



# MOMENTUM

The Newsletter for Members of the Human Rights Campaign Fund

Spring 1995

## Dear HRCF Member:

It's been three months since I took the helm of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, and I am in awe of all this organizational accomplishments and the support it receives from people like you. These three months have filled me with a renewed sense of hope for our movement for equality. HRCF's membership has grown to 100,000, and we are reaching out like never before.

I have visited HRCF members and supporters in a dozen cities across the country, while setting the pace of a very active staff who have done brilliant work in developing strategies and delivering results in the challenging new Congress. We have responded to every anti-gay statement coming from Congress in 1995, and we have scored incredible successes in protecting AIDS funding from major cuts. From Rep. Dick Arney's (R-TX) slur of Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) as Barney "Fag," to House Speaker Newt Gingrich's (R-GA) knee-jerk and often hostile statements on gay issues, HRCF has been out in front, usually in a matter of minutes, to see that no anti-gay statement or action has gone unchallenged.

Our vision is fueled by a unique blend of optimism, energy and determination. In light of the high expectations and dashed hopes of the past few years, one lesson resonates clearly: The future of our equality rests with each and every one of us. We cannot rely on political parties and presidents to win equal rights. Mobilizing our ranks and our allies by promoting personal involvement is what HRCF is all about. In the months ahead, you'll be hearing more about our efforts to effect positive change at the state and national levels — and finding plenty of opportunities to get involved.

A new political magazine — *HRCF Quarterly* — will soon premiere as a special benefit to all HRCF members. The new publication, which replaces the *Momentum* newsletter, will provide timely news, personal profiles and in-depth analysis of issues and personalities on the national political scene. In the meantime, this interim edition of *Momentum* brings you up to date on the exciting work underway across the country.

## Leadership Conference Gains National Attention

Vice President Al Gore and his wife, Tipper, graciously opened their home to host a reception that kicked off the Randy Klose Gay and Lesbian Leadership Conference held March 5-6 in Washington. Candace Gingrich, sister of House Speaker Newt Gingrich, joined more than 300 HRCF

supporters from 30 states at the weekend conference and Congressional lobby day. These events were covered on all the major television networks and in virtually every newspaper in the country. Candace has since joined our team as a spokesperson for HRCF's National Coming Out Project, travelling the country to bring new attention to our issues and our work.



HRCF Executive Director Elizabeth Birch addresses HRCF supporters on Capitol Hill.

## Victories on HIV/AIDS Funding

In the first action on AIDS by the 104th Congress, two House subcommittees voted to cut off funding already in the pipeline to states and cities for AIDS prevention, care and housing programs. Local communities grappling with the epidemic stood to lose \$222 million in federal assistance. HRCF's 5,000-member Federal Advocacy Network began phoning, visiting, faxing, writing and e-mailing Members of Congress. HRCF members who are participants in the Speak Out program sent thousands of letters to key Representatives. HRCF staff and members intensively lobbied key Representatives and Senators.

When the issue moved to the House Appropriations Committee, HRCF released the results of a new, bipartisan poll showing that 77 percent of voters favored maintaining or increasing federal funding for HIV/AIDS programs. HRCF commissioned the poll and hired leading Republican and Democratic polling firms to conduct the research. The committee voted to restore funding for AIDS care and prevention programs.

HRCF and our coalition partners worked closely with Republicans and Democrats in the House to secure a commitment from the Appropriations Committee chairman to consider restoring funds for the housing program, which keeps tens of thousands of people with HIV/AIDS from losing their homes. We were successful in saving the housing program in the Senate, which puts us in a strong position when the House and Senate meet to hammer out their differences over the legislation.