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GAY / LESBIAN —
Deborah Green

August, 1999

Dear Friends:

Enclosed please find *HRC's Blueprint for Political Action*, and the latest issue of the *HRC Quarterly*. As we approach the August recess, I hope you will take a moment to review these documents.

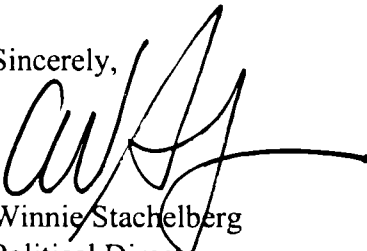
The *Blueprint* summarizes HRC's main goals and strategies for the 106th Congress, as we work towards ensuring that gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans are guaranteed their basic equal rights. Outlined here are the issues of hate crimes, workplace discrimination, HIV/AIDS, lesbian health, the military, and gay families. Also included is information on HRC's organizing strategies, PAC, and our response to anti-gay legislation.

This Fall 1999 issue of the *HRC Quarterly*, which will reach more than 250,000 fair-minded Americans nationwide, includes articles on the recess appointment of Ambassador to Luxembourg James Hormel, the reintroduction of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, and the Senate hearing on hate crimes.

Together, HRC and our allies have been tirelessly working towards equality for all gay and lesbian Americans. We hope that you will find these documents interesting and informative.

Thank you!

Sincerely,



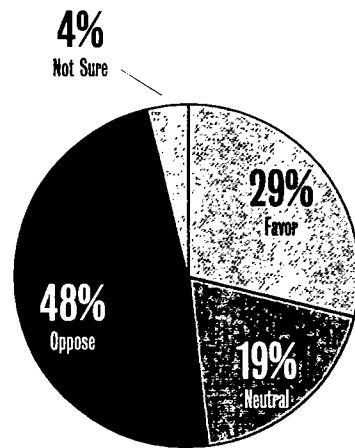
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HRC's Blueprint for Political Action



American Voters Oppose a Ban on Gays and Lesbians Adopting Children. In a Feb. 1999 telephone survey of 1,411 registered voters, Peter D. Hart Research Associates learned that 48 percent of voters oppose such a ban (shown in red), 19 percent of voters are neutral (shown in pink), and 29 percent are in favor of a ban, with four percent not sure (both shown in gray).

Electing Fair-Minded Officials

HRC's bipartisan PAC seeks to elect a Congress and President that support basic equal rights for all Americans. Each election cycle the PAC contributes at least \$1,000,000 into targeted races, providing strategic support for viable, pro-gay candidates. HRC's PAC also works to engage our membership and the broader gay and lesbian community as an active and effective voting block in American politics.

HRC PAC is one of the largest Political Action Committees (PACs) in the country with a 91% success rate in 1998. The 2000 election cycle promises great opportunity for electing fair-minded candidates. As a presidential election year, turnout is projected to be higher than average, and with 4% of voters in 1998 self-identifying as lesbian or gay it is critical to engage the community in the 2000 elections.

To expand its role in the electoral arena and elect fair-minded candidates, HRC will:

- contribute over \$1 million to fair minded candidates;
- educate candidates about lesbian and gay issues;
- mobilize the lesbian and gay community into active voters and volunteers on targeted campaigns;
- place staff and hire volunteer coordinators to organize our membership around specific campaigns and implement aggressive GOTV programs;
- host HRC's Youth College for Campaign Training — a program in which we train young people, ages 18-24 in campaign skills and place them as in-kind contributions on targeted campaigns. ■

Organizing Communities

HRC's Field Department generates the grassroots pressure that can move elected officials on issues critical to our mission and mandate. It is the field presence that often serves as a point of access to HRC and represents HRC's grassroots organizing efforts. With almost 10,000 engaged activists in the Action Network, HRC participates in strategic partnerships with other organizations and constituency groups. We have trained and resourced State Coordinators across the country and we continue to identify Congressional District Coordinators in most of our priority districts.

