

NATIONAL COMMITTEE

FOR

SEXUAL CIVIL LIBERTIES

18 OBER ROAD

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540

(609) WA4-1950

*Co-Chairmen:*

Prof. Walter E. Barnett  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dr. Arthur C. Warner  
Princeton, New Jersey

26 August 1996

Thomas F. Coleman, Esq.  
The Spectrum Institute  
4017 Division Street  
Los Angeles, California 90065

Dear Tom:

I am writing to report a surprising discovery which I made the day after you and I had our conference here with the archivist of Princeton University. I was rearranging our files, and I came across a folder containing the papers of the meeting of the National Committee in Columbus, Ohio in 1977.

At that meeting Keeston Lowery, whom you may remember was our representative in Little Rock, made a presentation in which he detailed the entire history of the legislative developments in Arkansas that had led to the unfortunate recriminalization of the crime of sodomy in that state. I discovered that Keeston included for our files, not only a copy of his presentation to us, but copies of the correspondence which passed between him and the then attorney-general of Arkansas, who was none other than the honorable Bill Clinton.

A reading of this correspondence makes abundantly clear the yeoman work which Attorney-General Clinton performed during our efforts to prevent gays from once again being sent to prison for consensual sodomy in private. I was surprised at how extensive was Keeston's correspondence with Clinton, and by the earnestness and sense of commitment which Clinton demonstrated on our behalf. You will notice that some of Clinton's notes are personal holographs to Keeston.

I am taking the liberty of sending you copies of this material, if only to demonstrate how unjust is the current criticism which the President currently receives from so much of the mainstream gay community.

As ever,



Arthur

THE RECRIMINALIZATION OF  
CONSENSUAL SODOMY IN ARKANSAS

A Paper Prepared for the  
National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties  
Columbus, Ohio  
July 1, 1977

Keeston Lowery  
Little Rock, Arkansas

As a result of the Arkansas Criminal Code Revision, effective January 1, 1976, all laws dealing with private sexual relations between consenting adults were effectively repealed. The code revision, initiated by former Gov. Dale Bumpers and overseen by then Atty. Gen. Jim Guy Tucker, had overwhelmingly passed both houses of the state general assembly, and was signed by Governor David Pryor.

Reactionary groups in the 1977 General Assembly introduced several pieces of "morals" legislation. These were designed to reinstate certain laws from the past criminal code that had been inconspicuously omitted in the revision, dealing with sodomy, cohabitation, and obscenity.

The "sodomy" legislation was introduced as HB 117 on January 12, 1977, by Rep. William H. Stancil, a high school football coach from Fort Smith, Arkansas, and 68 co-sponsors. A subsequent conversation with Rep. Stancil revealed that he introduced the bill in response to: a) complaints from fellow legislators that decriminalization of "sodomy" had been "sneaked through" the legislature under the guise of code revision, and b) complaints from church groups in the Ft. Smith area that "sodomy" was now legal, and their equation of legality with moral justification. (The Ft. Smith area of Arkansas is traditionally a conservative republican area of the state, primarily composed religiously of fundamentalist groups.)

Rep. Stancil offered seemingly dichotomous explanations in his reasoning: a) He stated that he did not introduce the "sodomy" bill to "come down" on any group, although this result could not be denied, and b) He felt that Arkansas law was condoning "unchristianlike and immoral" behavior in its criminal code revision. He seemed to view the bill as only a reaffirmation of principle, as he agreed that laws dealing with private sexual acts were generally unenforceable. (Rep. Stancil's understanding of sexual acts appears to be limited, as he was unaware that venereal diseases could be transmitted between members of the same sex.)

