantasticks*, longest running musical in theatre history.
- ♥ Was terrified for her son, and like many parents, went into the closet. After a serious heart attack, decided that "I wasn't spared to live life cowering in the closet anymore. I went straight to PFLAG."
- ♥ "I plan to lobby whoever will listen. I have never lobbied before but at 54 I think it is high time I learned. Gays and lesbians are gentle people and they do have friends and family who need to speak out and say 'Stop the violence now'. Gays and lesbians are children of the same God as all of us. They shouldn't have to live closeted secret lives."

Alice Wilson

- ♥ 49, lawyer and Executive Director of the Houston Volunteer Lawyer Program.
- ♥ Family history of political and civil rights activism, going back to Texas War of Independence.
- ♥ Joined the bus trip because "I want my gay and lesbian friends to know that I am committed to this cause, and I want my nieces and nephews to see family members taking action to defend their principles."
- ♥ Message to Washington: " You represent gays and lesbians in your district - don't you want our constituents safe and gainfully employed."

Fred W. Wilson (Wife, Rosemary)

- ♥ 60, engineer, retired from Brown and Root, instrument rated pilot.
- ♥ NASA's 95% man - 95% of all astronauts can wear the space suit designed for Fred.
- ♥ Family: wife Rosemary, two daughters, Ann, 32, and second daughter and her partner (names and ages withheld).
- ♥ Hopes to meet with "Newt, Bobbie, Phil, Jesse and the boys."
- ♥ "These folks can use me as a crutch to cure homophobia. I grew up and it didn't hurt. God does not make mistakes! Stop the hate! Love your kids!"

Rosemary Wilson (Husband, Fred)

- ♥ 59, retired registered nurse, lives in Livingston with Fred and two cats, Pablo & Picasso.
- ♥ Joined PFLAG to help other parents feel good about their child.
- ♥ Plans to lobby Charles Wilson and Kay Bailey Hutchison.
- ♥ "I want to draw attention to the fact that gays and lesbians do have parents who think that they are special. ENDA is important because my child should not be afraid that someone could fire her because she happens to be gay."

Barbara Winston

- ♥ 58, single parent of six: three sons and three daughters, from 25 to 39 years old.
- ♥ Youngest son Phillip, 25, came out 3 years ago.
- ♥ Once a psychotherapist, now heads P-FLAG's education efforts.
- ♥ Plans to lobby Bill Archer, perhaps Phil Gramm ("The pleasure would be **all** mine.")
- ♥ "Forget votes, forget politics. Be courageous and stand up for what is right, good and fair. America is yearning for leaders with integrity who dare to LEAD. All Americans deserve the right to hold down a job without fear of being fired simply because of who they are. If you truly are interested in families and building community, vote Yes for ENDA."

Dick Graves (Wife, Norma)

- ♥ A mechanical engineer degree from New Mexico State University but has worked in operations, leasing and management of commercial office space for last 20 years.
- ♥ Family: wife, Norma, and three children. Rick, 34, Kern, 31, and Julie, 27. Rick is gay and Julie is lesbian. One grandchild.
- ♥ Rick, a doctor in California, and his partner, a psychiatrist, have been together for eight years. Kern is a sales rep living near Dallas with his wife Gina. Julie, "a radical feminist", is a second year medical student at University of Texas, San Antonio Medical Center. Her partner of three years is finishing law school at University of Texas, Austin.
- ♥ "I go to Washington in support of my children, their spouses and my wife. I want to stand up and be counted against the injustices that have been brought about by the homophobic society that I live in."
- ♥ Plans to lobby Phil Archer, Phil Gramm, Kay Bailey Hutchison.
- ♥ "Having a gay son and a lesbian daughter has made me more sensitive about prejudice whether it's due to race, color, religion or sexual orientation. Discrimination is wrong. What do I need to do to assure that my gay and lesbian children have the same rights and privileges that my straight children have?"

