

May 23, 2000

than something you have chosen, that you could change it at will? If that's not the case, then why would you suggest that someone else can?

A popular theme in your letters is that Vermont has been infiltrated by outsiders. Both sides of my family have lived in Vermont for generations. I am heart and soul a Vermonter, so I'll thank you to stop saying that you are speaking for "true Vermonters."

You invoke the memory of the brave people who have fought on the battlefield for this great country, saying that they didn't give their lives so that the "homosexual agenda" could tear down the principles they died defending. My 83-year-old father fought in some of the most horrific battles of World War II, was wounded and awarded the Purple Heart.

He shakes his head in sadness at the life his grandson has had to live. He says he fought alongside homosexuals in those battles, that they did their part and bothered no one. One of his best friends in the service was gay, and he never knew it until the end, and when he did find out, it mattered not at all. That wasn't the measure of a man.

You religious folk just can't bear the thought that as my son emerges from the hell that was his childhood he might like to find a lifelong companion and have a measure of happiness. It offends your sensibilities that he should request the right to visit that companion in the hospital, to make medical decisions for him or to benefit from tax laws governing inheritance.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

8989

How dare he? you say. These outrageous request would threaten the very existence of your family, would undermine the sanctity of marriage.

You use religion to abdicate your responsibility to be thinking human beings. There are vast numbers of religious people who find you attitudes repugnant. God is not for the privileged majority, and God knows my son has committed no sin.

The deep-thinking author of a letter to the April 12 Valley News who lectures about homosexual sin and tells us about "those of us who have been blessed with the benefits of a religious upbringing" asks: "What ever happened to the idea of striving ... to be better human beings than we are?"

Indeed, sir, what ever happened to that? (Sharon Underwood lives in White River Junction, VT)

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2000

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, May 18, I was unable to cast a vote for final passage on H.R. 4205, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2001 and 6 amendments.

For rollcall vote No. 202, the Skelton amendment, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 203, the Sanchez amendment, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 204, the Moakley amendment, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 205, the Cox amendment, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 206, the Buyer substitute amendment to the Taylor amendment, I would have voted "no."

For rollcall vote No. 207, the Taylor amendment, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 208, Final Passage of H.R. 4205, I would have voted "yes."

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 22, I was unable to cast votes for H.R. 3852, the deadline extension for construction of a hydroelectric project in Alabama, S. 1236, the deadline extension for construction of the Arrowrock Dam hydroelectric project in Idaho, and H. Con. Res. 302, concerning a National Moment of Remembrance to Honor Men and Women of the U.S. Who Died in Pursuit of Freedom and Peace.

For rollcall vote No. 211, H.R. 3852, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 212, S. 1236, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 213, H. Con. Res. 302, I would have voted "yes."