In its original form HB 117 prescribed class D felony penalties for all sexual acts involving oral, anal, or animal penetration. The bill was referred to the House judiciary committee. Discussion of the bill's contents were seemingly presented in a humorous context, as one amendment was offered to justify enlargement of the prison system in order to adequately house the large number of married couples that commit "sodomy". Two amendments were offered which became a part of the bill, limiting its scope. The amended HB 117 read as follows:

Section 1. Sodomy (1) A person commits sodomy if such person performs any act of sexual gratification involving:

- a) the penetration, however slight, of the anus or mouth of an animal or a person by the penis of a person of the same sex or animal; or
- b) the penetration, however slight, of the vagina or anus of an animal or a person by any body member of a person of the same sex or an animal.

2) Sodomy is a class A misdemeanor.

(Copy attached)

The two amendments thus limited the scope of the bill to homosexuality and bestiality, and reduced the penalties from class D felony to class A misdemeanor.

While in the judiciary committee the bill gained national attention, along with the other "morals" legislation that had been introduced. It was at this point that I, Keeston Lowery, made contact with Mr. Paul Hardman of San Francisco, who subsequently informed Mr. Arthur Warner of these occurrences. In a later telephone conversation, Mr. Warner was informed of the status of the bills before the legislature and my willingness to lobby against the proposed "sodomy" bill. (My activities in the legislature were somewhat limited, as I was also lobbying for an unrelated bill that I had co-authored. I was unable to risk compromising the chances of passing my bill, and it is doubtful that any amount of legislative work would have altered the eventual outcome in the case of the "sodomy" bill.) Mr. Warner stated that letters could be obtained from at least one state governor urging Gov. Pryor to veto the measure if it reached his desk. Mr. Warner contacted Nan Brown, director of the Arkansas affiliate of the ACLU, in seeking local support, and I made follow-up calls in order to strengthen our collective efforts.

As conversations continued between Mr. Warner, Mr. Lowery, and Ms. Brown, it became apparent that our strategy was, out of necessity, dependent on action in the Governor's office. The chances for passage of the amended sodomy bill in the Arkansas House were regrettably excellent, and its margin of passage in the Senate was expected to be even greater. (There are three groups of fairly progressive representatives in the House—three(3) are black members, the delegation from Little Rock, and two or three members heavily influenced by organized labor—a total of possibly 12 out of a total House membership of 100. There are no truly progressive members of the Arkansas Senate.)

On February 1, 1977, I contacted Ann Pride, appointments secretary for Gov. Pryor, to request a tentative meeting with the governor in the event that the bill reached his desk. (Copy attached)

On February 3, 1977, I contacted Atty. Gen. Bill Clinton by phone concerning HB 117, and a follow-up letter and his reply are attached to this paper. He stated that he would make every effort to stop the progress of the bill.

HB 117, as amended, was reported out of the House judiciary committee with a "do pass" recommendation, and in mid-February passed the House by a vote of 66 "yes", 2 "no", 3 "present", and 29 not voting. (copy attached) The only "no" votes came from a black representative from Pine Bluff, and a labor-influenced representative from El Dorado. The remainder of the progressive members of the House either voted "present" or did not vote.

Under advisement from Mr. Arthur Warner, on Feb. 17, 1977, I contacted Gov. Milton Shapp of Penn. by letter, the purpose of the correspondence being to inform him of the status of HB 117, and seek his assistance at the level of the governor's office. (Copy Attached) Assistance was also sought from Gov. Jerry Brown of California, through Mr. Paul Hardman, and from Gov. Straub of Oregon, through Mr. Tom Coleman. (Copy Attached) There was no confirmation of contact by Gov. Shapp, though I believe contact was made with the assistance of Mr. Barry Kohn and Mr. Mark Segal. Pryor's office issued one press release concerning a contact made by Gov. Brown, downplaying the contact as only an "inquiry" about the bill. There was no confirmation of contact by Gov. Straub, although the forementioned press release did indicate that several contacts had been made from individuals in other states.