Norma Graves (Husband, Dick)

- ♥ Homemaker, music teacher and volunteer at their Methodist church.
- ♥ New Mexico State University graduate.
- ♥ "It took me eight years to grow from tolerance, past acceptance, to celebration of the diversity of my children."
- ♥ Plans to lobby Phil Archer, Phil Gramm, Kay Bailey Hutchison.
- ♥ "I want the world to know that we are ordinary people with the same dreams and aspirations for our children as they have for theirs. We rejoice as they do when our children are doing well, and we hurt in the same way they do when our children are hurting. The big difference is that our children are not assured the basic human and civil rights that other parents can afford to take for granted. It is our hope that when they really understand this they will want to be part of changing that."

Mary K. Jones

- ♥ Lives in Houston, holds a degree in business administration from U.T.
- ♥ Family includes husband Russell, married daughter Lauren, two grandchildren, and a son whose name she will not reveal out of fear for his safety.
- ♥ Plans to meet with Congressman Bill Archer.
- ♥ "I feel a great deal of anger when I have to conceal my son's accomplishments for fear of his security. This is not right and I want to put an end to that discrimination."

Moms and Dads Go to Washington -- Road Itinerary

We're on Our Way!

Day 1 -- Saturday, March 16

Possible Stops	Approximate Time of Day/Happening	Mileage From Last Stop	Mileage So Far Today	Mileage Since Leaving Houston
Lafayette, LA	11:30 AM	216	216	216
Baton Rouge, LA	12:30 PM (Lunch, Media Stop)	45	261	261
New Orleans, LA	3:00 PM (Pickup Betty Moyan & Claire Katner)	77	338	338
Mobile, AL	5:30 PM (1st Night Stop)	136	474	474

Day 3 -- Monday, March 18

Possible Stops	Approximate Time of Day/Happening	Mileage From Last Stop	Mileage So Far Today	Mileage Since Leaving Houston
Greensboro, NC (Winston-Salem)	9:30 AM (Media; Pick up Flora Isasi, Winston Salem, and Shelby Nichols, Mount Airy)	91	91	1120
Durham, NC (Raleigh)	11:30 AM (Pick up LaJa Satrezemis, Loretta Bullaboy; Lunch)	55	146	1175
Richmond, VA	3:00 PM (Pickup Rosalie Witbeck from Arden, NC, Media?)	146	292	1321
Washington, DC	6:00 (A Historic Event!)	100	392	1421

Day 2 -- Sunday, March 17

Possible Stops	Approximate Time of Day/Happening	Mileage From Last Stop	Mileage So Far Today	Mileage Since Leaving Houston
Auburn, AL	11:30 AM (Lunch)	227	227	701
Atlanta, GA	3:00 PM (EST) (Pickup Marci and Bob Haver; Media)	95	322	796
Greenville, SC	5:30 PM	79	469	943
Dallas, NC	6:30 PM Dinner at Rankins Joined by Tom & Debra Myers, riders from Charleston	63	532	1006
Charlotte, NC	8:30 (2nd Night Stop)	23	555	1029

Moms and Dads Go To Washington Road Itinerary

We Return Triumphant!

