"It shall not be unlawful to deny housing on the basis of sexual preference..."

DECENCY

ORDAINED:

By Kenneth W. Martin

Austin’s Anti-Gay Crusade

On January 16, Austin will go to the polls to vote on what could be the nation’s toughest law against homosexuals. The man who leads the anti-gay crusade is Dr. Steven F. Hotze, founder of the Austin Citizens for Decency (ACD). Discrimination against homosexuals in public accommodations and employment practices was prohibited in ordinances passed in 1977, so Hotze’s campaign now is to stop gay “acceptability” from spreading to housing.

Hotze’s operation on the body politic started with a public relations campaign. In July of last year, the month after Hotze terminated his registration as an anti-abortion lobbyist with the Texas legislature, he began showing the CBS film, "Gay Power, Gay Politics," to churchgoers around Austin. The TV special depicts gays using political power to "take over" cities such as San Francisco. "That film catalyzed me," Hotze said.

And Hotze is counting on it to mobilize others for his anti-gay crusade. ACD spokesman Bruce Hall said showing the film isn’t really a scare tactic, "but fear is very important when trying to counteract something." What the ACD wanted to counteract was a proposal by the City of Austin’s Human Relations Commission to make it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in the sale or rental of real estate.

The ACD sponsored a press conference on August 4 at which Rich Baker, pastor of Harris Memorial Baptist Church, told a crowd of 200 that giving homosexuals protection "will give legal status in Austin to those involved in immoral and criminal activity." The specter of additional horrors was also raised: it’s the first step in teaching homosexuality in the schools as an alternate lifestyle, they said; Austin would become a haven for homosexuals.

Hotze had turned up the heat carefully. On the evening of August 6, he fired a hot blast at the city council. Nineteen hundred people filled the city council chambers on 2nd Street. The crowd overflowed the seating and hallways, and spilled out onto the sidewalk. More than 135 people spoke during the six-hour meeting. "The council chambers took on a revivified-type atmosphere," the American-Statesman reported. "People who describe themselves as 'spirit-filled Christians' waved Bibles and read scriptures denouncing homosexuality."

Of that overheated city council meeting Mayor Carole McClellan would later say in a private interview, "It was not one of my favorite public hearings—there are too many more important matters we need to be dealing with."

Things simmered down for a while until August 20, when the ACD held a press conference on the steps of city hall to unveil its own version of the housing ordinance: "It shall not be unlawful to deny housing on the basis of sexual preference."

Hotze's speech was "shock waves" sent through the community by the city council's attempt to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual preference. "We believe that it is only fair and just that a homeowner or a property owner be allowed to use moral discretion when determining to whom he is going to sell or rent," Hotze declared.

On August 21, Hotze raised the heat some more, charging that five of the seven city council members supported homosexual rights because they had received either contributions or endorsements from the Lesbian/Gay Political Caucus during their election campaign.

It's the first step in teaching homosexuality in the schools, they said; Austin would become a haven for homosexuals.

The ACD declared the weekend of August 29-30 "Walk a Block for Decency" to gather the remainder of the signatures needed to validate the petition that would force the city council to vote on ACD's anti-gay amendment. (Ten percent of the registered voters—over 19,600 people—must sign a petition for it to be valid.) Hotze announced that 60 local pastors would pass out copies of the petition and ask church members to walk a block after church to collect the signatures still needed. On September 1, just two days after the walk, the ACD submitted the signed petitions to the city clerk for validation.

While those petitions were being screened, the struggles continued. On September 14, Larry Neilson, lawyer for the Austin Apartment Association, was quoted saying that his group is "unalterably opposed to all amendments in the housing ordinance."

