

'Ex-gays' warn against same-sex marriages

By Jennifer Hong
Star-Bulletin



Michael Johnston says he is living proof that homosexuality is a choice - a product of nurture, not nature.

After being gay for 13 years - during which he contracted the AIDS virus - Johnston said he chose to change. He says he is now straight. An "ex-gay."

Johnston and a panel of three other "ex-gays" from the mainland yesterday told legislators that not everyone who is gay wants to be that way. They support religious organizations like Exodus International that help homosexuals make the change.

The comments followed a hearing in which the Senate passed two bills preserving traditional marriage and extending benefits to domestic partners. Republican Reps. Gene Ward, Bob McDermott and Colleen Meyer were the only legislators present.

The panel warned the legislators that legalizing same-sex marriage would elevate a lifestyle that is against the Bible. They said lawmakers have a responsibility not to be fooled by claims that homosexuals are born that way.

"Gay rights' is a counterfeit civil rights movement," said Anthony Falzarano, who said he was gay for nine years before reforming. "The myth that homosexuals are born gay is a lie."

The panel also agreed that promiscuity is the nature of homosexuality, and allowing homosexuals to marry won't change that.

Not so, said Owen Green, a critic at the discussion.

"Promiscuity has nothing to do with homosexuality," said Green, who is homosexual. "It's a purely male trait. Look at male dogs.

"These people are all in denial. They can walk with all the swans they want, but they're still ducks."

But Falzarano said he has the numbers to prove his claim: More than 18,000 people have passed the Exodus International program with a 100 percent success rate of reform, he said.

Exodus International started in 1986 and is based in Seattle. Its reform process is similar to that of Alcoholics Anonymous, in which the individual changes at his or her own pace, said "ex-gay" John Paulk.

Paulk is married to Anne Paulk, also an "ex-gay," who said 85 percent of those who go through Exodus International have common experiences: They were sexually molested and have overdominating mothers and emotionally detached fathers.