

NLWJC - Kagan

DPC - Box 027 - Folder 011

Gay/Lesbian - ENDA

LOCATION: Oval Office.

PARTICIPANTS: Senator Jim M. Jeffords
Senator Edward M. Kennedy
Congressman Christopher Shays
Congressman Barney Frank
Wade Henderson, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
Elizabeth Birch, Human Rights Campaign

OUTLINE OF EVENTS: Brief meeting and remarks. Photo-op.

REMARKS REQUIRED: Talking points to be provided.

MEDIA COVERAGE: Yes. Pool.

FIRST LADY'S ATTENDANCE: No.

VICE PRESIDENT'S ATTENDANCE: Optional.

SECOND LADY'S ATTENDANCE: No.

RECOMMENDED BY:

CONTACT: Richard Socarides 6-1611.

ORIGIN OF PROPOSAL: Office of Public Liaison.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 19, 1995

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Ted:

I am writing in regard to the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which you and Senator Jeffords have reintroduced in the current session of Congress.

As you know, discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation is currently legal in 41 states. Men and women in those states may be fired from their jobs solely because of their sexual orientation, even when it has no bearing on their job performance. Those who face this kind of job discrimination have no legal recourse, in either our state or federal courts. This is wrong.

Individuals should not be denied a job on the basis of something that has no relationship to their ability to perform their work. Sadly, as the Labor and Human Resources Committee documented last year, this kind of job discrimination is not rare. Cases of job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation are seen in every area of our country.

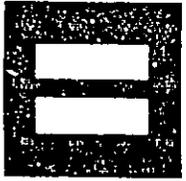
The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, however, is careful to apply some exemptions in certain areas. I understand that your bill provides an exemption for small businesses, the Armed Forces, and religious organizations, including schools and other educational institutions that are substantially controlled or supported by religious organizations. This provision, which I believe is essential, respects the deeply held religious beliefs of many Americans.

Moreover, your bill specifically prohibits preferential treatment on the basis of sexual orientation, including quotas. It also does not require employers to provide special benefits.

The bill, therefore, appears to answer all the legitimate objections previously raised against it, while ensuring that Americans, regardless of their sexual orientation, can find and keep their jobs based on their ability and the quality of their work. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act is designed to protect the rights of all Americans to participate in the job market without fear of unfair discrimination. I support it.

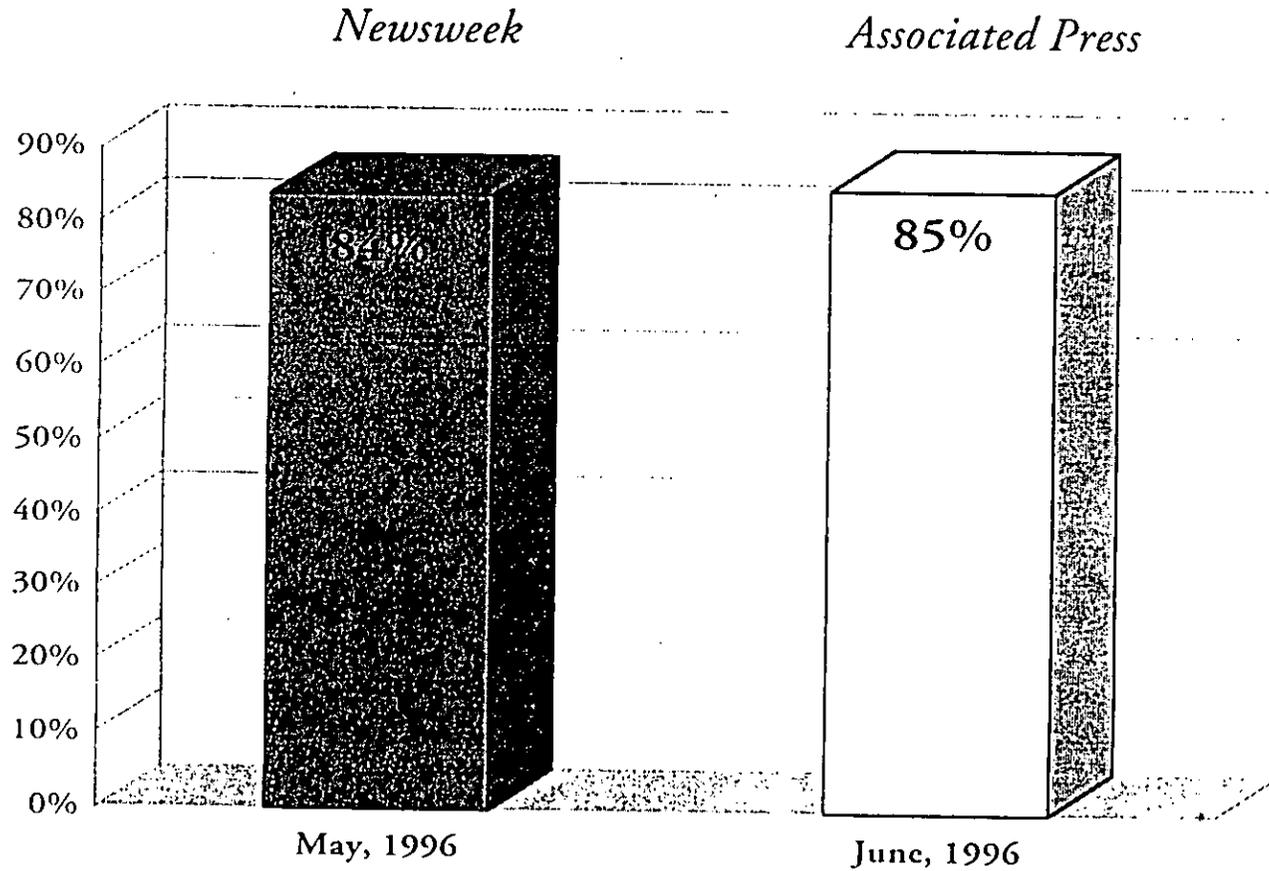
Sincerely,

Bill Clinton



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN

Support for Equal Rights in the Workplace



Americans who favor equal rights for gay people in the workplace.