Mayor McClellan tried on September 15 to get the city council to put a housing ordinance amendment—worded any way the council wanted—on the November 3 ballot along with the scheduled referendum on whether to sell the South Texas Nuclear Project. She failed. She would later say that the council had provided impermiss for the petition drive because it had surfaced the issue of homosexual rights and then not dealt with it. The council "didn't want it on the ballot with the Nuke. So apparently they frustrated a segment of the community." On November 19—exactly 15 weeks after the proposal to prohibit housing discrimination against homosexuals had been hotly debated in a city council meeting—the council was forced to deal with ACD's petition to legalize it. The ACD had gained the upper hand. But rather than enact the ACD's version of the ordinance then and there, the council scheduled a January 16 election to let the voters decide whether landlords may legally discriminate on the basis of sexual preference.

If the voters do legalize such discrimination, Austin's ordinance will probably be unique in the entire nation. "No other municipalities in Texas have such an ordinance as this petition would effect if voters approve it," said acting City Attorney Albert DeLaRosa. "I don't know of any city that has a discrimination law like this."

And DeLaRosa makes it clear how hard such an ordinance would be to change, should it be approved by the voters. "The ordinance must not be amended for two years. After that two years, it would take the affirmative vote of six of the seven council members to amend the ordinance."

Getting the ordinance passed is a major concern to Hotze, but he has help. His finance committee is made up of the recent mayoral candidate Jack McCreay, tire company owner Felix Dailey, and lawyer Michael Brandes. Hotze is also supported by 40 to 100 churches, including the Hyde Park and Allardale Baptist churches. (It was Allardale Baptist Church that sponsored Anita Bryant's 1979 visit to Austin, less than a year after her successful crusade against homosexual rights in Miami.)

But not all churches will support the anti-gay ordinance. The Reverend Deborah Exon Parsons, Associate Pastor of the University Presbyterian Church, says, "I'm against the discrimination ordinance proposed by the ACD, because I think that housing is a basic right. . . . There's just no room for that kind of criteria to prevent (someone from getting) housing."

As to homosexuality itself, Parsons says, "The Presbyterian Church recognizes it as it is in the order of things. Homosexuality is not a part of the intended creation of the world and of proper relationships between men and women. [The church] also admits that it occurs and we're not sure why it occurs. We're not sure if there's a choice on a person's part. And so we're going to tread real lightly on denouncing it as a sin, to the extent that we all fall short of our intended purpose."

Another church figure who dislikes the ACD ordinance proposal is Reverend Robert Rehman, pastor of
the University United Methodist Church and a mem-
ber of the Human Relations Commission. Breihan
says, "I'm certainly opposed to it. I think it's going
the wrong way." When asked if he is concerned
about the possibility of a wider movement, he
said, "I'm not." He added that he has not had any
problems with the city's Human Relations Com-
nission.

On November 23, the Campaign for United Austin
(CUA), an organization formed expressly to de-
hance the visibility of this issue, announced that it
had raised some $6,000. The CUA has

Robby Southland for its leader.

Southland is the 36-year-old owner of J. R. Reed
Music Company, and a part-owner of an Austin
apartment house. He is also the man who led the last
initiative petition to succeed in Austin prior to the
ACD petition. He obtained over 32,000 signatures
for his petition to stop the narrowing of Congress
Avenue, compared to about 26,000 signatures ob-
tained for the ACD petition.

In describing his past political affiliations, South-
land calls himself a "free spirit." He ran unsuc-
cessfully for city council in 1977 against Richard
Goodman. He backed such widely divergent political
candidates as Republican Bill Barnett for Assessor-
Collector of Taxes, Doyle Bailey for Sheriff, Bob
Horns for County Commissioner, and Mike Guerrero
for City Councilman.

Conscience of a Conservative

At age 31, Dr. Steven F. Hotze, the man who
leads the anti-gay drive of the Austin Cit-
tizens for Decency, is a veteran of 14 years
in the gay rights movement. He first made headlines for his
organizing efforts when he was president of his senior
class at St. Thomas High School in Houston. The
Houston Post front page of November 13, 1967 car-
ries the story, "Youth Rally! Three thousand parade,
sing, applaud in support of patriotism." The story in-
side tells that the rally's organizer, Steven Hotze, was
disappointed with attendance, which had been pre-
dected at 25,000 to 30,000. "He urged the crowd to
help organize and participate in more youth rallies,"
the article said.