Day 1 -- Thursday, March 21

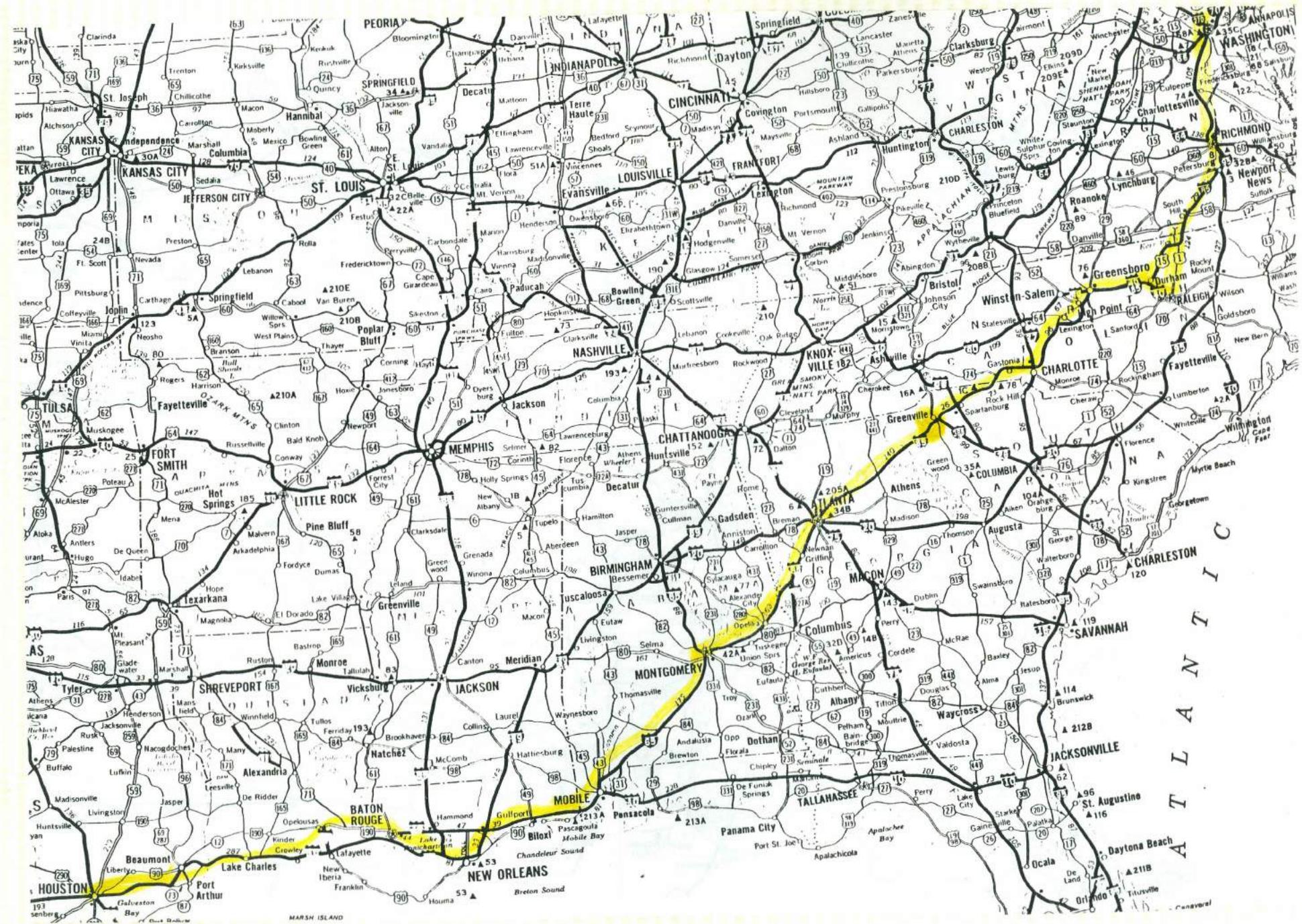
Possible Stops	Approximate Time of Day/Happening	Mileage From Last Stop	Mileage So Far Today	Mileage Since Leaving Washington
Richmond, VA	9:30 AM	100	100	100
Raleigh, NC	12:00 Noon (Lunch, Drop-offs, Media?)	146	246	246
Greensboro, NC	2:00 PM (Drop-offs)	55	301	301
Charlotte, NC	3:30 PM	91	392	392
Greenville, SC	5:30 PM (1st Night Stop)	86	478	478

Day 2 -- Friday, March 22

Possible Stops	Approximate Time of Day/Happening	Mileage From Last Stop	Mileage So Far Today	Mileage Since Leaving Washington
Atlanta, GA	10:15 AM	68	147	625
Mobile, AL	5:15 PM	227	469	947
New Orleans, LA	7:30 PM (2nd Night Stop)	136	605	1083

