



### View Is Brighter For Disney Subsidy

■ The prospects of a Virginia subsidy for a Disney theme park improved markedly when lawmakers seeking to hold it hostage were outmaneuvered. *Page A14*

### New Life, Old Idea

■ A citizen panel endorsed merit pay for Fairfax teachers, giving new life to a program eliminated last year. *Page A13*

### Winter Storm

■ A major winter storm surged toward the Washington area last night, threatening to hit the area with the heaviest snow of the season. *Page D2*

# Echoes of '84 in Gay-Rights Debate

*Washington Post*  
**Same Arguments Heard as Montgomery Eyes Ending Decade-Old Ban**  
3/2/94 (P1)

By Kevin Sullivan  
Washington Post Staff Writer

John Willis, of Rockville, told the Montgomery County Council last night that he is a tolerant man who supports gay rights, a statement that drew derisive laughter from gay-rights advocates gathered in the hearing room.

Willis turned to them and thundered:

"I would march with you homosexuals for the right to speak, but you do not have the right to advocate your homosexuality with my minor children!"

With that, Willis distilled a passionate debate that lasted for three hours among 150 homosexuals, teachers, ministers, a rabbi, parents, students, government officials and scientists.

In 1984, Montgomery County enacted what was then ground-breaking legislation banning employment discrimination against homosexuals. But to mollify angry religious groups and council member William E. Hanna Jr., now the council president, two exceptions were added to the law.

One said religious groups didn't

have to hire homosexuals. The other—the one debated last night—said that employers didn't have to hire anyone who "advocated" a homosexual or bisexual lifestyle if the job required the employee to work with children of the same sex.

That second exemption never has been invoked or challenged. Gay groups and the county's Human Relations Commission now say that it was an unnecessary safeguard that should be stricken from the law. They say it is anachronistic and promotes unfounded, hateful stereotypes about gay people as pedophiles.

At least five of the council's nine members favor striking the provision, so there seems to be little doubt about the outcome when the council votes on the matter in a few weeks.

But last night's hearing in Rockville showed that the opposition remains as angry and vocal as it was in 1984. Well more than half of the crowd favored keeping the provision in place, asserting that advocates of homosexuality should be kept away from children.

"The idea that homosexuality is not directed toward sex with boys is

a repudiation of an entire world of history," said Judith Reisman, of the Institute for Media Education, based in Arlington.

Reisman received a long standing ovation after telling the council that mainstream homosexual literature is filled with explicit references to sex with children. She and several others said the law should keep homosexuals from advocating their lifestyle around impressionable children.

Those who disagreed with Reisman said there is no evidence suggesting that homosexuals are more likely than heterosexuals to molest children.

"There is no reason other than prejudice to believe" that is the case, said Stephen Nassau, chairman of the Human Relations Commission, which administers the county's anti-discrimination laws.

Nassau said the law in question "has no place in the laws of a community as highly educated and sophisticated as Montgomery County."

Several speakers said they feared that homosexual teachers would advocate homosexual lifestyles to

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