

# daily nebraskan

## Gay ordinance meeting prompts much discussion

By Joe Kreizinger

A standing ovation from backers of the proposed gay and lesbian rights amendment to Lincoln's human rights ordinance capped more than four hours of discussion at Tuesday night's Human Rights Commission public hearing.

Gay rights advocates stood to applaud the closing statements of a number of Lincolinites who spoke out in favor of the controversial amendment.

**"This is a lifestyle I cannot accept, and I choose not for my family to accept it. If this amendment is allowed, I and my family will have no choice but to leave the city," Robert Howe.**

The amendment would add the phrase "sexual and affectional orientation," to the 1966 ordinance which protects this city's citizens from discrimination based on "race, color, sex, disability, national origin, age, ancestry, marital status, or receipt of public assistance."

A standing-room-only crowd gathered at the Lincoln City Council chambers to express opinions on the issue.

Both the supporters and the opponents to the proposed amendment were given 45 minutes to make opening statements, with individual speakers allowed five minutes each. Following a 10-minute intermission, supporters and

non-supporters were given an additional 45 minutes each.

### Amendment backers speak

Tim Sindelar, chairman of the Human Rights Commission, noted that about 40 additional supporters of the amendment also wished to add their comments. They were then limited to one-minute presentations.

Supporters of the amendment stressed that the amendment is necessary to ensure gays and lesbians an equal opportunity to become employed and keep their employment and to be ensured of security in finding and keeping their apartments.

Many of those opposed to the amendment spoke out on the immorality and "perversions" of the homosexual lifestyle. Passing the proposed amendment would cause a number of immediate problems, said Robert Howe, a Lincoln businessman.

"This is a lifestyle I cannot accept, and I choose not for my family to accept it," Howe said. "If this amendment is allowed, I and my family will have no choice but to leave the city."

Howe expressed concern that approval of the amendment could result in Lincoln's becoming similar to San Francisco or New Orleans, which Howe faulted as having high ratios of immorality.

He added that in these cities he has encountered "teen-age girls fondling each other in the streets, men exchanging money on the street for sexual favors and a number of homosexual propositions." These kinds of occurrences must not become common in Lincoln, Howe stressed.

### Some stay away

"No one will come and visit this city and like this type

of lifestyle," Howe said.

Cheryl Long, co-chair of the Lincoln Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights, presented another view of the issue to the nine-member Human Rights Commission. Long said "an incredible level of ignorance and discomfort" exists in Lincoln regarding the gay rights ordeal. She urged the commission to "be consistent with the trend to extend legal protection to lesbian and gay citizens."

"There are thousands of lesbians and gay men productive in this community," Long said. "They are weary of being unjustly hated and despised." Long added that it "takes great courage" for supporters of the amendment to step forth and speak.

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Other amendment supporters cited specific examples of discrimination they encountered because of their sexual preference. Gloria Swisher, a Lincoln resident, spoke of her son's being fired from his job with an ambulance firm because of his homosexuality.

"He worked for five years with the firm," Swisher said. "After they found out he was gay, he was released within 24 hours. They said he was 'contagious.'"

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## Attorney says Uruguayans reject military rule

By Jeff Goodwin

The government of Uruguay has been systematically taken over by the military of that country, according to a member of the Lincoln chapter of Amnesty

International.

Pat Williams, a Lincoln attorney, spoke at the Nebraska Union Wednesday afternoon as part of the Talks and Topics program sponsored by the University Program Council.

Williams said the military takeover began in the late 1960s when the military began to crack down on urban guerrilla groups.

"Unlike Chile, where the military took power in a bloody coup, the takeover in Uruguay was gradual," she said. "Eventually, in 1973, the military closed parliament and took over the government completely."

Williams said prior to the late 1960s, Uruguay had been one of the most democratic countries in South America. She said the Uruguayan constitution, which was passed in 1967, has many guarantees of human rights, but the military government is ignoring these.

Williams said that, between 1973 and 1980, one out of 50 Uruguayan citizens was arrested and imprisoned by the government. At one time Uruguay had the most political prisoners per capita of any country in the world, she said.

Williams said a vote was held on a new constitution last November.

"The military was trying to give legitimacy to their rule," she said. But, instead of approving the constitution as they were expected to, the people of Uruguay voted it down.

"This says very loud and clear to the military leaders that they don't have the support of the citizens," Williams said. "The Uruguayan citizens have not for-

gotten their democratic roots, much to the surprise of their military leaders."

Williams said the government has started to crack down even more on political prisoners since the constitution was defeated. There have even been some executions, she said.

Williams detailed the conditions which prisoners must endure in Uruguayan prisons. Prisoners must keep their heads down at all times when they are not in their cell, she said. In addition, parents who are being held prisoner are not allowed to show any affection toward their children when they are allowed visits. Children are only allowed to visit their parents for nine hours every year.

Even if the sentence of a prisoner does expire, the family of the prisoner is required to pay the government for the cost of keeping him in prison.

"As a result of this, very few prisoners are ever released," Williams said.

One of the two prisoners adopted by the Lincoln chapter is a Uruguayan, Williams said. Alvaro Rodriguez Rodriguez is an architecture student who was arrested in June of 1977. Since January 1978, there has been no word from him.

"We are currently writing letters to military and government officials trying to determine what his condition is," Williams said.



Photo by Dave Bentz

Lincoln Attorney Pat Williams speaks to UNL students Wednesday afternoon about the oppression of political prisoners in Uruguay.

## U.S. military role to be topic

By Melinda Norris

Secretary of State Alexander Haig's Nov. 12 refusal to rule out a naval blockade against Nicaragua will be discussed in a panel presentation Monday at 7:30 p.m. in the Nebraska Union. Jeff Hamill, a member of the Young Socialist Alliance, announced the presentation at Wednesday's ASUN Senate meeting.

Entitled "Against U.S. Military Intervention in Latin America," the program will feature speakers Suzy Prenger, human rights coordinator for Nebraskans for Peace, and Jeff Adams, a Latin American studies student.

"Cuba and Nicaragua have called a military alert," Hamill told the senate. "The last time Cuba called a military alert was during the Bay of Pigs."

The United States has a large number of economic interests in Latin America, such as sugar and coffee plantations, Hamill said.

The funneling of arms from Russia through Cuba to El Salvador is a fraudulent excuse for a military move, Hamill said.

The Monday presentation will be sponsored by the Feminist Action Alliance; the Student YWCA; the Young Socialist Alliance; Charles Quinn, member of the New American Movement; lecturer Joe Swanson, and Iranian supporters of the Iranian People's Fedari Guerrilla Organization.

Concerning the city wheel tax, approved by the Lincoln City Council Nov. 16, Nette Nelson, chair of the Government Liaison Committee, told the senate that Mayor Helen Boosalis has until Tuesday at 4:30 p.m. to sign the proposal into law.

Nelson suggested that students write or telephone the mayor to express their opinions in hopes she will veto the proposal.

## inside thursday

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