Hotze had organized the Greater Houston Youth
Rally to counteract fears that America's youth had
gone "hayseer". In the words of his mother, Margaret
Hotze, "He was very concerned, because that was
in the middle of a lot of the student rioting—they were
burning the American flag.

The rally began with a 12-block parade. Youthful
marchers carried signs proclaiming "God Is Not
Dead," "Christ Is Cool," and "Support Patriotism." The
parade ended at the music hall, where the crowd
applauded loudly for the speakers, and especially for
Governor John Connally, who told them to "squadron
with light, but not with heat," as he cautioned against
responsible protest.

Four years later, the governor—then a Demo-
crat—to speak by playing him off against an offer from
then-Congressman and now Vice President George H.
Bush, a Republican from Houston—and a
neighbor of the Hotze family. Just 12 years later,
those two politicians would be running for president
of the United States. But for his rally, the 17-year-old
Steven Hotze was able to take his choice. That early
spark of success in influencing politicians lit a fire in
Hotze, and burned brightly.

Hotze was graduated from the all-male St. Thomas
in May of 1968. He married his wife Jane that sum-
mer. She had been a cheerleader for St. Thomas and
had helped Hotze organize the youth rally. Steven
and Jane had much in common: both came from
large families, she from a family of seven children, he
from a family of eight. As it turned out, they, too,
have a large family: three girls and three boys.

But in the fall of 1968 they were newlyweds who
moved to Austin when Steven transferred from the
South Texas Junior College in Houston to the Univer-
sity of Texas. In 1969, while still a freshman at UT,
Hotze joined his mother for his first lobbying with the
Texas legislature. They worked to prevent the ab-
olition of laws which prohibited abortion. They were
successful. Abortion was not made legal until a 1973
Supreme Court decision ruled Texas's abortion law
unconstitutional.

The Hotzes have long opposed abortion. Steven's
father, Ernest Hotze, is president of the publicly
funded Center for Life, a Houston-based research institute
working on a broad range of so-called pro-life issues, such
as opposing euthanasia and infanticide, as well as abor-
tion. Margaret Hotze, who took a journalism degree
from UT in 1948 at age 19, is editor of the Life Advoc-
date Newspaper produced monthly by the foundation
for its 30,000 subscribers. Given this environment, it's
easy to understand Margaret Hotze's feeling that her
dearest son is "not a maverick. . . . He's not off on
a tangent."

If anything, Steven Hotze is an exemplar of the Amer-
can dream. In his second year at UT, he founded a
redecorating and remodeling business. By working 40
to 50 hours per week and employing other students
as helpers, he was able to support his growing family
well enough so that Jane could stay home and care
for their children. Neither his wife's parents nor his
own helped financially. Steven graduated with a
Bachelor of Arts degree in December 1971.

From there he went on to graduate from the Uni-
versity of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston in 1976.
He was licensed by examination as a general practi-
tioner and then entered the surgery training program
at St. Joseph's Hospital in Houston.

Even while training as a surgeon, he participated in
pro-life politics. As Margaret Hotze tells it, "In Texas
(after abortion had been legalized), there was a great
deal of coercion for medical students to have to train
in abortion procedures. The National Abortion
Rights Action League was sending letters to every
hospital insisting they do abortions . . . (saying) that
no hospital could refuse to have abortion procedures
don those hospitals. . . . And doctors who really
opposed abortion didn't want to do them . . . didn't
want to be perceived as killers rather than as curers
or healers." So Steven went to Austin to testify in
connection with a "conscience bill" introduced by
Senator Walter H. Mengden, Jr. from Houston.

