A LOOK AT GAY TEACHERS

Should gay people be allowed to teach?
WHAT IF CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION FOR GAY PEOPLE BECOMES LAW?

QUESTION: Will this legislation allow Gay people to be teachers?
ANSWER: There are Gay teachers now, and there will continue to be Gay teachers whether this legislation passes or not.

QUESTION: But won’t Gay teachers molest the children?
ANSWER: No. Almost all authorities, including the American Psychiatric Association and the National Institute of Mental Health, agree that Gay people are no more likely to molest children than are heterosexuals.

Of course, any teacher who attempts to molest a child should be removed immediately, no matter what the sexual orientation of that teacher. But it is unfair to assume in advance that Gay teachers will be guilty of this, especially when the statistics and the experts indicate otherwise.

QUESTION: Won’t the presence of Gay teachers cause the students to be Gay?
ANSWER: Sexuality is not like a political ideology that can be taught. The leading experts in the country, such as Dr. John Money of Johns Hopkins, agree that sexual orientation is determined by age 3 or 4 and will not change significantly thereafter.

Further, using one’s teaching position as a platform to attempt to influence a student’s sexuality is wrong, and most Gay teachers would agree.

The idea that people become Gay just by associating with Gay people is simply incorrect. That idea doesn’t make sense, as most people have associated with Gay people, whether they know it or not. And once again, there are Gay teachers now, and it hasn’t caused the students to be Gay.

QUESTION: But what if a Gay teacher does attempt to seduce a student or convince his or her students to be Gay?
ANSWER: Civil rights legislation allows for people to be removed for misconduct. This can and must be strongly enforced to protect the welfare of the children, regardless of the sexual orientation of the teacher.

QUESTION: Then what’s the real issue concerning Gay teachers?
ANSWER: The real issue here is discrimination. Will Gay teachers be judged as individuals, or by stereotypes? And what about Gay people as bus drivers, candelstore clerks, and so forth? In the final analysis, a person who does a good job should not be denied his or her job or vocation because of some irrelevant criteria in his or her private life.
AN INTERVIEW WITH A GAY TEACHER

QUESTION: What effect would this bill have on Gay teachers?
ANSWER: There are many Gay teachers now and that won’t change whether this legislation passes or not.

What would change is that the constant fear that many of us have that we might lose our jobs if someone finds out would end. I can only speak for myself, but I’m sure that my performance could only improve by eliminating the constant fear and anxiety.

QUESTION: Does that mean that you would “come out” and advocate your homosexuality in school?
ANSWER: No. It’s totally inappropriate to advocate personal matters in the classroom, whether they be religion, political philosophy, or sexuality.

And my understanding is that it is not only inappropriate, but that it is grounds for discipline and possible dismissal.

QUESTION: Wouldn’t your presence in the classroom lead your students to become Gay?
ANSWER: No. I don’t believe that Gay teachers have any effect on our students’ sexuality. The idea that we do is based on several misconceptions.

First, like I said, we don’t preach homosexuality to our students — we teach the subject matter of our classes — English, history, math or whatever.

Second, Gay teachers have been there all along. The opponents of Gay civil rights are talking about a problem that just doesn’t exist. And, from what I know, there haven’t been problems in the many cities that have passed civil rights laws for Gay people.

Gay teachers aren’t much different from any others. There are some that are good and some that aren’t. It’s a very individual thing. I wouldn’t expect a school to keep a teacher that isn’t doing a good job or is involved in improper behavior, and the proposed law wouldn’t require that. Teachers, like others, should be judged by their ability and performance rather than their private sexual orientation. It’s really just an issue of fairness.
WHAT EDUCATIONAL EXPERTS SAY

American Federation of Teachers
"Discrimination Against Homosexuals Denounced"
Whereas professional people insist that they be judged on the basis of professional and not personal criteria; and
Resolved, that the American Federation of Teachers protests any personnel actions taken against any teacher merely because he or she practices homosexual behavior in private life.

National Education Association — Chicago, Ill.
E-5 Nondiscriminatory Personnel Policies
The National Education Association believes that personnel policies and practices must guarantee that no person be employed, retained, paid, dismissed, or demoted because of race, color, national origin, religious beliefs, residence, political activities, professional association activities, age, marital status, family relationship, sex or sexual orientation.

Washington, D.C. Board of Education
"The Board of Education of the District of Columbia passed a resolution in the Spring of 1972 prohibiting job discrimination against homosexuals in the public school system. The passage of this resolution has not resulted in any problems within the public school system."
Marion Barry
Former President, Board of Education

American Personnel and Guidance Association — Resolution adopted by APGA Senate
Be it resolved, that the Senate approve the idea of adding sexual orientation of all anti-discrimination based on race, creed, sex and national origin.

American Psychiatric Association
"I realize that many lay persons are concerned about the hiring of homosexuals as teachers. These concerns are the product of misunderstanding, not of scientific knowledge. Some, for instance, have feared that homosexual teachers might affect the sexual orientation of their students. There is no evidence to support this thesis, nor is there evidence to believe that seduction of a student by a homosexual teacher is any more likely to occur than heterosexual seduction."
John Spiegel, M.D.
President, A.P.A.

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