HRC will continue to organize and energize communities through innovative programs that will:

- educate and turn ignorance into acceptance with outreach programs such as the National Coming Out Project;
- conduct voter registration and education projects;
- build ties with the faith community through the Faith & Fairness coalition;
- coordinate the sharing of information and resources between statewide groups and HRC with the Field Advisory Cabinet;
- inform elected officials and members of HRC's Action Network on pending state and federal legislation through the distribution of Actiongrams and Action Alerts;
- train advocates and activists in lobbying and organizing at three regional OutVote conferences.

Stopping Anti-Gay Extremism

Despite broad public support for equal treatment of gay, lesbian and bisexual Americans, political organizations with extreme anti-gay agendas unduly influence some members of Congress. In the summer of 1998, HRC faced — and defeated — an unprecedented wave of attacks in Congress.

Some members of the 105th Congress sought to overturn the president's non-discrimination policy and legalize discrimination against gay federal workers; punish the city of San Francisco for its law prohibiting city contracts to companies that do not treat gay workers fairly; and deny gay and lesbian citizens of Washington, D.C., the ability to adopt children.

HRC will be ready to fight any anti-gay measures introduced by:

- educating new members of Congress about anti-gay discrimination and the need for equal treatment;
- rallying our nationwide network of advocates to contact their elected officials when anti-gay measures come before Congress;
- preparing influential organizations at the national level to oppose anti-gay discrimination in Congress.



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The Human Rights Campaign envisions an America where lesbian and gay people are ensured of their basic equal rights — and can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community.

To achieve our mission, HRC with more than 300,000 members nationwide, educates Congress, the White House and federal government agencies; participates in election campaigns across the nation; organizes advocates at the grassroots level in every state; forms coalitions and works in partnership with other organizations; and educates the general public about our issues. The Human Rights Campaign strongly supports public and private initiatives to counter discrimination based on real or perceived gender identity. Additionally, privacy rights are key elements of HRC's mission, including the right to choose.

In the 1998 election, moderation triumphed over extremism. Among the 200 races HRC participated in 91% of the candidates won, while more than half of the social conservatives backed by the anti-gay Campaign for Working Families lost. These electoral results coupled with more tolerant public attitudes have combined to create a positive political environment for progress on gay and lesbian and HIV/AIDS issues in the 106th Congress. Here are some of the major issues where the Human Rights Campaign will be the most active in the new Congress, and some of the strategies we will employ to achieve our goals.

Ensuring Fairness in the Workplace

No federal law protects Americans from employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. This gap in basic civil rights law means that in 40 states, employers can legally fire, refuse to hire or otherwise discriminate against qualified people who happen to be gay, lesbian or bisexual — or are perceived as such. Most Americans believe such discrimination is wrong.

To ensure fairness and equality in the workplace, HRC's goal is to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act in the 106th Congress. ENDA would prohibit job discrimination based on sexual orientation. The bill is supported by major businesses, as well as civil rights groups, labor unions, churches and religious organizations.

In his State of the Union address, President Clinton called on Congress to pass ENDA. HRC will build on this historic endorsement by:

- launching a "Campaign For Equality," with high-profile business leaders, Hollywood personalities, state and local leaders, and well-known opinion makers;
- building support for ENDA among business, labor, religious and civil rights organizations to lobby for ENDA at the national and grassroots levels;
- bringing real stories of discrimination before Congress and the American public;
- mobilizing HRC's nationwide network of advocates to educate senators and representatives.

Protecting Families from Discrimination

Families headed by gay and lesbian people face special challenges due to discrimination. Gay and lesbian employees performing the same work as heterosexual employees are often denied equal health benefits for their domestic partners. While 48 states allow gay and lesbian people to adopt children, religious political extremist groups are pushing the government to make new laws prohibiting gay and lesbian parents from raising children. Also, gay and lesbian partners in long-term, committed relationships are prohibited from entering civil marriages under the law, and thus lose basic rights such as visiting a partner in the hospital or inheriting a partner's possessions.

HRC will work to protect lesbian and gay families from discrimination by:

- preparing for and responding to any attacks on lesbian and gay families in the 106th Congress;
- encouraging employers to provide equal benefits for partners of gay and lesbian workers;
- working with coalitions at the federal and state level to protect gay and lesbian parents and their children.