Day 3 -- Saturday, March 23

Possible Stops	Approximate Time of Day/Happening	Mileage From Last Stop	Mileage So Far Today	Mileage Since Leaving Washington
Baton Rouge, LA	10:15 AM	77	77	1160
Lafayette, LA	11:00 AM	45	122	1205
Houston, TX	3:30 PM	216	338	1421





Moms & Dads Go To Washington

March 19-20, 1996

FACT SHEET

February 15, 1996

OVERALL GOALS

- ▶ To put a "face" on the parents of gays and lesbians, advocating for equal rights for their sons and daughters
- ▶ To focus national attention on ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act) specifically and gay/lesbian issues in general through speaking to lawmakers
- ▶ By our very presence, let the country know that there are voices of "good Americans" that are very different from the voice of the Radical Right

THE SOUTHERN BUS ROUTE

- ▶ The bus departs Houston Saturday, March 16, 7AM
- ▶ Going within 100 miles of 22 PFLAG chapters picking up passengers
- ▶ See Southern Bus Route for more details on tentative itinerary
- ▶ Media is invited to ride the bus

SEND-OFF PEP RALLY

- ▶ Friday, March 15, 7-9:30PM, Christ Church Cathedral, Great Hall, 1117 Texas Avenue
- ▶ Media is invited

WASHINGTON D.C. TENTATIVE ITINERARY

▶ Tuesday, March 19	Kick-Off Event	Morning
▶	Press Conference	Noon
▶	(Coordinated by Human Rights Campaign)	
▶	Lobbying Legislators	All Afternoon
▶	(All participants make their own appointments)	
▶	Candlelight Vigil	7PM
▶	(North Steps of Capitol)	
▶ Wednesday, March 20	Holocaust Memorial Museum	9:30AM
▶	(Early Entry Group Tour)	
▶	Lobbying Legislators	All Afternoon

HEADQUARTERS HOTEL

Doubletree Park Terrace

202-232-7000

THE MEDIA CONTACTS

▶ PFLAG Houston Media Contact Kyle Young March 16-19 (on the bus)	713, 439-1424 To Be Announced
▶ PFLAG Houston Media Contact Donna Pinnick	713, 630-1114
▶ PFLAG National Media Contact Rob Banaszak	202, 638-4200
▶ Human Rights Campaign Media Contact David Smith	202, 628-4160
▶ Project Coordinator Gail Rickey	713, 440-0353

THE BIRTH OF AN AMERICAN IDEA

By Gail Rickey, Project Coordinator

The foundation for Moms & Dads Go To Washington was laid when the executive director of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL), Dianne Hardy-Garcia, invited three Texas P-FLAG parents to become members of LGRL's Board of Directors for 1995. As one of those parents, I was very honored, and I threw myself wholeheartedly into the work of LGRL. Our top priority in 1995 was working to pass a Hate Crimes Bill in Texas.

P-FLAG Houston got very involved in working for the passage of the bill. From the beginning, Dianne recognized a resource that LGRL had never tapped--parents lobbying as a group for gay rights. She called upon us to testify at hearings and to lobby in person. Back at home, we wrote, called, faxed, and in general, made our presence known to our legislators. Surprisingly to us, they noticed! They listened to us. They responded. On LGRL's Lobby Day, we parents were there in full force. Dianne divided us into teams and sent us out to legislative offices. At the end of the day, everyone, especially gays and lesbians who had lobbied for years, were amazed at the response we parents had gotten.

Sadly, the Texas Hate Crimes Bill lost--actually, it was tabled, by a vote of 70 to 68. Prior to the vote, we parents stood at the entrance to the House Floor, forming a mini-gauntlet that legislators had to pass through. Some of the legislators who had once wavered on the issue told us that they were going to vote for the bill.

