

## Vermont Commission on Women Meeting Minutes February 11, 2009

Commissioners Present: Marcia Merrill, Chair; Laine Akiyama; Sharon Baade; Gretchen Bailey; Eileen Boland; Cary Brown; Carol Buchdahl; Retta Dunlap; Ruth Finn; Cathy Frey; Karen Henry; Anne McClaughry; Marion Milne; and Vicky Young.

Commissioners Absent: Mary Claire Carroll and Linda Fogg.

Advisory Council Members Present: Lindy Hatcher representing Vermont Federation of Business and Professional Women, Linda Ingold representing Vermont Women's Business Center, Louise Luring representing American Association of University Women, and Carol Story representing Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains.

Staff: Janet Bullard, Wendy Love, and Lilly Talbert.

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Janet Bullard

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

### Introductions/Announcements

Everyone introduced themselves.

### Minutes

Motion made by Anne McClaughry to accept the January 14, 2009 minutes as written. Seconded by Ruth Finn and voted unanimously.

### Freedom to Marry Policy

Carol introduced the discussion by noting that the Vermont Commission on Women has a Civil Rights Policy which states: "The Vermont Commission on Women supports legislation, policies, programs, and initiatives that facilitate full civil rights for all Vermonters, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry, place of birth, age, physical, or mental disability."

Motion made by Carol that the Vermont Commission on Women support the Freedom to Marry legislation that would allow the right to marry to same sex couples as is now allowed for heterosexual couples. Seconded by Karen Henry.

Motion made by Retta to amend the motion to postpone the vote to the April 2009 Commission Meeting to allow commissioners to get more information about this issue. Seconded by Anne McClaughry. Discussion on the amendment ensued. Motion made by Laine to call the question. Vote to call the question passed unanimously. Vote on amendment failed.

A full discussion followed on the main motion. Motion made by Cary to call the question on the original motion. Vote to call the question passed unanimously. Vote on motion passed. Wendy was instructed to inform the relevant legislative committees and the governor of the Commission's position on this issue.

### Harassment Study Committee Report

Eileen, Chair of the Commission's Education Committee, informed everyone that the *Preliminary Report of the Committee to Study Harassment and Bullying of Students in Vermont Schools* contains a lot of national data and information since Vermont's data is not as complete. The report recommends change in three areas: 1.) statutory language, 2.) standards for teacher training and recertification and 3.) continuing support for school administrators and teachers on how to recognize and investigate claims, and support for peer-to-peer education in schools.

Motion made by Eileen that the Vermont Commission on Women support the committees' preliminary findings and the recommendations for teacher certification standards, creating healthy school climates, and statutory changes necessary to address harassment and bullying in Vermont schools. Seconded by Carol Buchdahl. Motion passed unanimously.

#### Committee Time

Committees met to discuss further the Harassment Study Committee Report as well as review their sections of the status report. Motion offered by Retta on behalf of the Education Committee that the Commission authorizes Wendy and Eileen to meet with the Commissioner of Education regarding the draft harassment report. Seconded by Sharon Baade and voted unanimously.

#### Update Burton Snowboards Discussion Update

Anne reported that the task force has been doing research on developing a guide for parents on how to talk to young children about objectionable imagery and will have another phone meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 12:36 p.m.