

Unity and Hope

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Abstract

In my recent post, Rose Colored Glasses, I had quite a few people respond here and on livejournal. Anyone familiar with the history of the trans-community and HRC (Human Rights Campaign) will know how contentious that relationship has been over the years. In March of 2001 the board of directors changed their mission statement to [...]

Article

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In March of 2001 the board of directors changed their mission statement to include transgender people. In the six years since our inclusion it's been an uphill battle to get HRC to actually include transgender people in their legislative efforts. It took HRC three years to only support a trans-inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). That inclusion didn't come easily. It had become such an issue in the summer of 2004, that number of organizations (NCTE, NTAC, Pride at Work, Transsexual Menace, and many others) planned the "Unity Rally for Transgender Rights." (photo by debra kate)

The protest climaxed with Cheryl Jaques announcing the the HRC board of directors had decided to only support inclusive ENDA legislation. She said:

"we are strongest as a community when we are united and that's why we need the strongest and most unifying protections."

Many transactivists assumed that this proclamation meant HRC was making a commitment to only support transgender inclusive legislation. This assumption was proven incorrect with the introduction of the hate crimes bill into the US Senate in 2005. HRC stood by this version and actively lobbied for its passage.

In researching my post for "Rose Colored Glasses" I found a post by HRC Donna Rose, entitled "Trans-formed." She said

"I specifically know of one "trans-activist" who is angry about this news. Like a one-trick pony, this person is angry at everyone and everything supportive of the Human Rights Campaign." She continued

“These people don’t speak for me. Their anger is not my anger. Their outdated style of in-your-face, flame-throwing, loudmouth activism is not my style. In my opinion they do more damage than good and are proof that the notion of any activism is better than NO activism is not true. The fact that much of this positive movement is happening isn’t because of their efforts, it’s despite them.”

The comments to “Rose Colored Glasses” from HRC employees made me very hopeful. I was assured that the “Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act” (LLEHCPA - H.R. 1592) would be trans-inclusive. It was also relayed to me that the same language is going to be used in the Senate version of the bill. Since then, I’ve been in contact with David Stacy, HRC’s Senior Public Policy Advocate. He promised to forward me the language of the bill. Friday evening I received the language... of the 2005 bill. I’ve asked him if the language of the bill was exactly the same as the 2005 bill, and he’s said the language is “the same” and “identical.”

I’m curious as to why the language that has already been introduced can’t be shown to the media (mainstream or not). If it’s trans-inclusive and there is interest within the community to see the language, I don’t really understand why releasing the language before it comes out on Thomas is such a big deal.

I’d say to Donna Rose that we don’t hate HRC. We are just very suspicious of a group that’s been very reluctant to carry out its mission statement concerning us. I hope that in the future she’s able to look past her own issues and see that we are not the enemy. I hope that she’ll see that her HRC cheerleading is just as much of a “one trick pony” as” HRC hating.” I hope that she’ll realize that we are all working toward the same thing. I hope she’ll realize it’s ok to use female pronouns when referring to me in the future. I’m cautiously optimistic, about HRC and Donna Rose. Oh, and I have one last hope; I hope Charlie Brown finally gets to kick that damn ball.

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