Despite our loss, something important happened that day. We parents were empowered to speak up for our children in a new way. "We have been silent too long," one mom, who had never dreamed of calling on legislators, told her Representative. And LGRL had discovered a new resource, right at its fingertips.

When the legislative session ended a few days later, and we were trying to recover from our wounds, we parents began thinking about where to focus our newfound commitment for speaking up to elected officials. Let me note that in P-FLAG Houston we had certainly worked on a variety of advocacy projects prior to this time, but never in such a concerted, unified way. And never before had we positioned ourselves in such a visible way as parents and family members of gays and lesbians.

The Texas Legislature would not reconvene until January, 1997. Meanwhile, ENDA had just been introduced to Congress. So, the idea of going to Washington to focus national attention on ENDA was born. We called the Human Rights Campaign to ask whether they thought such a project would be helpful to the cause, and we asked the advice of political experts across the country. We wanted to go to Washington, that much we knew, but when? Some P-FLAGers suggested that we wait until the 1996 National Convention in October, when other gay-related events, especially the Quilt, will be in D.C. Frankly, that scenario sounded enticing, since we as a chapter would not have to expend any energies organizing or developing it. But increasingly we heard from veterans to this cause: "Lobbying during the National P-FLAG Convention is fine. But Members of Congress are going to look at it as, Oh just those gays in town. Wait till next week and they'll be gone."

And that's when our vision began to take form. Go to Washington as moms and dads, families, and allies, with the message that non-gays have joined together to call attention to discrimination against their children, family members, and friends. In our view, this project is unique. It's not a protest. It's not a march. It's not even a rally. Instead, it's a message that we are taking to our nation's Capitol, and we want to speak it to fair-minded people across the country. It's really a simple message, one that Americans believe in their hearts: When one member of our society is diminished, so are we all.



Bus Trip Pep Rally

Kick-Off Rally for Bus Trip to DC

If you don't know by now, PFLAG Houston is sponsoring the **Moms and Dads Go to Washington** project which will bring together parents and friends from all over the country to our nation's capitol in support of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Here in Houston we are sending over 30 PFLAGers to Washington, DC, on the Southern Route Bus Trip.

To show our support for these folks and to send them off in a right way, PFLAG Houston will be sponsoring a Bon Voyage Kick-Off Rally for those folks leaving from Houston. Held in the Great Hall at Christ Church Cathedral on 1117 Texas Avenue from 7:00pm - 9:30 pm, this exciting event will be fun for all.

We are inviting numerous gay and lesbian organizations and are hoping for a Houston-size gathering. Bring some soda, some chips, or some dip, and join in the fun as we send off the Southern Route Bus Trip.

Donna Pinnick

KYLE YOUNG,

Media Coordinators

→

Craig
Stephens
And

Tim
Curtman

organized
kick-off
Rally

Gay activists rally in favor of anti-discrimination act

By R.A. DYER
Houston Chronicle

Like many gay men, Dean Luttrell has made sacrifices. But one sacrifice, the Houston native said, was particularly painful: his \$45,000-a-year job.

Luttrell believes he was fired last year because he's gay. The dismissal was unfair, he said, but not illegal.

"I wanted very much to sue, but I had no legal recourse," said Luttrell, 44.

He was among about 75 activists at a Friday night rally in support of the proposed federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit job discrimination against gays and lesbians.

Today, about 35 activists head to Washington, via bus, to lobby Congress to pass the bill.

Members of PFLAG — Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays — the bus-riding activists will pass through several Southern states, picking up more supporters and conducting press conferences.

In Washington, the group will meet with congressional lawmakers and White House officials, and hold a vigil on the Capitol steps.

ENDA, shot down during the last congressional session, would prohibit job discrimination against gays but would not apply to religious organizations, small businesses and the military. It also would prohibit quotas and not require employers to provide equal benefits to same-sex partners of employees.

It has received some Republican support but is not expected to make headway in the GOP-dominated Congress. It has also received support from President Clinton.

But ENDA has also drawn opposition.