HB 117, following passage in the House, was sent to the Senate and assigned to the Senate judiciary committee. The bill mysteriously remained at the bottom of the committee agenda for two weeks, and then during the last week of Feb. was reported out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation. The chairman of the judiciary committee, Senator Max Howell, is considered by most to be the powerhouse of the Senate, and thus his support of the bill signaled its certain passage. During committee hearings he erroneously stated that the amended bill only dealt with bestiality, but denied making this statement in a subsequent telephone interview.

Mr. Arthur Warner, on a return trip from Houston, was able to spend March 1 and 2 in Little Rock. On Wed., March 2, I arranged for a meeting with Arkansas Atty. Gen. Bill Clinton, and though the encounter was not lengthy and not without distraction, it was fairly productive. Mr. Clinton, at least in theory, was receptive to and supported our arguments against the bill, and indicated that he had made efforts to halt HB 117 in the Senate committee, explaining possibly the delayed vote. Mr. Warner discussed the legal arguments offered by officials in other states opposed to the criminalization of consensual sodomy, and provided information as to how these opinions could be obtained. A portion of this information, a city attorney opinion from Los Angeles dealing with the employment of gay policemen, was provided by Mr. Tom Coleman and was forwarded to Atty. Gen. Clinton.

HB 117 remained on the bottom of the Senate agenda from late February until Thursday, March 17, 1977. On that date, the day before recess of the General Assembly and the last day for voting on pending issues, Senator Milt Earnhart of Ft. Smith asked that the Senate rules be suspended and that HB 117 be considered. In discussion of the bill, Senator Earnhart reportedly suggested that the Senate should find some individuals to demonstrate the sexual acts described in the proposed legislation. After a brief discussion, the bill was passed unanimously by the Arkansas Senate on March 17, 1977.

A hand-written letter to this writer from Atty. Gen. Clinton, dated March 22, stated that attempts to kill HB 117 in the Senate had failed and that he doubted that Gov. Pryor would veto the bill.

Under Arkansas law a bill must be acted upon within five(5) days, excluding Sunday, of its arrival in the governor's office or it automatically becomes law without his signature. The governor can pocket veto any bill following an adjournment of the General Assembly, but the use of a pocket veto is not applicable in the case of a recess, as in the case of HB 117.

Further contact was then made with the governor's office by this writer and Nan Brown, director of the local ACLU, regarding an earlier requested meeting. That meeting was scheduled for March 29 with Steve Clark, Gov. Pryor's legislative aide. On Monday, March 28, Nan Brown was contacted by the governor's office and told that a mistake had been made and that the governor must make a decision on the bill that afternoon, one day earlier than expected. As a result of this unexpected change, Mr. Tom Coleman was forced to cancel his planned trip to Little Rock for the meeting, and the minister from the Unitarian-Universalist church was unable to attend on such short notice. The coalition opposed to HB 117 was thus represented by Keeston Lowery, speaking from a personal angle as to the effects of the proposed law, Nan Brown, speaking of the legal ramifications, and the president of the local Quaker group, speaking from an ethical-religious viewpoint. It was the consensus of the group following the meeting that the chances of a veto were minimal at best.

Governor Pryor signed HB 117 into law on the afternoon of March 28, 1977, and the bill became Act 828 of the 1977 Arkansas General Assembly.

Follow-up letters and replies from Gov. Pryor and Atty. Gen. Clinton are attached. The letter from the Atty. Gen. is especially interesting, in that it describes his role in the Senate and the governor's office in attempts to prevent the passage of this bill.

February 1, 1977

Ms. Ann Pride  
Appointments Secretary  
Governor's Office, Room 250  
State Capitol Building  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Re: HB 117

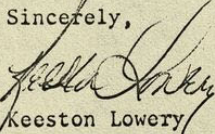
Dear Ann,

Thank you for returning my call this morning regarding the status of HB 117, which as amended declares certain forms of sodomy as Class D felonies and prescribes penalties for violation of the proposed statute.

