

*** KAMENY FOR CONGRESS COMMITTEE ***

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FOR RELEASE 11:00 A.M.
Monday, February 22, 1971

I am here to announce the filing of a petition containing more than 7,000 signatures--well over the required 5,000--nominating me for the position of Delegate to Congress from the District of Columbia.

This will place me on the ballot in the March 23 election, as the first publicly-declared homosexual ever to run for Congress and, to my knowledge, ever to run for any public office in this country. As such, I am not running for office; I am being run for office by the homosexual community and, therefore, my candidacy is a special one and will be conducted in some special ways.

This campaign represents the first organized effort by the homosexual community--10% of our population, here in the District as elsewhere--to enter the political arena first-hand, in our own behalf. That more than 7,000 signatures were obtained in a mere three weeks, by a coordinated effort staged by the homosexual community--an effort involving some 400 people--indicates that this latest arrival upon the political scene will be a formidable group to be reckoned with.

The homosexual community has been studiously ignored by those in politics and in public office. We expect this campaign to change

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that not only here in Washington but elsewhere in the country. We expect to see homosexual candidates running for a variety of offices at all levels, Federal, state, and local, throughout the nation in the near future.

We intend to wage a vigorous and hard-hitting campaign. We intend to pull no punches. Our primary concern will be with issues relating to homosexuals, but we will also be concerned with a broader range of closely-related issues having to do with personal freedom for all citizens, and with the right to live one's personal life as one chooses, without penalty, disability, or disadvantage, public or private, official or unofficial, for any nonconformity involved-- in short, with the Declaration of Independence's inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness--the happiness chosen by each citizen for himself, not the happiness chosen for him by society or by government. This deals with his sexual life, his choice of reading matter, his expenditures of his money, and his choice of life style. It ties in closely with such matters of current concern as governmental surveillance of which homosexuals are particular objects, and with other issues increasingly coming to the fore.

We intend to deal with a Civil Service Commission which, by rewarding bigotry instead of fighting it, and further penalizing the victims of bigotry, indicates a total lack of comprehension of the meaning of Americanism; with a non-existent security system which is merely a facade for a social and sexual conformity program and is a

menace to the security of our country; with armed services which needlessly consign 2,000 homosexuals per year to the human scrap heap and waste the taxpayers' money by investing some 90% of their investigative effort, in recent times, to ferreting out homosexuals. We intend to point out the political corruption under which these abuses flourish, and to lay the blame at the doorsteps of those public officials responsible, in order to compel the adoption of the necessary corrective measures.

We intend to deal with civil rights and equal opportunity legislation which leaves homosexuals and others unprotected in private employment, housing, and myriad other areas.

We intend to question the diversion of police activity and prosecutory activity to "crimes" without victims, at the expense of badly needed effort on crimes with victims, thereby endangering the safety of the persons and property of all residents of the District of Columbia.

We intend, in short, to remind a government and a country which seem in many ways to have forgotten it, exactly what Americanism means--that this is a country of personal freedom and individual diversity; that Queen Victoria is dead and the Puritans are long gone.

As homosexuals, we are fed up with a government which wages a relentless war against us and others of its citizens, instead of against the bigotry of our society. This is OUR country, OUR society, and OUR government--for homosexuals quite as much as for heterosexuals.

We are homosexual American citizens. We intend to see to it that the second and third words of that phrase: American citizens, are no longer ignored with regard to us. Along with other minorities-- blacks, women, students, the poor--we are first class citizens and we intend to play a full role in the life of our country.

We intend as well to use this campaign as an educational device, to inform the larger community about homosexuality, and to dispel stereotypes of homosexuals and homosexuality, and to discredit the type of drivel about homosexuality such as that which appeared in this article by Alfred Friendly in yesterday's Washington Post.

As a candidate from the entire District of Columbia, I will, of course, give full and careful attention, as well, to the full gamut of other issues which are of current and pressing concern to the residents of this colony.

With my campaign committee, I have formulated our positions on a variety of these issues and will be presenting them throughout the campaign.

You will be hearing much of us in the next 30 days--and long thereafter.
