

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Betsy Smith, Executive Director, (207) 939-7769

EqualityMaine Endorses Congressman Tom Allen Cites His Longtime Support of Maine's LGBT Community

(PORTLAND, 8/18/2008) EqualityMaine, the state's oldest and largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) advocacy organization, announced today its endorsement of Congressman Tom Allen for United States Senate.

"Throughout his long career, Congressman Allen has supported fairness and equality while opposing discrimination," Executive Director Betsy Smith said. "His voting record on LGBT issues is exceptional. He has worked to eliminate discrimination in jobs, housing, public accommodations and financial matters, and we look forward to working with him to win fully-inclusive federal employment non-discrimination legislation.

"Congressman Allen has proven his commitment to LGBT issues, and this commitment is not a matter of political convenience," Smith went on. "He has always taken the time to attend LGBT community events and rallies in Maine, even in non-election years, and he has reached out to LGBT constituents to hear our community's concerns."

As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Allen co-sponsored bipartisan legislation to repeal the military's discriminatory Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy, and he has pledged to co-sponsor similar legislation in the Senate, if elected there. "After repeated requests for her to sponsor legislation, Senator Collins has called for a re-examination of this policy, but that is simply not enough," said Smith. "Until it is repealed, Don't Ask, Don't Tell will undermine national security and perpetuate discrimination against LGBT Americans who serve their country."

"Since its enactment in 1993, this discredited and unjust law has resulted in the discharge of more than 12,000 gay and lesbian service members from the military," said Allen. "If elected to the U.S. Senate, I will co-sponsor and continue to work for passage of legislation to repeal the Don't Ask, Don't Tell law, eliminate discrimination in the Armed Forces and honor the contributions and sacrifices of LGBT Americans who serve our country with skill, dedication and courage."

Smith added, "Congressman Allen has refused to vote in lockstep with the most anti-LGBT administration in modern history. His votes have broken with this administration over 80 percent of the time. Meanwhile, Senator Collins chose to vote with this anti-LGBT administration 77 percent of the time. She has also supported the confirmation of highly conservative court appointees, setting back progress on relationship recognition issues and endangering critical protections for our allies, for women and for choice."

Smith concluded, "I am looking forward to Congressman Allen's success in his campaign, and I know he will be a valuable asset to Maine and to the nation as a member of the United States Senate."

Since 1984, EqualityMaine has worked to secure full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Maine.

###