

More than 200 sign petitions against gay rights bill

By **JANET BAINE**
Staff writer

People at four local churches signed petitions opposing Bill C-33, which amends the Human Rights Act by adding "sexual orientation."

The petitions from Georgetown Alliance Church (100 signatures), Maple Ave. Baptist (83 signatures), Salvation Army Church (33 signatures) and Evangel Pentecostal Tabernacle (32 signatures) were sent to Reform Party member Sharon Hayes, said Naomi Johnson, a member of Georgetown Alliance Church who is against C-33.

"I've never uttered a mean or fearful word against the homosexual and lesbian community here, I've never disliked a single

one of them, but I've also never viewed their lifestyle choice as one to be emulated or promoted," she said. "(With the passing of C-33) I have been forced to accept as natural, normal, healthy and good as the color of one's skin, their right to not only choose to function in counter-natural ways, but also to be able to promote this in open and unabashed ways."

Halton-Peel MP Julian Reed supported Bill C-33 in the House of Commons.

"What the bill does, is it says you can't discriminate against somebody in the federal government system or a crown corporation because of sexual orientation."

He noted the bill catches up with eight of the provinces, including

Ontario, which already doesn't allow discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Reed said he voted for the amendment, which passed May 10, because "it's a simple matter of human rights." He also believes the amendment prevents discrimination against heterosexuals by those who are gay.

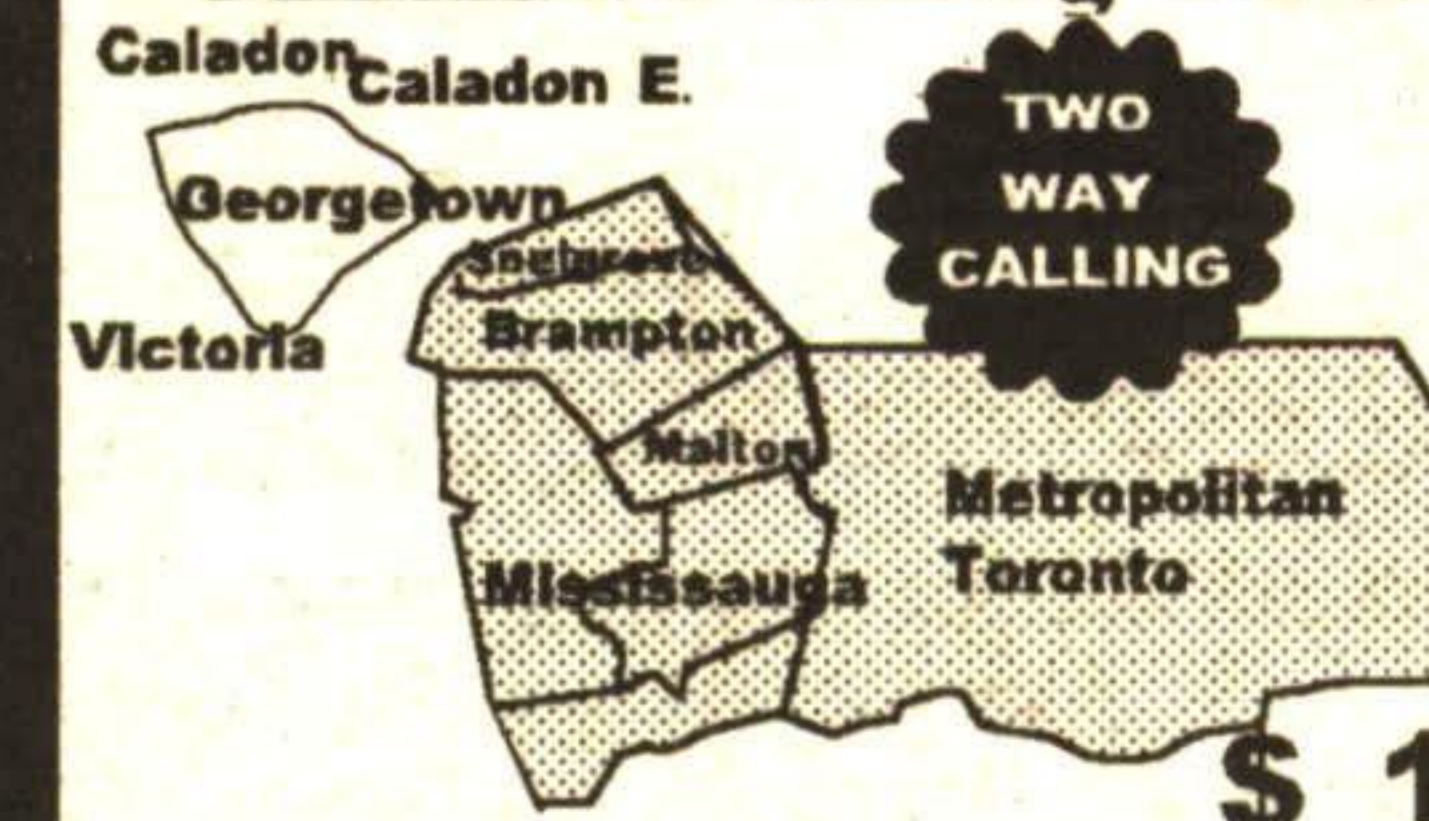
Reed hasn't seen any of the local petitions, but he did receive one from outside

his riding. He also received about 25 to 30 phone calls from people urging him to vote against Bill C-33 and three from people in favor of it.

