

TennCare Action



photo by Al Levenson

at the Governor's Office

by Pam Beziat

Thanks to the good organizing efforts of education director Jen Cartwright, coordinator Matt Leber, and a handful of spirited activists, a successful six and one-half-hour nonviolent direct action was held on June 20 at Governor Bredesen's office. Our success was due to extensive early planning and to a training in nonviolent action. Support and coordination was also received from ADAPT, American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today, a Memphis-based action group.

At 10 a.m., our group of about 20 activists moved into the governor's reception space and presented our demands:

1. Stop the TennCare cuts.
2. Resume talks by June 30 on ways the program can be reformed.

Our spokespersons Randy Alexander, Lori Smith, Glen Barnhill, and Karl Meyer negotiated a Wednesday meeting with

Governor Bredesen to hear our demands. We insisted the meeting be open to the public and the media.

We informed the office staff that our sit-in of the governor's office would continue until we received written confirmation of our demands. We were given a 10:30 a.m. Wednesday meeting time. The situation quickly changed, however, when Governor Bredesen showed up Tuesday and held a behind-doors meeting with our group and available press. Our first victory occurred following a moving speech by Glen Barnhill, who requested the retention of nurses for patients on ventilators. The governor agreed!

At press time of the NPJC newsletter on Friday, June 24, we remain at the Governor's office 24 hours a day, seven days a week to keep this human health crisis on Governor Bredesen's table.

See page 4 for more information about the people participating in this action.

NASHVILLE PEACE AND JUSTICE CENTER

A community-based, multi-issue center for the Middle Tennessee region seeking to promote peacemaking, social justice and environmental issues in our society and the world.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Americans United for Separation of Church and State
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Bring Urban Recycling to Nashville Today
Common Cause
Cumberland Greens Bioregional Council
The Emma Center
Earth Matters
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashville
Greater Nashville Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Homeless Power Project
Interfaith Alliance of Middle Tennessee
Latin American Central American Solidarity Association
Living Wage Campaign of Nashville
Middle Tennessee Presbytery/Peace With Justice Committee
Mideast Peace Coalition
Nashville Friends Meeting
National Organization for Women
Pan Africa
PeaceRoots Alliance
Radio Free Nashville
The Scarritt-Bennett Center
Tennessee Coalition to Abolish State Killing
Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition
United Nations Association
Veterans for Peace
War Resisters League

ALTERNATIVES

is the official bimonthly publication of the Nashville Peace & Justice Center

EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

Ashley Crownover, Al Levenson, Gene Kelly, and Karl Meyer

SUBMISSIONS

We seek cartoons, articles, letters and photos related to peace and justice issues relevant to the Tennessee progressive community.

We will try to respect the integrity of your submissions, but we reserve the right to edit for clarity, grammar, spelling and length.

Objections? Write us a letter.

Fax: 615-320-8897 Phone: 615-321-9066

Email: nashvillepjc@yahoo.com

Calendar July/ August 2005

July 7: The Secretary of Agriculture will hold hearings on the 2007 Farm Bill in Nashville. More Info: www.oxfamamerica.org.

July 21: Central Labor Council (CLC) Luncheon. Learn more about local unions and their current campaigns, and hear of ways to help organized workers in Middle Tennessee. Meets every 3rd Thursday, 12 p.m., at Piccadilly Cafeteria on Murfreesboro Road. More Info: Michael Allen, michael.allen@unitedwaynashville.org.

July 21: Jobs with Justice works to improve working people's standard of living, fight for job security, and protect workers' right to organize. Steering committee meets directly AFTER the CLC luncheon on the 3rd Thursday of each month at Piccadilly Cafeteria. More Info: If you would like notice about regular meetings, please contact Maura-Lee Albert, mauraleealbert@yahoo.com, or Daynise Couch, daynisecouch@hotmail.com

July 23: EarthMatters Tennessee's Non Lawn and Alternative Garden Tour. More Info: 615-252-6953 or www.earthmattersn.org.

