

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Members of the Legislature, there are people who, I believe, do not hate homosexuals but simply do not understand them. This was brought to my attention and I accept that. That which we don't understand but which we perceive as a threat, even if we cannot put it into articulable terms, put us in fear and fear is the father of hatred. So the lack of understanding, the fear, verges into hatred and there are more attacks and assaults on people who are deemed to be homosexual, not just physical assaults that disfigure and cripple and cause pain, but that result in death. For my Christian brothers and sisters or those pretending to be such, you know that verse they used to use to terrify children and hardhearted sinners when they came to church--the day you hear my voice harden not your heart. Now is the time for salvation, now is the time. Billy Graham said let this be your hour of decision, don't put it off. The fact that another bill may come before us is not a justifiable reason to fail to vote on this issue today in the way we ought to vote. You all may be dead tomorrow. I won't be. (Laugh) I won't! I promise you, or should I say I threaten you with that. But you know how people are stressed out so much in this society by dreading to do those things that they know ought to be done. They put it off in the future, and as with that Pilgrim's Progress book, things far in the distance look a lot larger than what they really are. The hill looks steeper, the valley looks deeper, the lion looks larger, but as you move toward these things that were so fearsome, you may not even be aware of a slight gradation in the path as you walk it. But if you stay in the position you find yourself in you can never improve, you can never grow, you can never become better. We have to make a conscious effort to do better and to be better. When we go out preaching to young people and athletes about being role models, let us show by the things we do to protect those who need our protection what a role model is to be. We should lead by our example and the example is the most important thing. We, as a Legislature, put into our policy, as Senator Warner pointed out, that there can be no discrimination based on sexual orientation, and I am pleased and proud to say that that is a provision I insisted on being incorporated into our rules that govern the Legislature. I believe in lending assistance to those who are in need of it. There are many on this floor who probably feel, and you're lucky if you're correct, that they will never be in need of help from anybody. But on the chance you feel that way, if your mind is open enough