"On matters of conscience I vote according to my conscience, because I have to look myself in the mirror every day," he said. "Voters wouldn't want to say, there goes Julian Reed, he has no conscience because we told him not to have one."

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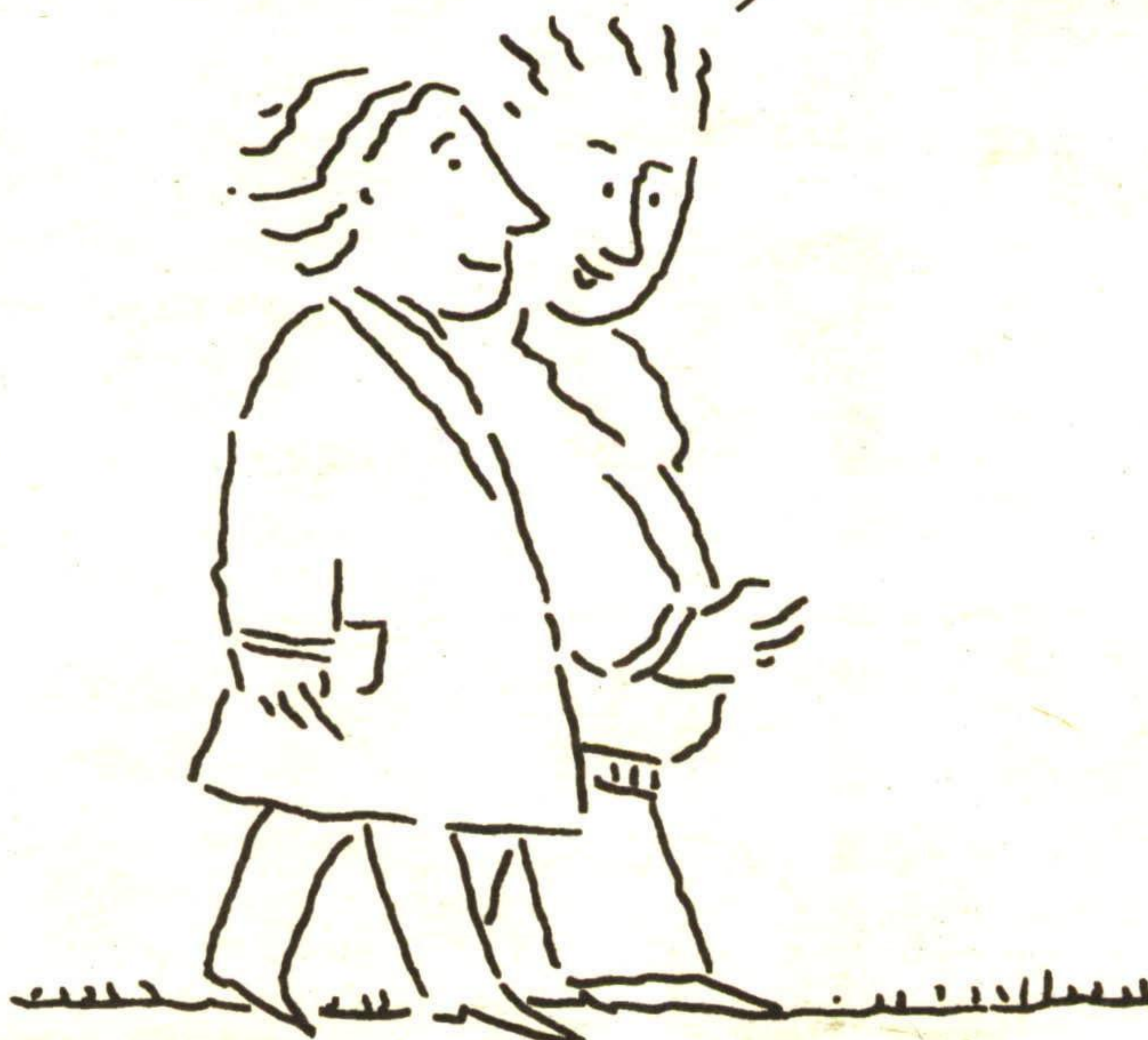
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