July 28: Congregations Offering a Living Wage (COLW). Explore ways for more workers to earn a living wage by working with congregations and their members. Meets every 4th Thursday (July 28 and August 25) at 10 a.m., Jefferson Street Missionary Baptist Church. More Info: Rev. Bill Barnes, 615-297-3973, iamacog@comcast.net, or Rev. Brad Gran, 615-883-5176, bhgran@bellsouth.net.

August 17-19: "People + Money: Making It Work in the Neighborhood," National Housing and Banking Summit, Hyatt Regency, Chicago. Twelve workshops on community reinvestment, African-American home ownership, predatory lending, creative approaches to affordable housing. More Info: National People's Action, 810 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622-4103; phone 312-243-3035; fax 312-243-7044.

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August 25: Congregations Offering a Living Wage (COLW). Explore ways for more workers to earn a living wage by working with congregations and their members. Meets every 4th Thursday at 10 a.m., Jefferson Street Missionary Baptist Church. More Info: Rev. Bill Barnes, 615-297-3973, iamacog@comcast.net, or Rev. Brad Gran, 615-883-5176, bhgran@bellsouth.net.

September 8-11: Sierra Summit 2005, National Environmental Convention and Exposition, Moscone Center, San Francisco. Workshops on everything from "Backyard Organics" and "Eating Smart" to "Photography and Nature" and "Restoring the Wild." Exhibit hall with environmentally sensitive technologies and products. More Info: To register, go to www.sierrasummit2005.org.

September 15: School of the Americas Watch (SOAW), Nashville Chapter. 6:30 p.m. at NPJC*. Nashville's SOAW works in solidarity with other chapters around the country and throughout Latin America to shut down the notorious School of the Americas terrorist training facility in Ft. Benning, Georgia.

September 22-25: Jobs With Justice Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO. For labor, religious, student, and community activists supporting the right to organize, economic justice, accountable development, and more. More Info: www.jwj.org.

September 22: National Student Labor Pre-Conference, in connection with the JWW Annual Meeting. Orientation to student and worker rights on college campuses, fresh from victories at Georgetown and Washington Universities. More Info: www.unionvoice.org/ct/G7aRz-511ct0.

October 27-30: National Annual Conference, National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, Austin, Texas. More Info: Call 888-286-2237, email conference2005@ncadp.org, or visit www.ncadp.org.

Weekly Activism

Sundays: Food not Bombs from 1:30-3 p.m. at Legislative Plaza (between Capitol and Sheraton, at 6th and Union). More Info: ryan@monsterlabs.com or 615-293-0603.

Wednesdays: Peace Coalition from 6-7:30 p.m. at NPJC*. Join the two-year-old NPJC Peace Coalition as they plan protests and educational events.

Thursdays: Women in Black from 12-1:00 p.m. on Broadway between 12th and 11th. "Silently stand in black: to mourn, to remember, to be a presence for peace."

* NPJC offices and board room are located at 1016 18th Ave. S., Nashville, Tenn. 37212. Call 615-321-9066 for directions.

Report Back on National War Tax Resisters Central Committee National Meeting

by Joey King

On May 7, 2005, Nashvillians were treated to a special event. The National War Tax Resisters Central Committee (NWTRCC, pronounced "nutrick") held a meeting here. This is due primarily to the efforts of Karl Meyer, a famous war tax resister who has called Nashville his home for the last 7 years or so.

The modern movement grew from the resisters of World War I and today includes members of historic peace churches, pacifists, anarchists, Buddhists, and others opposed to war. Since World War II, the movement in the U.S. has had ebbs and flows in participation, probably peaking in the Vietnam era. Various methods have been used to prevent income taxes from flowing to the U.S. government. These include voluntary poverty and self-employment. War tax resisters can and do go to jail for their convictions every year, although the IRS is reluctant to prosecute resisters of conscience.

Today, war tax resistance is experiencing renaissance, due to the never-ending-war-on-terrorism (NEWOT). Although war tax resistance is not new or confined to the U.S., it is most actively practiced in the U.S. because of the unparalleled military spending by the government. This year (2005), for example, the military budget is nearing a half-trillion dollars and that does not include military pensions, military healthcare, or interest on war debt. The mantra of the war resister is, "if you work for peace, stop paying for war."

