

N E W S R E L E A S E

from the

MATTACHINE SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

P. O. Box 1032
Washington 13, D. C.

FOR RELEASE ON:
Tuesday, August 28, 1962

The formation of a new social action group in the greater Washington, D. C. area is announced. This group, the Mattachine Society of Washington, is dedicated to improving the status of the homosexual in our society, in the interest both of that minority group and of the nation. The Society discusses and acts upon all problems relating to the homosexual, both general and specific.

Guest speakers will address the group from time to time on a variety of relevant subjects. The Society is also setting up a professional referral service -- doctors, lawyers, clergymen, etc. --- for the homosexual in need.

The organization feels that the homosexual, today, is where the Negro was in the 1920's, except that the Negro has had, at worst, the mere indifference of his government, and, at best, its active assistance, whereas the homosexual has always had to contend with the active hostility of his government. For this reason, it is time that a strong initiative be taken to obtain for the homosexual minority --- a minority in no way different, as such, from other of our national minority groups --- the same rights, provided in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, as are guaranteed to all citizens. These include the rights to the pursuit of happiness, and to equality of opportunity; the right, as human beings, to develop and achieve their full potential and dignity; and the right, as citizens, to be allowed to make their maximum contribution to the society in which they live -- rights which Federal policy and practice now deny them.

The Society feels that prejudice directed against an individual, for no cause other than an unconventional sexual preference, is unwarranted, and that harsh, discriminatory action taken on the basis of such prejudice, with its incident waste of useful talent and manpower, is not consistent with the national welfare. It is felt that personal and popular prejudice cannot be eliminated as long as official prejudice exists and is indulged.

For this reason, the Society's primary effort will be directed to four main areas; First, the clearly improper, discriminatory policies of the U. S. Civil Service Commission --- policies which are plainly unconstitutional, and which operate against the best interests of the country, in that they act to deprive the nation of the services of many clearly well-qualified citizens who

have much to offer. That these policies are quite needless is demonstrated by the fact that, despite them, there are at least 200,000 homosexuals in the Federal service, and have been for many years, with no ill effects.

Second, the Armed Forces' needless and harshly-administered policies of exclusion. The present practice of giving less-than-fully-honorable discharges to homosexuals is unnecessarily vicious. In view of the fact that the Armed Forces also presently include at least a quarter-million homosexuals, in all ranks, without ill-effects, and that over a million served well and honorably in World War II, present policy seems open to serious question.

Third, the illogical policies of our security-clearance system, for civilian and military government personnel, and for those in private industry, under which all homosexuals, as a group, are regarded as security risks, without consideration of the merits of each individual case. Despite the continuing presence of some-quarter-million homosexuals with security clearances, at all levels, and within the cognizance of all agencies, the number of breaches of security resulting from homosexuality is virtually, if not actually nil.

Examination will show that present policies foster just that susceptibility to blackmail against which these policies are supposed to protect.

Fourth, the area of local law, both its provisions and its administration and enforcement. The Society feels that the example of the State of Illinois should be followed, in legalizing private homosexual relations on the part of consenting adults, but that, in any case, action must be taken against existing often flagrant and shocking abuses and violations of due process and of proper rights, liberties, and freedoms in this area.

The organization seeks a reassessment and reconsideration of present, totally unrealistic Federal policy and practice, law and regulation, on homosexuality. A "New Frontier" approach to official policies and practices which relegate over 15,000,000 Americans to second-class citizenship is long overdue and badly needed. The Government, hitherto, has attempted to sweep this problem under the rug, and, ostrich-like, has refused to face the situation or to deal with it in a logical fashion.

The Mattachine Society of Washington is confident that all intelligent, informed, public-spirited citizens will join them in their efforts to achieve a fresh and reasonable approach to this problem.