Kristi Hamrick, spokeswoman for the Family Life Research Council, said that unlike women and blacks, gays have not suffered economic injury. She also said gays have higher incomes and are more educated than average Americans.

"At a time America is talking about trouble with excessive affirmative action policy, it is counterproductive for us to make sexual behavior a whole other way of dividing up the workplace," Hamrick has said.

But PFLAG officials said gays and lesbians — regardless of economic status — frequently suffer discrimination. Gail Rickey, vice president of the group's Houston chapter, said she hopes their lobbying efforts will encourage ENDA's passage.

Failing that, she said, PFLAG's multistate, weeklong bus journey should at least draw attention to the issue. "Many fair-minded Americans don't realize people can be fired because they're gay," she said.

Without legal protection — such as federal law provides on the basis of race, gender and religion — gays can fall victim to the "employment-at-will" doctrine, legal experts say.

Recognized in Texas and elsewhere, the legal doctrine generally recognizes an employer's right to dismiss workers without cause.

Because of the doctrine, employees are sometimes fired "for good reason, bad reason or no reason whatsoever," said University of Houston law Professor Thomas Newhouse.

"There are exceptions — like race or union activity — but once you get away from those, it's pretty much employment-at-will in many states."

And that's why Luttrell supports ENDA.



Luttrell

Despite increasing his company's sales and receiving repeated commendations, Luttrell said, he was dismissed after his supervisor discovered his sexual orientation.

"I received three large bonuses just prior to this," recalled Luttrell. "But then one of my co-workers told me my manager found out I was gay and was very upset."

"I worked from my home here and (my boss) worked in Kansas City. I tried to call and I got no response. He was always good at returning my calls, but he just wouldn't respond. After three days, I tried to start my computer, and my phone line was dead. I knew immediately that he fired me."

Luttrell said he never received an explanation for his dismissal or a call back from his boss.



Rev Susan Quinn Bryan
Rev Don & Kathy Sinclair
Rosemary Wilson, Nita Pierce (Waco) Don DeCamp
Blaker Weissen





Andrea



Charlotte

CHEERS FOR ENDA

#1

Hire us
Don't fire us
Just because we're Gay.
Pass the bill to Bill.
Send ENDA on its way.

#2

Go Parents Go
To Washington D.C.
Get ENDA Passed
And set your children free.
(Go..... Parents!)

#3

No more firings. No more Scares.
Lets be honest. Lets be Fair.
Corporate closets are too small.
ENDA will be good for all.

#4

Pass it through, Pass it through,
Through the House.
Pass it through, Pass it through,
Through the Senate.
Get Bill to sign it. ENDA, let's win it.

Enjoy these goodies.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

God Bless You.

Barbara
Winston
Rosalind

Phillip
Winston



Phillipp Winston's School of Social Work raffle raised \$982.00 for the bus trip. Good Job!! We thank each and all of you.

Kathy
Whitmire

Beth





Terrie
Cooney

Alice
Wilson

Jim

Kathy
Whitmore



Ann
Chapman

Kathy
Whitmore

Don & Donna
DeCamp

Terrie's friend

Terrie
Cooney

Sandy Lane
(New Mexico)