The first speaker on Saturday was Mr. Meyer, who delighted the audience with stories of his resistance to war beginning in August of 1945 when the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Japan. Meyer's early inspirations were M.K. Gandhi and the Quakers. Karl registered for the draft in 1959 and was granted conscientious objector (CO) status. His first act of civil disobedience landed him in jail with two famous American pacifists, Ammon Hennacy and Dorothy Day. The 20-year-old Meyer stayed up all night listening to Hennacy (a WWI conscientious objector) tell prison stories of his time with famous American radicals Eugene V. Debs and Alexander Berkman.

On that night, Meyer became a radical. He began attending meetings of the pacifist group, the Peacemakers, and helped the Catholic Worker movement (which was cofounded by Dorothy Day).

In 1966, he went to Vietnam and protested the war at the American Embassy before being kicked out. Meyer was the primary force behind the "Phone Tax Rebellion" in the U.S. There is a 3% tax on all phones that was originally intended to fund the Spanish American War (1898) and is still in use today. Karl's efforts have led many in the U.S. to refuse to pay this war tax. Many of his articles have been published over the past four decades.

Today, he views ecology as the best hope for humankind to avoid war. Maintaining a simpatico relationship with the Earth is something that Karl

session that I attended. The topic was retirement planning as a war tax resister. It was a continuation from previous sessions, and the intent was to spread ideas that would be helpful to those who resist. Obviously, it is an important subject, and one that is difficult for a group of people who have traditionally lived "below the radar" of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). From time-to-time the conversation strayed a bit from the stated subject, but it was always delightful.

The two main requirements for eligible Americans (and legal workers) to be eligible for a Social Security retirement check are 1) to be employed for 40 non-consecutive quarters and 2) to have the Social Security tax withdrawn from your paycheck. Part-time employment counts towards the 40-quarter requirement. Karl Meyer attended part of this session. His input was appreciated, because he has recently begun receiving Social Security checks. Karl suggested working part-time in the year prior to receiving Social Security. In his case, he had not filed an income tax form for 40 years; however, Social Security taxes had been withheld for much of his life as a wage earner. During his recent imprisonment, he earned about \$20 of income the year prior to his retirement as a prison food service worker. Social Security taxes were withheld from his check that year. This put him "back in the system" and he started receiving Social Security benefits when he became eligible the next year.

Keeping real property from being seized by the Internal Revenue Service is also important. In Karl's case he set up Nashville Greenlands (NG) as a corporation. All residents of Nashville Greenlands agree to barter for the rent. At the NG annual shareholders meeting, it is usually agreed that the barter arrangement has worked well enough to satisfy the principals. The corporation never makes any money; therefore is not subject to any war taxes; however, the NG Corporation does file an income tax form.

One attendee suggested barter as a way to acquire assets without paying war taxes. Alternative currencies have been set up in several American communities as a way to avoid taxes. Activists in Ann Arbor have been particularly successful in setting up an alternative currency. At this point the

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practices every day at Nashville Greenlands, an intentional community that he founded in the late 1990s. Nashville Greenlanders grow most of their own food on just two city lots. Residents of the cooperative pay only about \$100 U.S. dollars per month to live there.

A lifetime of war resistance has not been without costs. Karl has the distinction of serving the longest prison sentence of any U.S. war tax resister (9 months) back in the early '70s. True to his commitment, he avoided paying war taxes while on probation by earning less than a taxable wage and relying on donations from supporters. He recently served a six-month stint in a Georgia jail for civil disobedience during a protest at the infamous "School of the Americas" (SOA) at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Rick Bickhart facilitated the morning breakout

(continued on page 6)

SAVE TENNCARE!

We are here to say, with a unified voice, that access to health care is a basic human right. We are here to bear witness for all the Tennesseans whose lives are threatened by Governor Bredesen's unnecessary cuts to TennCare and to call on him to do the right thing for the people of Tennessee.



