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# Gay activists disappointed in Clinton, poll indicates

By Paul Bedard  
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When Bill Clinton took the White House last year, homosexual activists declared 1993 "The Year of the Queer."

After all, Mr. Clinton had made more campaign promises to the homosexual movement than to most of his other constituencies and there was no reason that the self-described "man from Hope" would let his pals down.

But he did, according to a new Washington Blade survey of homosexual activists.

"Somewhere along the path of his first year in the Rose Garden, President Bill Clinton fell down and the promises came spilling out onto the dirt," said the paper in a year-end review of the new administration's policies on homosexuals and AIDS.

Of the 20 top activists inside and outside the White House, the Blade polled, the average grade given Mr. Clinton was a C.

The president's most noted and outspoken homosexual appointment, Bob Hattoy, now with the Interior Department, simply said the president deserves an incomplete grade. "He gets an A for his ideas and plans ... but there has been a lack of follow-through in a number of areas."

The key area of anger remains Mr. Clinton's public flip-flop on lifting the ban on homosexuals in the military. Chai Feldblum, a legal strategist for the Campaign for Military Service, told the newspaper for homosexuals that "because of [Mr. Clinton's] actions, we're in a worse position now than under two Republican presidents." The activist said Mr. Clinton has "done more harm for

us than if he had never made the promise in the first place."

The grading system used by the Blade was broken into two issue areas — "gay issues" and "AIDS." For each, 10 activists inside the administration and the Democratic Party and 10 activists not associated with the White House or the party were asked to grade the president.

On "gay issues," Mr. Clinton received two B's, four C's, three F's and one abstention from the group of outsiders. Of the insiders, Mr. Clinton won two A's, six B's, one C and one incomplete.

On AIDS, the outsiders gave the president five B's, three C's and two F's. The insiders gave Mr. Clinton seven A's, one B, one C and one incomplete.

While the flip-flop dominated the news, the list of concessions made to the homosexual movement listed by the Blade is long. For example:

- Mr. Clinton has now appointed 29 homosexuals to key administration positions, more than twice the number provided by the White House. The Blade said that nine are at the White House; six at the Commerce Department; five at the Housing and Urban Development Department; two each at Health and Human Services, Labor and Education departments; and one each at the Interior and Energy departments and the Environmental Protection Agency.

- Funding for AIDS research has increased despite budget cuts.

- Funding for the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resource Emergency services program was also increased, although not as high has had been hoped.

- Mr. Clinton appointed the nation's first AIDS czar, Kristine Geb-

bie.

- The president regularly spoke out on AIDS.

- The administration has issued rules on a per-agency basis banning discrimination against homosexuals.

Most special interest groups would have been overjoyed with such success in the first year of an administration, but the homosexual community isn't and wants Mr. Clinton's other promises carried out soon. They want him to:

- Issue an executive order banning discrimination against homosexuals in the workplace.

- Fully lift the ban on military service.

- Author a "Gay Civil Rights Bill." Michael Petrelis, who leads Gay & Lesbian Americans, is one of many homosexual activists who claim the president has got a long way to go before getting an above-average grade.

For example, he slammed Mr. Clinton's appointments as too low-level.

Seattle Democratic Councilwoman Sherry Harris told the newspaper what many in the homosexual community feel that "what he has done has been good, but he has not done as much as he should soon enough."

But Clinton supporters such as homosexual lawmakers Barney Frank and Gerry Studds, both Massachusetts Democrats, said those grading the Clinton administration should do so in light of other presidencies.

Said Mr. Studds: "The real news is that we are news and that all of our struggles — civil rights, immigration, health care — are front-page news and [Mr. Clinton] put them there. That is extraordinary."