The State of Arkansas took what I consider to be a very progressive step last year in adopting the new criminal code revision which repealed laws governing private sexual behavior between consenting adults. I offer my thanks to Governor Pryor for his signing of the code revision. Many responsible citizens in this state were somewhat disturbed with the introduction of HB 117, which I personally consider to be a regressive step that our state need not take. The tone of the bill, as amended, would affect the personal and professional lives of many responsible citizens of our state. For this reason I, as a representative of many others, urge the Governor to consider carefully the implications of this bill. In the event that HB 117 is passed in both the House and Senate, I will make a formal request for a meeting between Governor Pryor, myself, members of the clergy, an ACLU representative, and others concerned with the effect that this bill would have on the lives of many Arkansans.

Thank you in advance for any assistance that you may provide concerning this matter. I ask that you keep my tentative request for meeting in mind as this legislative session progresses.

Sincerely,

  
Keeston Lowery

NATIONAL COMMITTEE

FOR

SEXUAL CIVIL LIBERTIES

18 OBER ROAD

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540

(609) WA4-1950

*Co-Chairmen:*

Prof. Walter E. Barnett  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dr. Arthur C. Warner  
Princeton, New Jersey

9 February 1977

Dear Keeston,

Thank you very much for the copy of your letter to Ms. Ann Price. I think it put the position very well

If all goes well, I am planning to leave Princeton by car next Tuesday, the 15th inst., headed for Houston and Austin. IF the weather is not bad, I may decide to take the inland route through Tennessee, in which event I should go through Little Rock, reaching there sometime on Thursday, the 17th, probably not until the evening. I could meet you then if your schedule permitted, and, if need be, spend part of Friday with you before continuing on. (I have to be in Austin by Saturday night, the 19th.) On the other hand, if it is necessary to take a more southern route, my visit to Little Rock would have to be on my return from Houston, which would not be until sometime after the 27th or 28th inst. or later. At that time, however, I would be less hurried.

Let me take this opportunity to commend you for your interest and concern in the entire subject, and for the diligent manner in which you are proceeding. I look forward to the time when you can meet the members of this Committee.

All good wishes and kind personal regards.

Very sincerely,



Arthur C. Warner

Mr. Keeston Lowery  
1009 Allis Street  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72202



February 3, 1977

The Honorable Bill Clinton  
Attorney General  
State of Arkansas  
Justice Building  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Re: HB 117

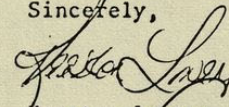
Dear sir:

Thank you for returning my call this afternoon regarding the status of HB 117, which as amended declares certain forms of sodomy as Class D felonies.

The state of Arkansas took what I consider to be a very progressive step last year in adopting the criminal code revision which repealed laws governing private sexual behavior between consenting adults. I was somewhat disturbed with the introduction of HB 117, which I personally consider to be a regressive step that our state need not take. The tone of the bill would affect the personal and professional lives of many responsible citizens of our state. I was contacted by a representative of the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties concerning the bill, and was advised that the Committee could obtain letters from the Governors of several states urging a veto if this piece of legislation reaches Governor Pryor's office. I have requested a tentative meeting with Governor Pryor to follow-up these letters in the event that the bill reaches his desk. It is my hope that HB 117 will die in the judiciary committee.

Thank you in advance for any assistance that you may provide concerning this matter. Please feel free to call me if I can be of any help.

Sincerely,



Keeston Lowery

February 3, 1977

The Honorable Bill Clinton  
Attorney General  
State of Arkansas  
Justice Building  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Re: HB 117

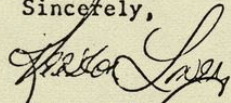
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Thank you in advance for any assistance that you may provide concerning this matter. Please feel free to call me if I can be of any help.