Susan
up church











Kathy
Whitmore



Rest stop
I-10
Just inside
Louisiana

Handed
out
flyers →



Home
of
PAT RICKEN'S
Mom
BATON ROUGE
LA



BATON ROUGE



MOBILE*

ALABAMA



Don Sinclair
Pat Rickey
Gail Rickey

Larry Kelsey
Liz
opelika, Al
Jane Smith
Dino

Don & DONNA
DeCamp
Mary Lou Kurtz

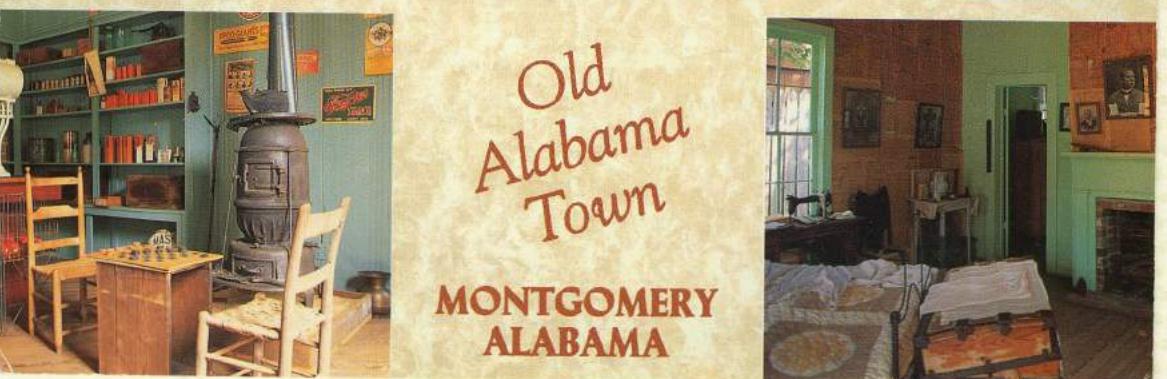
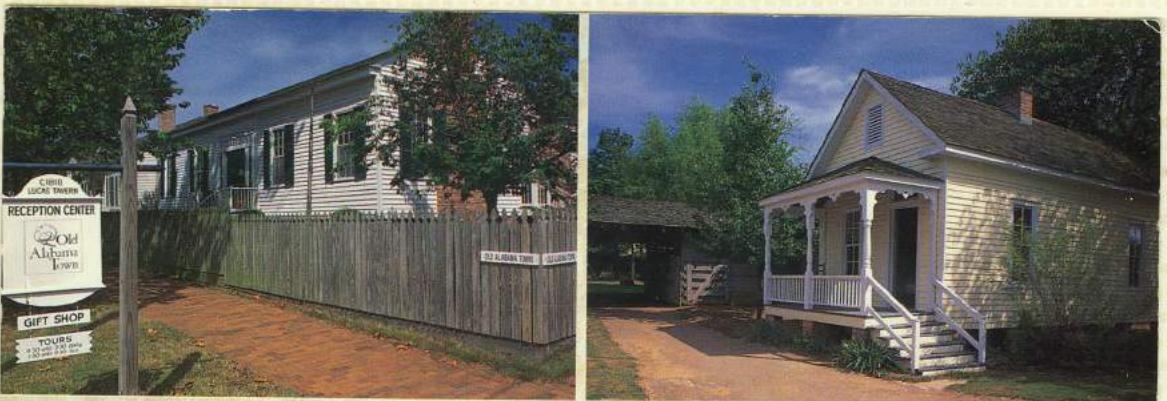
Wanda Markert
Liz Kelsey
(opelika, Al)
Gail Rickey



OPELIKA*

ALABAMA





March 19, 1995

Dear Parents,

On behalf of the Human Rights Campaign and the national PFLAG office, we would like to welcome you and thank you for coming to Washington, D.C. As parents and friends of lesbian and gay individuals, the support you are showing by making this trip can not be surpassed. Your sons, daughters, family, and friends will live in a safer and fairer world because of your efforts. We applaud your dedication and commitment. The reason that you all have come together for these few days is one of basic rights and fairness that should exist for all Americans.

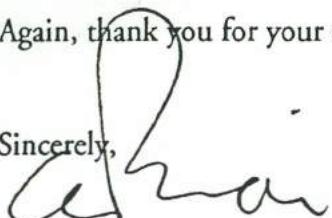
A fundamental American value holds that people who do their jobs, pay their taxes and contribute to their communities should not be singled out for unfair discrimination. Unfortunately, federal law does not extend this basic fairness to the untold millions of Americans who happen to be lesbian or gay or bisexual. Lesbian and gay people are fired from their jobs, refused work, paid less and otherwise discriminated against in the workplace - with no basic protection under federal law.

