



<<http://mlk-hawaii.com/>>

MEDIA RELEASE

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DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. COALITION-HAWAII URGES SENATE TO PASS HB 444 Reluctance To Pass Civil Unions Bill Has Become An International Embarrassment To The Aloha State

HONOLULU: MARCH 24, 2009 -- The reluctance of the Hawai`i State Senate to pass HB 444 which "Extends the same rights, benefits, protections, and responsibilities of spouses in a marriage to partners in a civil union" is producing an embarrassing tsunami of international media with more than 400,000 Google hits now online. MLK-Hawai`i President, Pat Anthony said, "Were Dr. King here today, he would be speaking in support of civil unions. Anthony quoted Dr. King: "A right delayed is a right denied." The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition-Hawaii strongly urges the Hawaii State Senate to lift up their eyes and see that this inequity can no longer stand. Pull this bill out of committee and vote for Civil Rights "with liberty and justice for all."

How can we know Dr. King would take this position? In 1937, at the age of 25, an openly Gay man named Bayard Rustin began training in non-violent protest with the American Friends Service Committee. By 1963, Rustin was perhaps one of the most important figures in Black and Gay history. Because he was Gay, Rustin fought for social and political causes from behind the scenes. Those who know this forgotten history will recognize Rustin's photo standing directly behind Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963 while Dr. King delivered his famous "I Have A Dream" speech. Rustin was the chief organizer of the March on Washington; a visionary strategist and activist who has been called "the unknown hero" of the civil rights movement. "A year before his death in 1987, Rustin said: **Twenty-five, thirty years ago, the barometer of human rights in the United States were black people. That is no longer true. The barometer for judging the character of people in regard to human rights is now those who consider themselves gay, homosexual, or lesbian.**" Also see: <<http://rustin.org/>>

"Of all the tyrannies that affect mankind, tyranny in religion is the worst; every other species of tyranny is limited to the world we live in; but this attempts to stride beyond the grave, and seeks to pursue us into eternity."-- Thomas Paine

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