

confab
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david l. aiken

WASHINGTON, DC -- A national conference to discuss the ways the federal government treats gays has been scheduled by Gay Activists Alliance of Washington for the Columbus Day weekend, October 10 through 13.

The schedule calls for those who ~~want~~^{want to} stay an extra day to visit their representatives in Congress to talk about the gay civil rights bill which has been introduced by Rep. Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.) with the support of several other members of Congress.

The conference schedule will focus on panel discussions on such topics as tax policies which discriminate against singles; ~~the~~ exclusion of gays from defense security clearances; discrimination against gays in the military; anti-gay immigration policies, and the need for expansion of ~~gay services~~ federal funding for gay services.

To help pin down which topics are of most interest, GAA of Washington is mailing out a questionnaire to gay organizations asking for their reactions and suggestions. Individual members of such organizations as the National Gay Task Force and gay women's ~~committees~~ groups within ~~of~~ the National Organization for Women will also be polled. A final agenda will be announced in June.

Jim Zais, a GAA member who is helping to organize the conference, said that a provision for "work sessions" will be made so that people who want to ~~schedule~~ organize action around a specific strategy will be able to do so.

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add one confab

"Such a schedule constitutes a midpoint between a strictly 'workshop' format and an 'action' format," Zais said. He said the emphasis will not be on formulating specific plans strategies, but on "genuine sharing of information and perspectives, a prerequisite for eventual effective action at the national level."

Each panel in the conference will feature a main speaker followed by responses from other panelists. ~~Federal government officials will take part in most of the panels along with~~ Most panels will be composed of two gay activists and a federal official. The officials "will be invited to sit on panels because they are likely to offer helpful insights, not because we intend them to become focal point for directing our hostilities against the government," Zais stressed.

He said Washington GAA's role "will be to contribute what we can, as a local organization that is based in the nation's capital, to the efforts of the national gay community vis a vis the federal government."

For further information, contact Washington GAA, P.O. Box 2554, Washington DC 20013.