The solution to this kind of discrimination is the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. ENDA extends federal employment discrimination protections currently provided based on race, religion, gender, national origin, age and disability, to sexual orientation.

For the above reasons, your efforts in the next few days are extremely important in facilitating the debate and passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. Never before has there been such a large number of people lobbying on the hill on behalf of ENDA. In the next few days, Members of Congress will be visited by over 200 people from their home states. Lobbying of this kind cannot be ignored.

Again, thank you for your dedication and support. Have a wonderful few days!

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Birch
Executive Director, HRC



Mitzi Henderson
President, PFLAG

WORKING FOR LESBIAN AND GAY EQUAL RIGHTS.

1101 14th Street NW, Suite 200 Washington, D.C. 20005
phone (202) 628 4160 fax (202) 347 5323 email hrc@hrcusa.org



Tuesday, March 19

Members are meeting with their Representatives at various times throughout the day.

From 12-4:30, you can drop into the Stewart Mott House to rest, get information, or to coordinate a lobby visit. Address: 122 Maryland Avenue NE (at the corner of 1st and Constitution across from the Supreme Court).

8:30 - 9:30 Welcoming Reception
The White House, Old Executive Office Building
Indian Treaty Room

Note: Name and social security number submitted in advance only.

11:30 - 12:00 Group photo
U.S. Capitol
Lower Terrace (westside)

12:00 - 1:00 Informal lobby training and orientation
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Room 562

1:00 - 2:00 Senate Briefing
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Room 562

6:30 - 8:00 Candlelight vigil
U.S. Capitol
Lower Terrace (westside)

Note: NO candles

Wednesday, March 20

Members are meeting with their Representatives at various times throughout the day.

9:15 am Holocaust Memorial Museum

5:30 pm Closing reception
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
18th and Church Street, NW

**Headquarters hotel: Doubletree Park Terrace, 1515 Rhode Island Ave NW, 202-232-7000
Human Rights Campaign: 202-628-4160**



Cathy
Whitmore



Fred +
Rosemary



Appointments Made for Lobbying in Washington, DC

Kay Bailey Hutchison	3-20-96 @ 2:30pm Bob Richard Room 283 Russell Senate Office Building
Phil Gramm	3-20-96 @ 4:00pm John Cerisan Room 370 Russell Senate Office Building
John Bryant	3-20-96 @ 2:00pm recheck on 3-18-96 Room 2330 Rayburn House Office Building
Ken Bentson	3-20-96 @ 2:00pm Room 128 Rayburn House Office Building
Tom DeLay	3-19-96 @ 3:30 pm April Lassiter Room H107 U. S. Capitol
Jack Fields	3-20-96 @ 1:00pm Room 2228 Rayburn House Office Building
Gene Green	3-20-96 @ 3:30pm Deanna Rodriguez Room 1024 Longworth House Office Building
Greg Laughlin	3-19-96 @ 1:30 pm Longworth House Office Building
Charles Wilson	3-19-96 @ 2:30 pm Rayburn House Office Building



Fred &
Rosemary
Wilson

Bus
heading
for new
(Orleans)



Said
good-bye
to Pat &
Gail
Rickey

Greenville
S. C.

Rosemary
Wilson

Dear
Luttrell

Bering
Church
parking
lot



Sandy Lane
Dear
Kathy
Tyler
Doug



Barry Goldwater

P.O. BOX 1601
SCOTTSOALE, ARIZONA 85252

January 24, 1996

BY FACSIMILE
202 638-0243

Mrs. Fred Wilson
PFLAG National Office
1101 14th Street, NW, Suite 1030
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Rosemary:

My Doctor has informed me that I need to curtail some of my activities this year. I have cut down the number of trips that I make to the Washington area. I am sorry but I will be unable to be with you on March 19, 1996.

My best wishes for a successful trip, and may you have some positive responses as a result of your meetings.

Sincerely,

Barry Goldwater