Sincerely,



Keeston Lowery



BILL CLINTON  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

STATE OF ARKANSAS  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
JUSTICE BUILDING, LITTLE ROCK

February 18, 1977

Mr. Keeston Lowery  
1009 Allis Street  
Little Rock, AR 72204

Dear Mr. Lowery:

Thank you for your letter of February 3. I will continue to do what I can to discourage the criminalization of acts which have no business being part of the criminal law.

Sincerely,

*Bill Clinton*  
Bill Clinton  
Attorney General

bk

February 17, 1977

The Honorable Milton J. Shapp  
Governor of Pennsylvania  
Main Capitol  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear sir:

I am writing concerning a piece of legislation currently being considered by the 1977 Arkansas General Assembly.

Due to a 1976 Arkansas criminal code revision, all laws dealing with private sexual relations between consenting adults were effectively repealed. The criminal code revision passed in both houses of the state legislature and was signed by Governor David Pryor. Upon discovering this one aspect of the code revision, HB 117, sponsored by representative Stancil, was introduced into the Arkansas House in early January, 1977, and was referred to the judiciary committee.

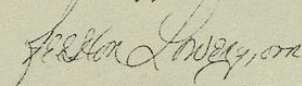
In its original form HB 117 set class D felony penalties for acts of "sodomy", defined in the bill as oral, anal, homosexual, or animal intercourse. Following two committee amendments, the bill reported to the House set class C felony penalties for homosexuality and bestiality, and the House subsequently passed the legislation by a vote of 66-2. HB 117 is currently being considered by the Senate judiciary committee, and the chances for its receiving a "do pass" recommendation and subsequent passage by the full Senate are regrettably good. It appears that the only point at which HB 117 can be halted is in the Governor's office, and I have some doubts that Governor Pryor will have the courage to veto the measure.

Having knowledge of your excellent record in the area of civil liberties, I appeal for any assistance that you may offer in defeating this regressive legislation. Governor Pryor has continued the trend of progressive reform in our state that began with Governors Rockefeller and Bumpers. I am certain that he personally opposes HB 117, but politically he may feel that the risk associated with a veto is too great. I would appreciate any contact that you may make with our Governor, be it personal contact or by letter, regarding your experiences in dealing with this type of legislation.

I have made contact with the Governor's office through phone and by letter, and have requested a meeting in the case of the bill's passage. A representative of the local chapter of the ACLU and at least one clergyman wish to accompany me. I have also talked with our state's Attorney General, Bill Clinton, who also opposes the legislation. Your encouragement in Governor Pryor's granting an audience with us would be greatly appreciated.

I thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Keeston Lowery, OTR

# NATIONAL COMMITTEE

FOR

## SEXUAL CIVIL LIBERTIES

*Co-Chairmen:*  
Prof. Walter E. Barnett  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dr. Arthur C. Warner  
Princeton, New Jersey

18 OBER ROAD  
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540  
(609) WA4-1950

Reply to:  
1800 N. Highland Ave.  
Suite 106  
Los Angeles, CA 90028

March 2, 1977

Honorable Robert W. Straub  
Governor, State of Oregon  
254 State Capitol  
Salem, Oregon 97310

Dear Governor Straub:

I am writing you for assistance with a matter of national concern to civil libertarians. I am aware of your support for equal rights for gay people and hope that you might find the time to help us in this time of need.

The Arkansas Legislature is about to pass a bill (H.B.117) which would reinstate felony penalties for private sexual acts of a homosexual nature. About two years ago the legislature passed a general penal code reform which decriminalized private sexual acts between all consenting adults, both heterosexual and homosexual. This has been in actual effect for over one year. Recently, an anti-gay legislator introduced H.B.117 to outlaw homosexual acts. Unfortunately, this bill has passed the House by a vote of 62/2. It was reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee this week with a recommendation that it be passed. The Senate will vote on the bill later this week and it is expected that the bill will pass almost unanimously. Our only hope now lies with the Governor of Arkansas.

