

TRANSADVOCATE

NCTE Lobby Days: Where's Waldo, HRC, or Barney Frank?

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Article

Last October Representative Barney Frank said:

"It's partly because some of the people who are now lately to this fight weren't there helping us through the lobbying. "

and then said:

I have been pleading with people in the gay and lesbian and bisexual and transgender communities to lobby for us. Instead, they want to strategize, many of them. Some, no. Some have done a very good job. But many of them weren't there.

Hearing those words, I assumed that the lobby day events would get extra special attention (especially to gaining access). But since the event I've heard from numerous lobbyists that their access was no different than in years past. If the education that has been done in the past (the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition

has lobbied Congress since 1995, the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition since 1999, and the National Center for Transgender Equality since 2005) wasn't good enough for Representative Frank and he wants us to be in the bill after doing the right kind of education, a little help in the access department from his office might help. And I'd think the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) would be helping out Mara Keisling, since they're using her image on the transgender section of their website!

Transgender advocacy groups are doing the work that needs to be done. The words of those that oppose gender identity inclusion in ENDA ring hollow when they don't expend ANY political capital or influence to see that the the educational/lobbying work is effective.

(As a post-script to this post, I'd just like to say how frustrating it is to find people still arguing that gender identity protections in ENDA only protect transgender people. The definition in the language of the inclusive ENDA bill (HR 1515) is as follows:

GENDER IDENTITY- The term 'gender identity' means the gender-related identity, appearance, or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of an individual, with or without regard to the individual's designated sex at birth.

This definition would cover anyone who is gender variant.)

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