**Wanda Eubanks – Nashville, Tennessee
TennCare enrollee
Nurse**

"I work every day and I'm like so many others, I can't afford private health insurance for my son who turns 21 this July. Coming to Governor Bredesen's Office is my last hope. While I won't be cut, the Benefit Limits are too low and will hurt. I am here for my family and friends who will be cut and may die."



**Lisa Abel – Nashville, Tennessee
TennCare enrollee
Skin cancer, gallstones, and uterine polyps
Uninsurable
Will be cut**

"Why am I participating? I have friends who are going to die because they won't have TennCare. How's that?"



**Glen Barnhill
TennCare enrollee
Incomplete quadriplegic
Losing in-home health care**

"The benefit that I am losing that I'm most concerned about is private nursing. Losing that will destroy the life I have. I'll be forced into an institution where I know for a fact I'll receive inadequate care. That's why I'm participating."



**Don Duvall – Jackson, Tennessee
TennCare enrollee
Paralyzed
Uninsurable
Will be cut**

"We have to come together as a people and protect our own because it is clear that our elected officials aren't going to do it. What it boils down to is people have to stand up for each other."



**Lori Smith – Nashville, Tennessee
TennCare enrollee
Multiple Sclerosis and Lupus
Uninsurable
Will be cut**

"We need justice in reform. These cuts are wrong. They don't follow along with a just society. We must change this."



**David "Cowboy" Lutrell – Nashville, Tennessee
TennCare enrollee
Formerly homeless
Will be cut**



**John Zirker – Nashville, Tennessee
TennCare enrollee
Nashville Homeless Power Project
TennCare Enrollee**

"I'm participating in this action as a way of living out what Jesus said: 'Whatever you do for the least of these my brothers, you have done for me.' This is not about me. It's about helping those in need."



**Michael Bennett – Chattanooga, Tennessee
Student – Fisk University
Three family members on TennCare**

Governor Bredesen's Office

"You may well ask: 'Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?' You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored."

—Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail



Catherine Lemaire Lozier – Nashville, Tennessee
Recent college graduate



Dee Hamilton – Nashville, Tennessee
Concerned citizen with loved ones on TennCare



Karl Meyer – Nashville, Tennessee
Son has survived due to TennCare



Keith Caldwell – Nashville, Tennessee
Medical professional



Howard Allen
Homeless
Member of the Homeless Power Project

Not Pictured:

Dr. Ryan Hutchinson, Nashville Tennessee
Cares for hundreds of TennCare Enrollees

Pam Beziat- Nashville, Tennessee
TennCare enrollee
Nurse



Lorri Maybre
TennCare enrollee

"I am tired of the state government treating the poor as second class citizens. They think people just need education. In my option they need food and health care too."

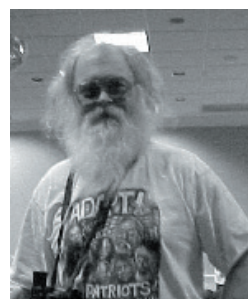


Randy Alexander – Memphis, Tennessee
ADAPT – (American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today)
Center for Independent Living

"We are talking about basic human rights here. You have admitted, Governor Bredesen, that you, this state, is willing to imprison people simply because they have a disability."



Lewis Patrick – Memphis, Tennessee
ADAPT – (American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today)



Michael Heinrich – Memphis, Tennessee
Center for Independent Living

Remember to Call to Opt Out of Spraying Each Year

by Rachel Sumner
No Spray Nashville

The No Spray Coalition wants to remind you to call to opt your property of spraying. If you haven't done this yet, don't wait. The Metro Public Health Department has finally submitted a written mosquito control policy but the news isn't good. It is likely that our neighborhoods will be sprayed earlier this year than in the past.

The Health Department's verbal policy the last two years has been to wait to spray until they found mosquitoes that tested positive for West Nile virus. Their new written plan (revealed on their website in May) states that they can spray if they find 35 female mosquitoes in a trap.

Why would the Health Department chose to expose people and the environment to the known risks of spraying when other cities have successfully controlled mosquitoes and the diseases they carry with less toxic measures?

In December of 2003, the entomologist with the Tennessee State Health Department recommended that Metro hire summer helpers to find and reduce mosquito breeding sites. This is what other cities do when they want to be successful with less toxic measures. The Metro Public Health Department has no entomologist on staff, yet they ignored her recommendation.