Our Committee became aware of this bill some three weeks ago. We have taken the following steps. Dr. Arthur C. Warner, our co-chairman, is in Little Rock today and is meeting with the Attorney General. We believe that he will write an opinion to Governor Pryor stating that the bill is unconstitutional on equal protection and other grounds. We are obtaining copies of similar attorney general opinions from Texas and Pennsylvania as a guide to Attorney General Tucker in Arkansas. However, the ultimate decision to veto the bill lies with Governor Pryor. We believe that with the proper encouragement he will veto the bill.

At the request of our Committee Governor Milton Shapp of Pennsylvania and Governor Edmund Brown Jr. of California have communicated with Governor Pryor. They have expressed their personal support for equal protection for gay people and the steps they have taken in their own states to secure equal rights. We believe that this type of communication will help Governor Pryor to do the right thing and to know that other Governors have been supportive of equal rights for gays.

page 2 of  
letter to  
Governor Straub

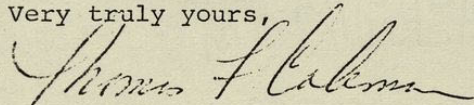
I have been in communication with people from the Oregon Task Force on Sexual Preference and others in your state in the hope that you might personally communicate with Governor Pryor. I don't know if my request has been communicated to you yet.

Unfortunately, time is of the essence in that the bill will be on Governor Pryor's desk this week or next week at the latest. Therefore, I am writing to you directly and asking if you could find the time to express your concern for civil rights of all people, including gays, to Governor Pryor.

Whatever you can do would be greatly appreciated. If you need any further information from me, please call me at (213) 464-6666 in Los Angeles.

On behalf of the National Committee and all civil libertarians, we thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,



THOMAS F. COLEMAN  
Attorney at Law

TC:dg



BILL CLINTON  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
LITTLE ROCK

3/22

Keerton -

I did my best to kill H03117  
and though I had it done -  
Sonny - Thanks for the material -  
I ~~had~~ have had a complete  
study done of the legality  
of the Act - I have to say I  
don't think Gov. will veto the  
bill but it's possible - Will  
do what I can.

But  
Bill

March 29, 1977

The Honorable Bill Clinton  
Attorney General, State of Arkansas  
Justice Building, Capitol Building  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Bill,

I have many regrets this evening as I reflect over Governor Pryor's signing of HB 117. My basic feeling is one of fear of the precedent that this has established for future discriminatory legislation against minority groups in Arkansas.

I have suffered once in a professional situation from the type of discrimination that this law prescribes, losing a job on which I had an excellent performance record simply because of my sexual orientation. After a month of Hell, I was reinstated and my superiors were dismissed, but only because I refused to be blackmailed or compromise myself. I actively fought HB 117 because, as trite as it may seem, I truly did not want to see anyone else harassed as I had been.

I appreciate your efforts at stopping this bill in committee, albeit unsuccessful. But I must say that I am disappointed that you did not take an active role in fighting this bill in the Governor's office, eg. issuing an opinion regarding rights of privacy, discrimination, etc. I personally feel that there is no room for compromise in the area of human rights, regardless of the political consequences. Failure to actively resist discrimination is equivalent to support of discrimination.

I sincerely hope that verbal support of equal rights in Arkansas will, in the future, be channeled into progressive action to insure that our state moves ahead in insuring the civil rights of all individuals.

Still uncompromised,

Keeston Lowery





BILL CLINTON  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
LITTLE ROCK

3/30

Keeton -

I got your letter.

