

## Ban on discrimination of homosexuals in schools

Soon schools may no longer sack or reject teachers because they are homosexual.

On Tuesday D66<sup>1</sup>, together with VVD<sup>2</sup>, PvdA<sup>3</sup>, SP<sup>4</sup> and GroenLinks<sup>5</sup>, proposed a change in the law which would end possible discrimination against homosexual teachers.

Schools for religious or other particular education<sup>6</sup> are not permitted to fire or deny employees 'solely on the basis' of that person being openly homosexual, or being in a homosexual relationship. It is possible, however, if 'additional circumstances' arise. In practice this can sometimes lead to problems, particularly at orthodox Christian and Muslim schools.

According to Vera Bergkamp, a D66 member in Parliament, the proposed law would end this confusion by removing the so-called 'sole basis'-construction from the General Law of Non-Discrimination.

'At the moment it is still possible to end a person's employment as a result of an 'additional circumstance' of homosexuality. For instance, a teacher who visits GayPride, or speaks openly about a homosexual relationship, can be fired.'

### Pink 'ballot box deal'

The proposed law, which is guaranteed majority support in both the Second and First Chambers<sup>7</sup>, forms part of the so-called 'Pink ballot box deal'. This is a set of agreements made by in September 2012 by VVD, PvdA, SP, D66 and GroenLinks, in which five questions on the topic of 'emancipation' will be resolved within a year.

The other questions are: the weigerambtenaar (a civil servant who, for reasons of conscience, may refuse to witness the marriage of two people of the same sex), education about sexual diversity in schools, lesbian parenthood, and gender identity.

<http://www.nu.nl/politiek/3416980/verbod-discriminatie-homos-school.html>

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<sup>1</sup> D66 – a liberal, 'democratic' party, in Opposition

<sup>2</sup> VVD – Liberal party, senior Coalition partner

<sup>3</sup> PvdA – Labour party, junior Coalition partner

<sup>4</sup> SP – Socialist party, in Opposition

<sup>5</sup> GroenLinks – Green party, in Opposition

<sup>6</sup> 'Religious...education' – state-funded education falls into two streams: 'Public' schools, which have no religious or philosophical background, and 'special' schools, which may be set up, sponsored, or run by groups with a particular religious (or other) conviction.

<sup>7</sup> First and Second Chambers – two Houses of the Dutch Parliament whose UK equivalents are the Houses of Lords and Commons, respectively