

Nebraska Democratic Party LGBT Caucus Meeting Minutes

Date: February 25, 2005

Location: Omaha - CFEP Offices, 1105 Howard

Present: Robin Quarles; Tom Dorsch; Victoria Lavin; Jeff Leanna; Peter Nisley; Tim Francis; Lin Quenzer; Barbara Baier; Michael Gordon; Larry Wikoff

Excused: Don Marti; Alene Swinehart; Chris Shepherd (recently ill); Amy Barker

Introductions were made. Officers were recognized.

Meeting Minutes

Tom Dorsch moved and was seconded by Lin Quenzer to approve the meeting minutes.
Approved.

Reports

Omaha - by Michael Gordon. LB 627 Anti-Bullying Bill sponsored by Sen. Gwen Howard had a hearing. Twelve people testified, including two students. Nebraska Department of Education supports the legislation. The School Administrators and School Boards Associations do not because they feel it'll open more lawsuits against them. Presently the bill is held in committee while this issue is researched.

LB 759 regarding employment discrimination protection appears to have support. A recent poll conducted by CFEP and the University indicated statewide support for legislation protecting LGBT community from employment and housing discrimination with even the 3rd Congressional District carrying approval rates of above 50%. The highest approval was in Lincoln and ironically in Sen. Foley's district. (Sen. Foley is a consistent foe against LGBT rights, as well as an ardent opponent to all forms of a woman's right to choose to bear children.) It was mentioned that Vern Williams has an excellent study debunking the value and impact of reparative therapy.

LB 50 regarding housing discrimination is coming up. CFEP's poll has impressed Sen. Jeanne Combs who traditionally is against all anti-discrimination measures regarding the LGBT community. She's stated that she may reconsider after review of the statewide poll.

Gordon was encouraged to forward the poll results to all members of the caucus and to have it uploaded on the caucus web-site.

Gordon is in the process of setting up a PAC. He is active in several Omaha campaigns, hosting fund-raisers, etc. He has gathered together several cases of LGBT discrimination in housing and is putting together information on this.

A Gay Summit involving LGBT organizations throughout the state is in the process of being organized by Omaha members. The summit is scheduled for May 21st at Mahoney State Park from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Beatrice - by Victoria Lavin. Victoria continues her excellent work e-publishing the *Daily Queer News*. This service has national subscribers and includes such entities as the Human Rights Campaign. It includes news and updates from across the nation and occasionally the world. To subscribe, please contact the caucus and we'll forward your e-mail address to her.

Third District - by Chris Shepherd. Ill, no report. Shepherd has gotten the web-site up and functioning. It's www.lgbtdemocrats.org. It's excellent. Check it out.

Chair's Report - by Lin Quenzer. Quenzer explained the NE Democrats Executive Committee retreat. It was agreed to have all caucus chairs have a place on the Ex Com. Delays continue to cause difficulties for various minority caucuses to organize and be certified. LGBT Caucus has provisional approval, as does the Women's and Young Democrats caucuses.

Quenzer suggested that the LGBT Caucus organize one big event for fund-raising with some funds going to the NE Democrats and public education featuring a major speaker. She was confident that with help from Kansas LGBT Caucus we could get Sen. Barney Frank. It was suggested to feature a dessert bar in lieu of a dinner to keep overhead to a minimum and allow ticket costs to be reasonable so most LGBT community members could attend.

It appears that at the next 1/4ly NE Democrats Central Committee, the party will formally recognize the caucuses.

Everyone was encouraged to attend the SCC meeting and the Patriots Dinner the next day. The caucus sponsored 2 tables for the Patriots Dinner, an annual fund-raiser for the Lancaster County Democrats.

Committee Reports.

Web-site - by Barb Baier. It's up and running. We can also have e-mails forwarded to our accounts. We need to open bank account to cover costs so we can utilize already raised funds.

Fund Raisers - by Peter Nicely. A fund raiser is scheduled at The Panic in Lincoln for late March. Peter is working with Rick. Rick will confirm date in near future. They want to do promotional fliers and posters, and have an auction to get some excitement going. It'll be a drag show.

Membership by Tim Francis. Francis requested information on mission statement and such. He suggested a coupon format to collect dues and get contact information. Gordon suggested sending this to CFEP and Center for People Need mailing lists. Interest was expressed in establishing a PayPal account on the web-site and a click and pledge account.

Motion was made by Tim Francis and 2nded by Tom Dorsch to setup a system to accept pledges on the web-site. Approved.

P.R. - by Barbara Baier. Baier continues to conduct interviews on the Lancaster County Democrats Forum on Time Warner, Lincoln, Channel 13, Tuesdays at 10:30 p.m., Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 12:30 p.m. Shows can also be seen on the Lancaster County Democrats web-site. Baier will also interview Anne Boyle, which will be aired in Omaha, public access t.v., and the Lancaster County Democrats web-site.

Everyone was encouraged to call the Lancaster County Democrats office to encourage them to get caught up on the videos so everyone can see the shows. Their number is: 476-2268.

Lavin will have Cindi developed logos, letterhead, banner and brochures for caucus to review at the next meeting. Suggestions included a donkey with a triangle.

Victory Fund Issues Forum - by Michael Gordon. Robin Brand of the Victory Fund visited both Omaha and Lincoln. The trainings provided information to encourage LGBT people to run for local office and receive support from this national donor network for the LGBT community.

Old Business.

The caucus is still hampered by inability to setup bank account. Hopefully, this will be resolved soon by the state party.

New Business.

Elections: Fielding Candidates. **Barbara Baier has filed and announced that she is running for Lincoln Public Schools Board. Volunteers and donations are needed. Call 475-7291 to volunteer or donate. Primary is April 5th and general election is May 3rd.**

Baier reported on meeting with the UNL student group. They were very enthusiastic and hoped we would allow them to send a representative to the caucus meetings. Motion was made by Baier and 2nded by Dorsch to allow LGBT organizations to send representatives to the caucus. Approved.

CFEP will sponsor a Lobby Day in the near future at the Unicameral. Gordon will give everyone at least 2 weeks notice so we can adjust our calendars to accommodate it.

Announcements

March 20, 2005 - Lincoln - Gay Straight Youth Panel discussing harassment in learning environments and its impact on education, CWA Union Hall, 7 - 9 p.m., sponsored by NE Democrats LGBT Caucus.

April 9, 2005 - Omaha - Peace & Justice Expo - Contact Citizens for Equal Protection for more specific information.

April 21, 2005 - Omaha - Citizens for Equal Protection, Dessert Reception Fund Raiser, 7 - 9

p.m. CFEP has a part-time director who conducts education regarding LGBT issues and advocates for legislative change.

April 29 & 30, 2005 - UNO - Campus Camp Wellstone - National grassroots training. Contact Jeff Leanna, jeff@jeffleanna.com to donate toward sponsorship and for more information.

May 21, 2005 - LGBT Community Summit at Mahoney Park, Conference Room at lodge, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Representatives of gay/lesbian organizations across the state will discuss our current status and ways in which to participate in the political process to achieve human rights.

Next Meeting

Friday, April 8th, 7 p.m., likely to be the CWA Union Hall at 25th & N in Lincoln (behind Tam O'Shanter's).

Tom Dorsch moved to adjourn the meeting, 2nded by Jeff Leanna. Approved. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:
Barbara A. Baier
Caucus Secretary