Preventing and Punishing Hate Crimes

Hate crimes committed against gays and lesbians are consistently the third-highest category of bias crimes reported to the FBI. The horrific murders in 1998 of James Byrd and Matthew Shepard and Billy Jack Gaither in 1999 opened many people's eyes to the brutal reality of bias-motivated violence.

Because it terrorizes entire communities, hate violence is punished more severely under federal law. In certain circumstances, federal authorities can help investigate and prosecute hate crimes — except for those committed against someone because of his or her sexual orientation. Current federal law only covers race, religion, national origin and color. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act would give federal law enforcement agencies authority to investigate and prosecute hate crimes based on a victim's sexual orientation.

To pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, HRC will:

- create a national forum for hate crime victims and their families to educate policy-makers and the public;
- work closely with state attorneys general and local anti-violence projects to build support for the bill;
- recruit influential members of Congress to champion the legislation;
- lead an active lobbying campaign through the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the nation's leading civil rights coalition.

Fighting HIV and AIDS

The success of new drug treatments in prolonging lives and reducing death rates is leading some people — including members of Congress — to believe that the AIDS epidemic is no longer a public health crisis. The reality is that 40,000 people become infected with HIV every year, and no evidence shows that these new infections are decreasing. While AIDS deaths have declined overall, AIDS remains the leading cause of death among Hispanic- and African-Americans age 25-44.

HRC will work to strengthen the national response to AIDS. Our goals are to reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act; promote broader access to medical care and a comprehensive HIV prevention plan; increase funding for AIDS initiatives across the board; and ensure that federal AIDS policy is based on science, not politics.

To accomplish these goals in the 106th Congress, HRC will:

- play a leadership role in the National Organizations Responding to AIDS (NORA) coalition, to maximize support in Congress for higher funding levels and sound AIDS policy;
- mobilize advocates at the grassroots level to influence key members of Congress;
- work with youth advocacy groups and other organizations to develop an HIV/AIDS prevention strategy to protect young people and other population groups increasingly at risk for HIV.

Ending Discrimination in the Military

Though the current "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue" policy was supposed to set limits on gay investigations and harassment, they have increased. The policy calls for the dismissal or even the imprisonment of military service members who truthfully acknowledge they are gay, lesbian or bisexual.

The loss of trained, effective service members due to this policy wastes millions of taxpayer dollars every year. Ultimately, this discriminatory policy must be overturned but, in the short term, the Department of Defense must comply with the policy and stop asking, pursuing and harassing service members.

To ensure that the military stays within the limits of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, HRC will:

- educate members of Congress and the administration on the limits of the policy;
- work with the Pentagon, White House and Office of the Vice President to issue clear guidance on the correct policy;
- work closely with the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, the leading legal organization representing military personnel hurt by the policy.

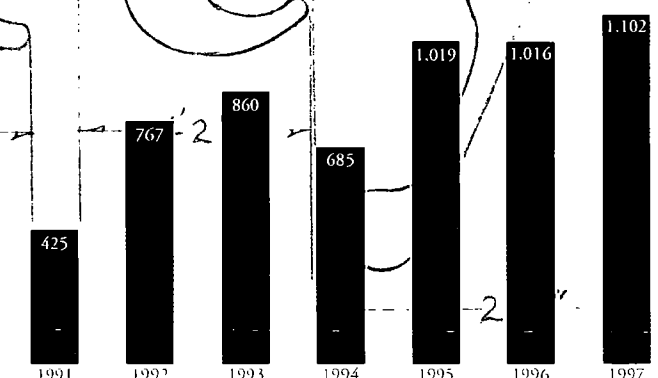
Protecting Lesbians' Health

A recent groundbreaking study from the Institute of Medicine on lesbian health — the federal government's first effort to assess the health needs of lesbians — revealed that lesbians may be at greater risk than other women for conditions such as breast and cervical cancer. However, the report concluded, the health care system is not addressing health issues faced by lesbians because so little information exists about their particular medical needs.

If the medical concerns of lesbians are to be addressed seriously at the national level, agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health must take an active interest in lesbian health issues.

To increase understanding of lesbian health issues at the federal level, HRC will:

- work with women's health organizations to educate officials at key federal health agencies;
- advocate for funding to address lesbian health concerns in federal research on cancer and other diseases;
- research federal grant money to support community centers that are addressing lesbian health issues.