After two years, Hotze decided to leave the surgery
program. He had a lot of children to support and
opted to start practicing medicine. So in 1978, he
moved back to Austin. He bought a two-story, brick
and frame house on Pony Chase in northwest Austin,
a neighborhood now classified in the upper 20 per-
cent in earning power. He became a part-time medi-
cal consultant for IBM in Austin and took weekend
shifts in emergency rooms in different parts of the
state. And he stayed active in politics.

In 1979 Hotze lobbied the Texas legislature from
April 2 through May 31 on behalf of the Texas Pro-
Life political action committee, promoting anti-abor-
dion legislation. In 1980 he ran unopposed and was
elected as chairman of Republican Party Precinct 254
in northwest Austin.

In early 1980, Hotze started the Austin Gold and
Silver Exchange, which buys items made of precious
metals from the public, melts the items down, and
sells the ingots to wholesalers. When a bill was intro-
duced in the Texas Legislature in 1981 to regulate
businesses dealing in crafted precious metals, Hotze

(continued on page 32)

Steven Hotze stands up and speaks out for decency. "For God's sake, let somebody else carry the ball," said his mother, "But, golly, nobody volunteered."
production. I think (our message) is going to be a fairly easy one for people to understand, because it's so simple. Homosexuality is something everyone believes in. That's the message we need to bring across."

Apparently, Hotze and Southerland intended to relieve the situation in some degree of their anger by making different views on the petition. At Hotze's invitation, they lunched together on November 25 to get to know each other a little better. From their previous conversations, it seems that they parted on cordial, very enlightening, I told him that his group had the right to think anything they wanted, but I thought they were wrong." But the animosity between Hotze and Southerland ended on December 1 when Hotze makes at the CUA a "front for aspiring politicians." Southerland replied that, if anything, the CUA was a "front for human rights." Southerland made the point that he didn't want "name-calling indepen-
sible, and therefore the public should expect more such statements from Hotze."

It was actually a front that a group of 53 min-
isters issued a statement: "We assert that it is con-trary to Judeo-Christian beliefs and to a concept of morality that anybody, regardless of any personal background or the basis of reasons such as race, religion, sexual orientation, family situation, age, or other similar conditions."

The group, which included author Lottie Bees of Crisco Rey Catholic Church and Pastor Merle Frank of the First English Lutheran Church, pro-

fessed to be speaking only their consciences—not for their congregations or denominations.

"That would ... give them a free hand to come and have relations with a minor, molest a child, and then they can say it's not against the law. ... And I've got six kids."

Someone else who doesn't feel comfortable with the ACD petition is city councilman Charles E. Urady, who holds a PhD in chemistry from UT and who teaches chemistry at Huston-Tillotson College. Urady says, "This country spends millions of dollars every year to provide housing for people who can't provide housing for themselves. So there's a fundamental commitment and a fundamental belief that housing is a human right. And then you turn around and promote discrimi-

nation in housing against any group of people who are classified legally as citizens seem to me to be com-
pletely un-American."

Urady makes a distinction between the property rights of individuals and the rights of landlords of commercial rental property; "I think it's one thing if the landlord discriminates against homosexuals or anyone else—blacks or anybody else—in my house, you know it's his house and that's the way things are. But if you're going to build apartments and put them on the market to make a profit off the public, you are using all those things that the public pro-
duces anyway and pays taxes on those— all the citizens. And if you're out there to make a profit off of that public, then I think you are bound to let everybody in."

Urady also says that if landlords have the right to discriminate then that right will undoubtedly be ap-
plied unfairly. If a person is denied housing "for their sexual orientation, then ... the burden of proof is on that person. And I don't know how one proves that they're not homosexual.

"What do you do? You say you've been married—
that's not proof of anything. ... So poor people, who must have these problems with racial segregation or discrimination, would then simply be discriminated against, because they wouldn't have the same kinds of problems."

The effect of the ordinance is going to be increased discrimina-
tion in minorities primarily, and not on people who are supposedly homosexual."

