Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell

Despite a mixed record on gay and lesbian issues, President Clinton has always allowed that he feels the pain. On July 28, he became the first sitting president to host a meeting with elected gay leaders. The First Empath and friends spent 90 minutes discussing “a broad domestic agenda, including the environment and Medicare,” according to the White House’s Dagoberto Vega. Did the AIDS pandemic merit a slot on the docket? POZ went straight to the horses’ mouths.

November 1, 1999 By Brent Jordheim

David Parks
Nevada state rep.
“AIDS was mentioned but not discussed. Because the president has done well in the programs he’s supported, it was important to focus on other issues. I walked out of there feeling that it was his attempt to gather support from a progressive coalition.”

Cathy Woolard
Atlanta city councilwoman
“We did not have an extended discussion on AIDS. We talked of items currently before Congress.”

Juanita Owens
San Francisco Board of Education president
“Health issues were discussed. I don’t want to discount the possibility that we talked about AIDS. Some--one may have brought it up.”

Liz Malia
Massachusetts state rep.
“We talked about Medicare and other health care problems. The meeting was informal—it wasn’t set up with any specific issues in mind.”

Victoria Sigler
Dade County, Florida, judge
“We went beyond issues specific to the gay community to broader issues, like tax cuts.”

Deborah Glick
New York state rep.
“There was no specific agenda. There may have been some mention of AIDS in terms of health care. When you have 90 minutes to discuss 42 issues, it’s limiting.”

Allan Spear

Minnesota state senator

“I think someone mentioned AIDS at the end, but we ran out of time. We met earlier and decided which issues we needed to bring forth. AIDS wasn’t one. But it wasn’t a conscious decision

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