Reported Hate Crimes Based on Sexual Orientation 1991-1997

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

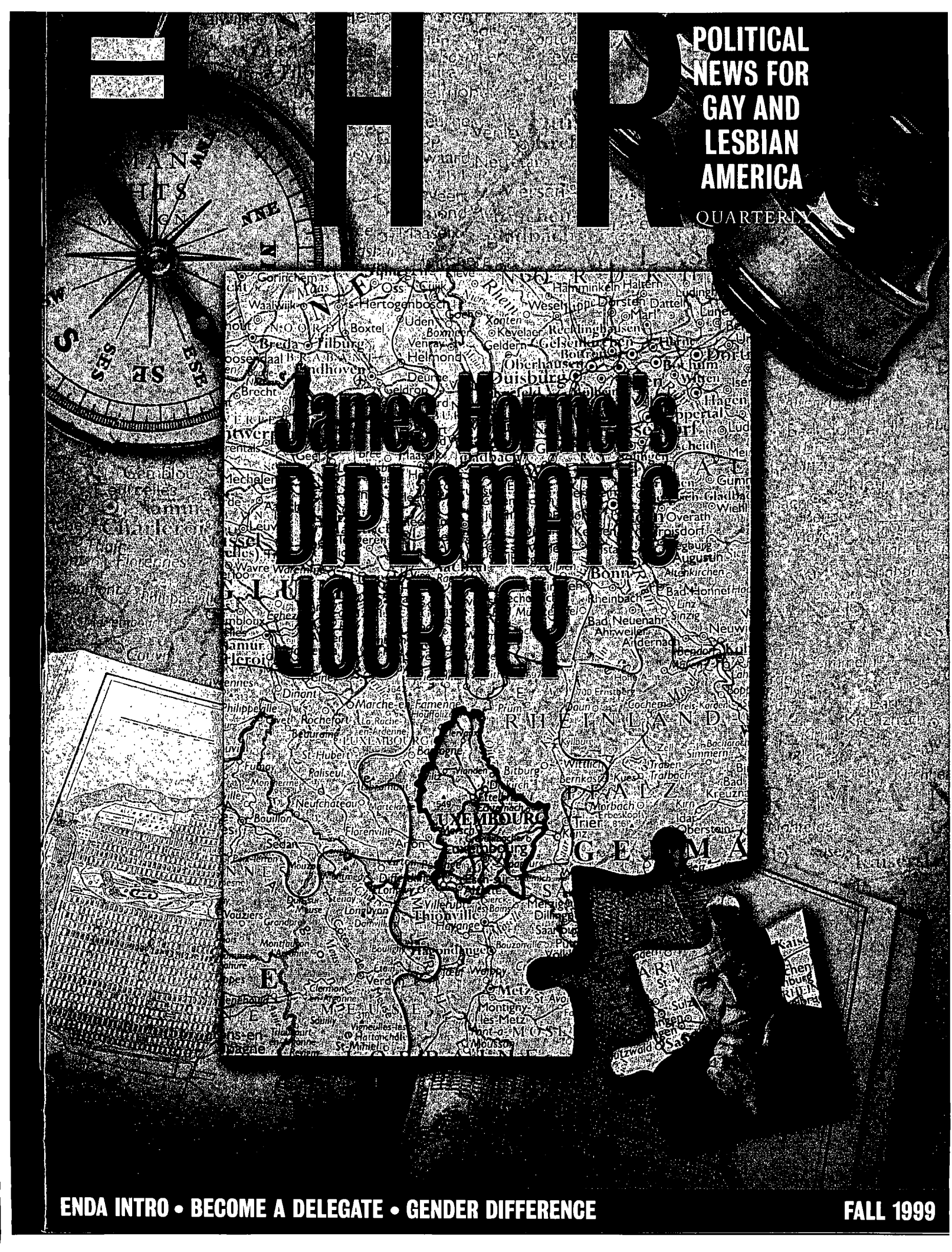
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James Hornel's DIPLOMATIC JOURNEY

ENDA INTRO • BECOME A DELEGATE • GENDER DIFFERENCE

FALL 1999