

Lobbying the Alberta Government in the 1980s

Written by Sheryl Ackerman
January 2015


(Documents include: 2 letters from MLAs and a copy of Bill 225 – 1989)

Quote From Alberta Hansard - June 5, 1989 ALBERTA HANSARD 29
(note: M. Laing, below, who sponsored the bill is Marie Laing)

Begin Quote:

“Bill 225
An Act to Amend
the Individual's Rights Protection Act (No. 2)

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 225,
An Act to Amend the Individual's Rights Protection Act.

This Act would make discrimination based on  **sexual orientation**
or mental disability unlawful.

[Leave granted; Bill 225 read a first time]”

End quote

On June 5, 1989, in the Alberta Legislature, MLA Marie Laing introduced Bill 225, an Act to Amend the Individual's Rights Protection Act. This Act would make discrimination based on sexual orientation or mental disability unlawful.

Many of us, including Pauline Bélanger (my spouse) and I, Sheryl Ackerman, wrote to MLAs in support of this bill. Here are two letters we received in response that summer, plus a copy of the proposed bill. The bill did not succeed, despite the fact that the Human Rights Commission in Alberta had recommended inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected category in 1977, 1981 and 1985. Lobbying continued, but the law did not change until 20 years later, in June 2009.

Note: The letter from Pam Barrett is personalized because she was our next-door neighbour at Sundance Co-op!



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
ALBERTA

PAM BARRETT, M.L.A.
EDMONTON HIGHLANDS
OFFICIAL OPPOSITION HOUSE LEADER

ROOM 202
LEGISLATURE BUILDING
EDMONTON, ALBERTA T5K 2B6
TELEPHONE: (403) 427-2236

10 August 1989

OUR FILE NO.

S. Ackerman & Pauline Belanger
27 Sundance
Edmonton, Ab.
T5H 4B4

Sheryl + Pauline

Dear Ms. Ackerman & Belanger,

Thank you for your letter concerning human rights for everyone, regardless of sexual orientation.

As you are probably aware, we New Democrats fully support entrenching in the Individual Rights Protection Act protection for gays and lesbians. This has been New Democrat policy for many years. During the current sitting of the Alberta Legislature, Marie Laing, New Democrat MLA for Edmonton Avonmore introduced BILL 225, AN ACT TO AMEND THE INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHTS PROTECTION ACT. This bill, a copy of which I enclose for your information would provide the much needed protection for gays and lesbians in Alberta. As you are aware, the Getty government refuses to recognize that legislation is required in this regard. As your Official Opposition, we will continue to press the government to amend the I.R.P.A. accordingly.

Again, my sincere thanks for letting me know your views, and please feel free to share with me any other concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Pam

Pam Barrett, MLA
Edmonton Highlands

Their (Getty's) Bill still hasn't "gone on notice" - if it doesn't by Monday - we'll raise the issue in Question Period, to add a little pressure.

By the way, letters (even form letters) to Ministers DO count, so let's keep the heat up...

*Regards,
your neighbour*



LABOUR

Office of Minister

Also responsible for
LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WOMEN'S ISSUES
PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

103 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6
Telephone 403/427-3664
Fax 403/422-9556

June 30, 1989

S. Ackerman
#27 Sundance Co-op
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 4B4

Dear S. Ackerman:

Thank you for your recent letter with respect to proposed inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected ground under the Individual's Rights Protection Act (I.R.P.A.).

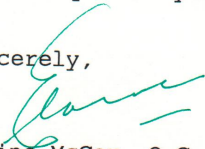
When the I.R.P.A. first came into effect in 1973, its primary objectives were to protect individuals from discriminating acts and practices and to assist Albertans who suffer prejudice due to these practices.

As you may be aware the I.R.P.A. currently provides protection from discrimination on the grounds of race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical disability, marital status, age, ancestry and place of origin. It has come to my attention that many Albertans are still suffering from discrimination especially with respect to employment and tenancy. It is my belief that a responsible government must be sensitive to the needs of its people and that all Albertans are entitled to equal protection from discrimination.

It is therefore my intention to propose to my caucus that the I.R.P.A. be amended to include sexual orientation as a protected ground. The final decision as to whether to proceed with this amendment rests with the 58 members of caucus.

Thank you for taking the time to write and express your views on this important matter. You can be assured the points you have raised will be given careful consideration.