Maurice Kirkland probably sums up the feelings of the community about the ACD petition when he says that "It's unfortunate that you've got to get to the last resort of the court system to see if we have the se-

moral orientation issue as more of a symbolic battle than I have as a real problem on housing."

Part of Southerland's lament is over the expense of the election, which he estimates will cost the taxpayers $40,000. And if the ACD gets the $40,000 it hopes to raise and the CUA gets the $43,000 it wants, then the total cost of deciding this issue will be around $123,000.

But for Hotze the battle is more than symbolic. He is fighting for what he sincerely believes in. And he is hoping to attract those with like opinions: "I hope that by taking a stand we can arouse other people in our community. ... When a few people start standing up, you wouldn't believe the people that rally around—they're waiting for leadership. They'll rally around and say, 'Gosh, I'm so glad that somebody stood up.'"

But Hotze knows that the battleground he has chosen this time is full of landmines. "What they (homosexuals) want is public acceptability, and that's exactly what the issue is here. They know it and we know it. By taking a stand on this, what they're doing is trying to fight this issue on a piece of ground ... that they think they can get a broad range of support (for) ... by using the tactic, 'Do you support discrimi-
nation in public housing?' People say, well, I don't support discrimination. That has a negative connotation."

Whenever you grant legal status to people you give them acceptability for their conduct, and we don't believe these activities should have public acceptability. ... Because once you allow them ac-
ceptability, then you allow them to proliferate. And they proliferate by one means, and one means only, and that's reproduction. They're strongest when they're the week. They're strongest when they're the weak. They recruit children or young people in their formative years. ..."

What's on their agenda are two things: One, is to get this (homosexuality) taught in public schools, in edu-
cation programs as (an) acceptable lifestyle. And once you break down children's barriers, in their in-
ner consciences, that this is something wrong, (and) when they are made to talk about it in class as if this is a normal lifestyle, then it's easy to recruit these (children) into your web of activities.

"The second thing they want is they want to see the abolishment—and this is a nationwide goal—of laws that prohibit sex with minors. ... And that (would) do is give them a free hand to come and have relations with a minor. Today it's illegal, and then they can say it's not against the law. ... That's the bottom line. And I've got six kids."

So the battle goes on. The ACD has gone forth to do battle with the forces of what they perceive to be an insidious evil. They see this battle as something that must be won in order to preserve the values they hold sacred, and to keep the homosexuals from tak-
ing their children. The opposing force is made up of people combating the evils of discrimination, just as Hotze predicted.

The crux of the situation is that a moral issue has been turned into a political issue. What can result? Only morality by consensus. Which seems like an odd way to arrive at decisions on morality. Columnist William Raspberry remarked in a recent column that, "We like to think that things are right or wrong regardless of popular attitude. Our grandchildren are likely to understand that morality-by-consensus is the only societal morality there is. Individuals may opt out of the consensus, just as some individuals re-
ject commonly accepted medical procedures as blood transfusions. But when most people accept a thing as right or wrong, that is the end of the moral debate."

Right now Austin is polarized over a moral deci-
sion, with those who care enough to get involved hotly debating the merits of their particular morality. And the best we can hope for is that when the thumbs go up on January 16 that each side will store its weapons and abide by the consensus.
(continued from page 30)

fought vigorously to oppose the regulations which would require, among other things, an eight-day-holding period so that police would have a chance to identify stolen merchandise. Nevertheless, the regula-
tions were upheld in law in September 1981.

On February 4, 1981, Hotze again registered with the secretary of state as a pro-life lobbyist, this time on behalf of the Texas Department for Life. A March 22 article in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram said Hotze reported that 120 doctors across the state had agreed to participate in the campaign to get the voters to hold the issue of abortion to the ballot. The newspaper said Hotze had spent much more than his $2,000 and $1,000 allocated to him by the campaign.