Charlotte, North Carolina, is similar in size to Nashville. They have a mosquito control budget that is also similar, but they hire 10 summer helpers and have one full-time environmental specialist. Since they have had this program in place, they haven't had to spray pesticides. Metro has a staff of three working an area of over 500 square miles.



NoSprayNashville.org

Advocates for a healthy community.

TO OPT OUT OF SPRAYING, CALL 615-862-5668

**TO LEARN MORE, FIND OUT ABOUT NO SPRAY SIGNS
OR OPT OUT ONLINE: WWW.NOSPRAYNASHVILLE.ORG
OR CALL BURNT, 615-327-8515**

REASONS TO OPT OUT:

1. The pesticide the Health Department uses contains a known endocrine disruptor (sumithrin) and a known mutagen (piperonyl butoxide).

2. As a voice of opposition to policies that don't weigh the risks and benefits of spraying against the risk of the disease.

3. West Nile virus incidence in Middle Tennessee has been extremely low.

4. The two species of mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus in Tennessee

travel 1/4-1/2 mile from their breeding sites. If you are concerned about West Nile virus (or just don't like mosquitoes), reduce standing water in your yard and encourage your neighbors to do the same. (Check out our website for more information on mosquito protection and control.)

War Tax Resisters Conference continued from page 3

conversation drifted more towards a discussion of where the tax resistance movement is going. There was general agreement that environmentalism is the pathway to peace.

The important topic of community came up next. For about 10-15 minutes, we spoke about the advantages of living in an intentional community. Communalism allows for the sharing of resources, which helps the environment. Giving up privacy can be an issue. Attracting good people to an intentional community is difficult, but advertising in magazines like Communities can make the job easier. There is also an intentional community conference coming up soon in Virginia, and that is a good venue for meeting good prospects for intentional communities.

Redirection of war taxes is also an important issue for the resister. Most in attendance have found suitable charities in which to donate funds in an effort to keep dollars flowing to the right places. That pretty much took us up to lunch, which consisted of vegetarian fare.

The Reverend Ralph Hutchinson, director of Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA), was the after-lunch speaker. OREPA is a group of like-minded people who work on issues relating to the production on nuclear bombs at Oak Ridge,

Tennessee's Y-12 plant. He gave a sobering history of the production on nuclear bombs at Oak Ridge. The bombs that were dropped on Japan in August 1945 were manufactured there. The Bush Administration has re-started many nuclear programs, according to Hutchinson, and implemented a pre-emptive use policy now that makes the world a dangerous place for a hair-trigger nuclear showdown.

Every year, OREPA plans and directs protests at the Oak Ridge facility around the August 6 Day of Remembrance for the victims of the nuclear holocaust. This year will mark the 60th anniversary of the horrific event. Marches, protests and civil disobedience will take place on Saturday the 6th. Hutchinson feels as if the movement has done a lot since 1988, and now has grown to a point where it is time to target the bottom line of the companies who profit from the manufacture of nukes. For those who would like to attend the event this year, more information can be found at www.stopthebombs.org.

Ruth Benn facilitated the next short session, which she titled "Media Outreach Brainstorm." This open forum solicited ideas from the group on how best to get the idea of war tax resistance to the public. The brainstorm resulted in ideas ranging

from advertising on "Democracy Now" (a popular broadcast among the type of audience who might be receptive to the message), to having downloadable PDF flyers for field activists, and downloadable radio ads for media types. Tabling events at pro-peace rallies, especially the School of the Americas (November) and Oak Ridge (August), were other ideas gleaned from the group. Advertising in the Global Report of Asheville NC was also suggested. Finally, many people had suggestions for voice and computer talent that may be wrangled in an effort to get out the message.

Rick Bickhart and Daniel Woodham held court over the final event I attended. There is a large meeting of war tax resisters this fall in Brooklyn, New York. A list of eight important points to drive the agenda for the Brooklyn event has been decided upon. Daniel and Rick solicited the group to fine tune the agenda and to request volunteers.