I want you to know that I told the Gov. ① I would publicly support him if he vetoed the bill;

② that I could not say categorically that the bill is unconstitutional because the U.S. Sup. Ct. has refused to extend the right to privacy to homosexual partners in private, although I think their decision was wrong;

③ that I told the Gov's Staff people that I could and would say that there were problems with the bill which might make it unconstitutional but ~~was~~ I was not asked ~~to~~ for an opinion (over)

and was told that the  
Gov was going to sign  
the bill anyway —

So it is not accurate to  
say I did not take an  
active role with the Gov's office.  
I did — They knew how I felt  
and what I would say — I could  
not issue an opinion they didn't  
ask for — nor could I say the law  
was something it isn't —  
Also, after the bill got out of  
the Senate City, 2 senators told  
me they would keep it from  
coming to a vote. They didn't  
although I made an agreement  
with them on another issue so  
that they would. Maybe they  
couldn't get it done —  
I am more disappointed than you know <sup>But,</sup> <sub>Prin</sub>

March 29, 1977

Honorable David Pryor  
Governor, State of Arkansas  
State Capitol  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear sir:

It is with disappointment that I received word tonight that you had signed HB 117. Our state has certainly taken a regressive step in the area of civil rights, (the protection of which we have never been held in aclaim).

It seems that there are two possible reasons that you have attached your stamp of approval to this regressive legislation:

- 1) Political expediency: It cannot be argued that your signing of HB 117 will certainly allign you with the forces of discrimination and bigotry which prevail in Arkansas each legislative session.
- 2) Lack of committment to human rights: Your public statements would seem to indicate that you favor the elimination of all vestiges of discrimination in this state. Yet, when it comes time to be counted among the humanistic voices of reason in our society, to be an agent of progressive social change, you ignore the rights and needs of a certain minority of individuals and join the bandwagon of prejudice and discrimination. There can be no compromise in the area of human rights. An individual either supports equal protection under the law, regardless of political consequences, or he/she does not. Obviously, by your action today, you have taken your stand against equal protection, and I cannot argue with the political expediency of this decision.

My mother, living in Mississippi, suffered much during the civil rights movement for her actions favoring equal rights for all individuals. But she slept well, knowing that she had taken the only moral course of action. As trite as this may seem to someone in your position, she was an agent of progressive social change. This type of action is especially important for you as governor, as your actions influence the thoughts of so many. You have failed to take a positive stand in this area of human rights, and have, instead, chosen the road of political expediency, a sad choice for a man who once carried the banner of progressive reform.

Still uncompromised,

Keeston Lowery



DAVID PRYOR  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ARKANSAS  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
LITTLE ROCK

April 6, 1977

Mr. Keeston Lowery  
1009 Allis Street  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72204

Dear Mr. Lowery:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding HB 117, the so-called Sodomy Bill. As you may know, I have signed this bill into law.

This was a very difficult decision for me to make, and I was grateful to have your thoughtful comments during the deliberations on this issue. Please feel free to contact me in the future about matters of concern to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Pryor".

David Pryor

DP:blj



ACT 828 1977

State of Arkansas  
Seventy-First General Assembly  
Regular Session, 1977

AS ENGROSSED 1/31/77  
AS ENGROSSED 1/25/77

A Bill

HOUSE BILL

117

By: Representative Stancil, et al

For An Act To Be Entitled

1 "AN ACT DECLARING SODOMY TO BE A CRIMINAL OFFENSE AND TO  
2 PRESCRIBE THE PENALTY FOR SUCH OFFENSE; AND FOR OTHER  
3 PURPOSES."  
4

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
6

7 SECTION 1. Sodomy. (1) A person commits sodomy if such person per-  
8 forms any act of sexual gratification involving:

9 (a) the penetration, however slight, of the anus or mouth of an animal  
10 or a person by the penis of a person of the same sex or an animal; or

11 (b) the penetration, however slight, of the vagina or anus of an animal  
12 or a person by any body member of a person of the same sex or an animal.

13 (2) Sodomy is a Class "A" misdemeanor.  
14

15 SECTION 2. All laws or parts of laws in conflict with this Act are  
16 hereby repealed.  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21

/s/ Bill Stancil, et al

22  
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26  
27  
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29  
30  
31  
32

MAR 28 1977  
APPROVED BY *[Signature]*  
GOVERNOR

*[Handwritten signature]*

*[Handwritten signature]*