Hotze also reported that he had spent much more than he had in order to set up groups, hire a staff, and open an office. (The office is located in Suite 403 of the community building beneath the Suite 503 of his Austin Gold and Silver Exchange.) Suite 403 is also the address given for the Texas Pro-Family Coalition and the Austin Citizen for Decency, both of which Hotze heads up.

For the first time he registered to lobby on February 4, 1981 until he terminated his registration on June 1, 1981. Hotze reported expenditures of only $1,009.45, all of which was for rent in March. If Hotze did raise between $3,000 and $7,000, then these reported expendi-
tures represent less than 3 percent of that amount.

Dr. Hotze is very well known around the Capitol for his lobbying efforts. Opinions of him seem to fall into one of two categories: those who share his views appreciate him; those who disagree are unkind. Strong supporters of so-called pro-life legislation, like Senator John Leedom of Dallas praise him, saying "He's an articulate spokesman for his positions, a dedicated proponent."

Art Kelly, aide to Senator Mengden, says, "He's done a terrific job, and we'd like to have a hun-
dred more like him. He's against the kind of things going on today that are bad and hurting society."

Jan Fries, Executive Director of the Texas Abortion Rights Action League, actively opposes Hotze on the abortion issue. She says, "He believes that he's got a corner on morality. . . . He is very, very rigid in his thoughts, and in his perceptions that the problems with America are that we have deviated from life as it was when he was a child."

Senator Ray Farabee of Wichita Falls tells about the first time Hotze came to see him. Farabee listened to Hotze's position on abortion and then asked him if he had spoken to Hotze would display the same concern for programs for abused children, undernourished children, and pre-natal programs. Farabee says that Hotze "didn't really seem to want to talk about those other is-

ues which I expressed, which are part of the whole picture."

Farabee's experience with Hotze on that occasion is said to be rather typical of the pro-lifers, so typical that other legislators are also at odds be-
cause of what could be called the "Mother's Day Massacre."" Still smarting from a vote from the Senate Judiciary Committee to send a package of so-called pro-life bills to subcommittee, rather than sending them to the floor for a vote by the full senate, Hotze took revenge on Senators Farabee, Kent Caper-
ton, and Bob Glassow. As president of the Texas Pro-
Family Coalition he made up a two-page newsletter about each of the three senators. The newsletters were dated May 9, 1981 and were distributed in each senator's district on Mother's Day, May 10. They were stuck under the windshields of cars outside churches, so that churchgoers would read them after worship services.

The circulars were customized so that only one senator was featured—so that the circulars distri-
uted in such senator's district would not contain the "blame" that particular senator: "State Senator (Name One) killed six pro-life bills on Tuesday, April 7th, in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Sen. (Name One) was the swing vote and he voted with the committee's pro-abortionists to send these bills to their death in the subcommittee. . . . (Name One) is a tool of the multi-million dollar pro-abortion industry which contributed nearly ($xxxx.xx) to his 1980 cam-
paign. (Name One) goal was clearly to kill all pro-
life legislation."

The newsletter went on to call for help by asking the readers to contact the senator and Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby and tell them how they felt about this senator. The newsletter also contained a low-key request for contributions and the statement, "Please mail each item in light of Proverbs 21:1." (Which reads: "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.")

It is difficult to see how all three senators could have been the "swing vote" in a nine-member com-
meeit. And, the fact that the senator may have had honest doubts about the bills in question, the fact that it is highly irregular to try to push through a package of bills on this subject, indi-

vidually, and the fact that some of those accused sen-
ators protested to support at least one of the bills in the package was puh-pushed in Hotze's newsletter. He wanted it all.

Hotze has now carried his moral concerns to the campaign against homosexuals. "You can see how somebody needs to be a spokesman and someone needs to be brave," says his mother. "I encouraged Steven not to do it, to be perfect frank, I said for God's sake let somebody else carry one ball. You don't have to be Earl Campbell and carry the ball every time. What he really intended to dowas to show them the "Gay Power, Gay Politics" film and just let a leader come forth. . . . Golly, nobody volunteered."