I feel honored to have attended this event in my hometown. As the movement in the U.S. moves from protest to resistance, it is imperative to have groups like the NWTRCC to remain active and grow. The modern war machine requires two essential ingredients: personnel and money. The war tax resister seeks to deny one of those essentials.

Why Phil Valentine is Wrong on Immigration

Quotes from the Phil Valentine Show
and responses by the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC)

Family Values: “Leave with your child or leave without your child, but get the hell out of my country,” Phil said, offering his advice for undocumented mothers whose children are citizens (June 2nd broadcast), adding that there are plenty of Americans looking to adopt children. Such statements reveal Phil’s true value system, and sharply contradict the family values held by most Tennesseans. Currently, U.S. citizens must wait up to 11 years to sponsor their own children from Mexico. Comprehensive immigration reform must include provisions to reduce these family backlogs.

Problem Solving: “Almost every problem in the U.S. today is caused by people coming across the border illegally” (June 1 broadcast). Phil Valentine makes a living stoking people’s anger and frustration about illegal immigration. Unfortunately, rather than examining the true causes of the problem to find a workable solution, Phil offers dangerous simplifications and gives people someone easy to blame—it’s all the fault of “illegals.” Every Tennessean will benefit from immigration reform that better reflects the economic interests of this state, re-establishes law and order at our nation’s borders, and recognizes that immigrants have a great deal to contribute to this country. To do this, we must look beyond ineffective “enforcement only” schemes, like deputizing angry citizens to confront foreign-looking people on worksites. We can’t just throw money at the problem without understanding it. We must acknowledge the economic forces that drive immigrants to fill holes in the labor market, and change the immigration system to satisfy those needs legally.

Public Benefits: “[People who disagree with me] just want to get around the laws and [want] all the free stuff” (June 2 broadcast). In Tennessee, undocumented immigrants have no access to TennCare or other public benefits. In fact, they have no access to any public services, unless it is in the vital interest of the public’s health and safety (i.e. fire, law enforcement, vaccinations). Even lawful permanent residents are barred from receiving public benefits for five

years. No immigrant wants to be undocumented. The truth is, immigrants come to Tennessee to do necessary work, not to get public benefits. Undocumented immigrants pay Tennessee sales tax like everyone (more, as a percentage of their income), usually without access to the services they fund. According to the Pew Hispanic Center and the Center for Immigration Studies, an estimated 55-60% of undocumented immigrants also pay federal income tax, without access to many federal programs or any hope of receiving social security or Medicare benefits (Talk of the Nation). The Urban Institute reported this year that citizen children of immigrants “use public benefits less often than children of natives, despite higher rates of economic hardship” (Urban Institute). Immigration reform must provide legal avenues for immigrant workers to continue contributing to this economy and to begin participating fully as the taxpayers they are.

Cultural Diversity: “So many immigrants are moving to Nashville and forcing ‘native Americans’ like me into the suburbs, the city is starting to look like Beirut” (June 3 broadcast). Although Beirut is, in fact, one of the world’s great cities, we can only imagine that Phil was lamenting Nashville’s growing ethnic diversity. The fact is that very few of us are actually “native Americans,” and this nation has its immigrant heritage to thank for much of its economic and cultural prosperity. Economist Richard Freeman reported to the Institute for International Economics in 2004 that foreign-born students and workers will be a major source of new scientists and engineers in the United States over the next few decades and will be critical to continuing productivity growth (Freeman, 2004). According to Georgetown’s Harry Holzer, “Immigrants will generate all net growth in the labor force over the next two decades” (Congressional Testimony).

For more “Why Phil Valentine is Wrong on Immigration: Quotes from the Phil Valentine Show,” visit www.tnimmigrant.org.

Tennessee Equality Project Wraps Up Successful First Year—Gearing Up for Round Two!

By Chris Sanders,
Tennessee Equality Project

The Tennessee Equality Project, a group formed in 2004 to promote and sustain the equality of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons in the state of Tennessee, finished its first year with a winning track record in the legislature.

