

# Gay Activists Target GU 01194

## Barry Urged to Block Bonds in Dispute Over Student Groups

By Eric Pianin  
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Gay activist leaders urged Mayor Marion Barry yesterday to block the issuance of \$63 million in D.C. revenue bonds to finance renovation at Georgetown University unless university officials agree to recognize the activities of gay student groups.

A D.C. Superior Court judge ruled last year that Georgetown may withhold privileges from gay student organizations because the university's adherence to Catholic beliefs against homosexuals is protected by the First Amendment. The ruling has been appealed to the D.C. Court of Appeals.

Barry, who met for an hour with officials of the politically influential Gay Activist Alliance and the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, said he was "sympathetic" to their request and agreed to look into the matter.

In the meantime, Barry postponed transmitting the university's request for tax-exempt bonding authority to the D.C. City Council for action. Georgetown plans to use the bonds to finance remodeling of its medical and law facilities and student housing and to buy new equipment.

"His [Barry's] heart was with us, but he said he'd have to look at the overall implications of it before deciding," said Bill Bogan, Stein club president.

Steve Smith, president of the Gay Activist Alliance, said it was stressed that the District government should not confer financial benefits to any nonprofit institution that violates any provision of the D.C. human rights law.

Charles H. Wilson Jr., an attorney for Georgetown, said yesterday that "the university will continue to defend its position" during a hearing on the court case Oct. 24.

Two student gay activist groups sued the university nearly four years ago, arguing that Georgetown should be required to recognize them under the D.C. human rights law, which bans discrimination on the basis of sexual preference. They said the refusal of official recognition denied them funding and other rights given to numerous other student organizations.

The students also claimed Georgetown is not a religious institution and it had acted arbitrarily in citing religious tenets as a basis for denying the gay group recognition.

However, the university argued that it is a religious institution despite some secular activities and that its refusal to recognize the gay group was proper because the students "were participating in and promoting homosexual life styles" contrary to Catholic beliefs. D.C. Superior Court Judge Sylvia Bacon ruled in favor of the university Oct. 14, 1983.

Gay activist leaders said yesterday they are urging the city to adopt contractual or legislative language to insure that Georgetown and other applicants for D.C. revenue bonds fully observe the city's civil rights legislation.

The District government currently is considering applications from 10 nonprofit organizations seeking to issue tax-exempt revenue bonds, which carry a lower interest rate than ordinary bonds.

On Tuesday, the mayor transmitted requests to the City Council for four such bond issues, including \$50 million for the D.C. Hospital Association to buy new equipment; \$45 million to finance construction of a 160-bed facility as part of the National Rehabilitation Hospital; \$3.5 million for Retarded Citizens Inc. and \$7 million to finance renovation at the Phillips Collection.

The City Council voted last July to approve in concept the \$63 million bond issue for Georgetown, but waited for the mayor to act on it before taking formal action. The mayor had planned to include the Georgetown project with the four other proposals he sent to the council this week, but held it back after the gay leaders raised objections.