Sincerely,


Elaine McCoy, Q.C.
Minister of Labour
M.L.A. for Calgary West

cc: All Government Members

1989 BILL 225

First Session, 22nd Legislature, 38 Elizabeth II

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

BILL 225

AN ACT TO AMEND
THE INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHTS PROTECTION ACT (No. 2)

MS. M. LAING

First Reading

Second Reading

Committee of the Whole

Third Reading

Royal Assent

Bill 225
Ms. M. Laing

BILL 225

1989

AN ACT TO AMEND THE INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHTS PROTECTION ACT (No. 2)

(Assented to _____, 1989)

HER MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the
Legislative Assembly of Alberta, enacts as follows:

- 1 *The Individual's Rights Protection Act is amended by this Act.*
- 2 *Section 2(1) is amended*
 - (a) *by adding "sexual orientation," after "sex," and*
 - (b) *by adding "or mental" after "physical".*
- 3 *Section 3 is amended*
 - (a) *by adding "sexual orientation," after "sex," and*
 - (b) *by adding "or mental" after "physical".*

Explanatory Notes

1 This Bill will amend chapter I-2 of the Revised Statutes of Alberta 1980.

2 Section 2(1) presently reads as follows:

(1) No person shall publish or display before the public or cause to be published or displayed before the public any notice, sign, symbol, emblem or other representation indicating discrimination or an intention to discriminate against any person or class of persons for any purpose because of the race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical disability, age, ancestry or place of origin of that person or class of persons.

3 Section 3 presently reads as follows:

3 No person, directly or indirectly, alone or with another, by himself or by the interposition of another, shall

(a) deny to any person or class of persons any accommodation, services or facilities customarily available to the public, or

(b) discriminate against any person or class of persons with respect to any accommodation, services or facilities customarily available to the public,

because of the race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical disability, ancestry or place of origin of that person or class of persons or of any other person or class of persons.

4 Section 4 is amended

- (a) by adding "sexual orientation," after "sex," and
- (b) by adding "or mental" after "physical".

5 Section 7(1) is amended

- (a) by adding "sexual orientation," after "sex," and
- (b) by adding "or mental" after "physical".

6 Section 8(1) is amended

- (a) by adding "sexual orientation," after "sex," and
 - (b) by adding "or mental" after "physical"
- wherever they occur in clauses (a) and (b).

4 Section 4 presently reads as follows:

4 No person, directly or indirectly, alone or with another, by himself or by the interposition of another, shall

(a) deny to any person or class of persons the right to occupy as a tenant any commercial unit or self-contained dwelling unit that is advertised or otherwise in any way represented as being available for occupancy by a tenant, or

(b) discriminate against any person or class of persons with respect to any term or condition of the tenancy of any commercial unit or self-contained dwelling units,

because of the race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical disability, ancestry or place of origin of that person or class of persons or of any other person or class of persons.

5 Section 7(1) presently reads as follows:

7(1) No employer or person acting on behalf of an employer shall

(a) refuse to employ or refuse to continue to employ any person, or

(b) discriminate against any person with regard to employment or any term or condition of employment,

because of the race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical disability, marital status, age, ancestry or place of origin of that person or of any other person.

6 Section 8(1) presently reads as follows:

8(1) No person shall use or circulate any form of application for employment or publish any advertisement in connection with employment or prospective employment or make any written or oral inquiry of an applicant

(a) that expresses either directly or indirectly any limitation, specification or preference indicating discrimination on the basis of the race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical disability, age, ancestry or place of origin of any person, or

(b) that requires an applicant to furnish any information concerning race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical disability, ancestry or place of origin.

7 Section 10 is amended

- (a) by adding "sexual orientation," after "sex," and
- (b) by adding "or mental" after "physical".

8 Section 16(1) is amended

- (a) by adding "sexual orientation," after "sex," and
- (b) by adding "or mental" after "physical".

wherever they occur in clauses (a) and (c).

7 Section 10 presently reads as follows:

10 No trade union, employers' organization or occupational association shall

- (a) exclude any person from membership in it,*
- (b) expel or suspend any member of it, or*
- (c) discriminate against any person or member,*

because of the race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical disability, marital status, age, ancestry or place of origin of that person or member.

8 Section 16(1) presently reads as follows:

16(1) It is the function of the Commission

- (a) to forward the principle that every person is equal in dignity and rights without regard to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical disability, age, ancestry or place of origin,*
- (b) to promote an understanding of, acceptance of and compliance with this Act,*
- (c) to research, develop and conduct educational programs designed to eliminate discriminatory practices related to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical disability, age, ancestry or place of origin, and*
- (d) to encourage and co-ordinate both public and private human rights programs and activities.*