This year will go down in history as one of the most important sessions of the Tennessee General Assembly. Not only did it end with indictments of current and former lawmakers in Operation Tennessee Waltz, but it also saw a record number of bills filed and a record number of bills dealing with the GLBT community.

The formation of the Tennessee Equality Project as a 501(c)(4) organization with the ability to engage in lobbying activities occurred just in time to deal with the onslaught of legislation. By the end of the session, the only piece of legislation detrimental to the GLBT community to achieve success was the initiative to place a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage on the November 2006 ballot. A coalition including the ACLU, the Tennessee Equality Project, and others are fighting the ballot initiative in the courts.

Every other anti-GLBT bill was defeated in committee, taken off notice by its



sponsors, or deferred until the next session. Some of the unsuccessful bills included efforts to ban civil unions and ban adoption and foster parenting by gays and lesbians.

Much of the success is due to TEP’s decision to engage lawmakers directly. The organization hired veteran government relations professional Jenny Ford as its first lobbyist. With more than 15 years on the Hill representing corporate clients, Jenny’s expertise and relationships with lawmakers were critical to the group’s early success.

TEP also worked with the Human Rights Campaign to sponsor “Advancing Equality Day on the Hill” on February 22 to prepare 50 citizens to come to Legislative Plaza to speak with their senators and representatives about the impact of discriminatory laws upon their families.

TEP’s public policy team believes that many of the defeated and deferred bills will be back in the next session. In the meantime, the organization is building more support around the state so that senators and representatives in every district will begin hearing from their own constituents about GLBT issues. If you would like to get involved in TEP, send an email to info@tnep.org. For more information, go to www.tnep.org.



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Citizen Comment: (202) 456-1111

(A one-minute call before
8 a.m. costs 29 cents)

Congressional Switchboard

(800) 648-3516

U.S. Senator Bill Frist

461 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.,
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3344; senator@frist.senate.gov

U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander

302 Hart Senate Office Bldg.,
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-4944;
senator@alexander.senate.gov

U.S. Representative Jim Cooper

1536 Longworth House Office Bldg.,
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-4311; visit <http://cooper.house.gov> to send an email

Gov. Phil Bredesen

Governor's Office, Tennessee State
Capitol, Nashville TN 37243-0001
(615) 741-2001; phil.bredesen@state.tn.us

Tennessee Senator Jim Bryson

310 War Memorial Building,
Nashville, TN 37243-0023
(615) 741-2495; sen.jim.bryson@legislature.state.tn.us

Tennessee Senator Thelma Harper

2 Legislative Plaza
Nashville, TN 37243-0219
(615) 741-2453; sen.thelma.harper@legislature.state.tn.us

Tennessee Senator Joe Haynes

5 Legislative Plaza
Nashville, TN 37243-0220
(615) 741-6679; sen.joe.haynes@legislature.state.tn.us

Tennessee Senator Douglas Henry

11 Legislative Plaza
Nashville, TN 37243-0021
(615) 741-3291; sen.douglas.henry@legislature.state.tn.us

TennCare: Volunteers Needed!

During the week of June 6, TennCare mailed letters to about 225,000 adults who are on TennCare. These letters will also include "Brown Pages," a seven-page application to determine whether adults on TennCare Standard can continue to receive coverage under another category, TennCare Medicaid.

Thousands of people who get these letters are very sick. They will be in disbelief that they are being targeted to be cut. Many will not know what to do or whom to call.

One simple action is to advise everyone who receives the letter to complete the forms and return them to the TennCare return address within the 30-day deadline. But help is on the way.

The Tennessee Health Care Campaign has designed a packet of information and is looking for volunteers in every county who can help. They can work from home, using the phone. Volunteers may call 800-280-8682 or email Tony Garr, tgarr@thcc2.org.

The National Association of Social Workers, Tennessee Chapter (NASW-TN), also has a TennCare Outreach Project to give both professionals and volunteers timely information. NASW-TN encourages volunteers in churches and community organizations to help recipients complete their "Brown Pages." A packet of materials for groups sponsoring these activities is currently being developed. Those who have outreach activities planned can contact K.C. McLean at 877-810-8103. —Gene Teselle