

**ANNOUNCER:** The following program contains language or images of the plant or sensitive nature which may be considered objectionable by some. Listener discretion is advised.

[BED CREAKING]

[THEME MUSIC]

(SINGING) After hours, after hours.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh, yes, you've tuned in to *After Hours*, queer radio with attitude, right here on KPFT Houston, 90.1 FM. The crew of *After Hours* is ready to bring you news, interviews, dialogue, and music geared for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people and their friends.

Here at *After Hours* we may be diverse, but we have one thing in common. We are all out of the closet and urge everyone to come out of their closets. That means standing up for yourself, taking responsibility for your own life, and being proud of who you are. Realistically, we know not everyone can do that because of age, job, or frame of mind. That's OK. We're here for you, too.

So sit back, relax, and enjoy this week's edition of *After Hours*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Hello, Houston, and College Station, and Sarasota, Florida, and New Hampshire, and the world. And welcome to *After Hours*, queer radio with attitude. I'm Jimmy Carper.

This is the November 10 edition. And we have got a wonderful show lined up for you today-- tonight. Or it is today in some places in the world. This is, believe it or not, *After Hours* is a morning show in places like London. But as soon-- well, let's talk about this first, the music.

The music, which is very important, that I started out with was-- I started out with *Angels*, and that was by Yolanda and the Plastic Family. This is a wonderful group from the very northeast, up there in the cold places.

And that was a very good song about the struggle to be human. And that's kind of what was been going on in this town during that last election.

And, of course, the Three Marys after that with *Homophobic Blues*.

A couple of things I want to talk about is first of all, I have a little flyer here about Mary Beth [INAUDIBLE]. And she is a wonderful singer. She has a CD out that we've played on *Esoteric Adventures*. She does a wonderful job of nice old standards, jazz, blues, and standards from the Great American Songbook.

She is going to be at the Vintage Bar at 4356 Westheimer on Mid Lane on Thursday, November 15, from 8 to 11. So if you don't have anything else-- well, cancel what you've got to do, go there. You will have a wonderful time. This is a great woman with a wonderful voice and good feeling for what she's singing.

Let's see, I do want to say happy birthday to Pat and Rosie from Pat and Rosie's *Night Sounds*. They are celebrating right this moment at the Last Concert Cafe over on Nance Street. There's a whole bunch of stuff going on over there. Both of their birthdays, I think, are this month. And I believe there may be a 50th birthday there for one of them.

**BETH** The big five zone.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes.

**BETH** Well, congratulations.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes, and on the other mic we have--

**BETH** Beth Richards.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Hey, Beth.

**BETH** Yes, it is.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** How are you doing? Yes.

**BETH** It's that second week of the month.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** It's that second week of the month. It's time for your show. And I'm right here. I've got this wonderful memo from Han-Net saying Annise Parker joins panel for November 10 *After Hours* show on KPFT. Well.

**BETH** Well.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Well, well.

**BETH** So our lineup for tonight was going to be Ray Hill, Deb Rogers, Grant Martin, and Annise Parker. Well, Grant has  
**RICHARDS:** had to give us his regards because he's pooped. He's running a-- running a heck of a campaign for what he's been doing the last couple of months here.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah, no kidding.

**BETH** And so he's going to have to pass his regrets on for tonight.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** OK.

**BETH** But we wish him well. And we hope to see him again sometime soon.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes we do. And I see Jackie Thorne has joined us, also.

**BETH** Wow, that's true. Yeah, I saw her out in the lobby--

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes, and she's--

**BETH** I wasn't sure if she's coming in or not.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** No, she's there. She's got headphones on. And, you know, Ray is just talking a mile a minute, anyway. So we might as well put them on mic and get going with this segment. Hello.

**RAY HILL:** Hello.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Hi, daddy.

**RAY HILL:** Anybody home?

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh, we're all home.

**BETH** Yeah, well, if everybody can-- does everybody got a mic OK over there?

**RICHARDS:**

**RAY HILL:** Yep.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh, yeah.

**ANNISE** I think so.

**PARKER:**

**BETH** So, as I mentioned, our original panel--

**RICHARDS:**

**RAY HILL:** Maybe you had to work it closer. Either-- pick your mic, [INAUDIBLE]. You either work close to that one or work close to this one.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Listen and--

**RAY HILL:** And Annise smells better than I do. So there you go.

**JIMMY CARPER:** In that--

**ANNISE** I'm deaf in one ear. So I have no idea what I'm doing tonight.

**PARKER:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** In that room, I've got enough mics on to pick up everybody.

**RAY HILL:** Oh, OK.

**BETH** You guys are all just--

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** I am very, very honored to have as a guest tonight, actually, Beth is guest tonight, Annise Parker.

**ANNISE** Very, very [INAUDIBLE].

**PARKER:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** The last time you were on this show was the celebration of your first election, I believe. That's one of my favorite shows. I'm still honored that you chose *After Hours* as the first media to announce your win and come on to talk about it.

**ANNISE** Well, I'm glad that I'm back tonight to talk about another win. It was close.

**PARKER:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** You bet. We're all glad about that, and a lot closer than anybody expected. You know, I didn't think there'd be kind of rub off there, but wow.

**ANNISE** The reason I started advertising on TV in the last week or so of the campaign is that we were doing polling numbers. And every time my name would get out there and there'd be a news story about Prop Two and lesbian council member, my numbers would go down. So we actually thought I'd bottom out about 53%, 54%, and that I'd be fine. But I actually won with 50.7%, 1,500 votes.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Wow. Wow.

**RAY HILL:** You see, I think this brings up, the referendum wound up hurting not only Annise, but I think it hurt Mayor Brown, as well.

**JIMMY CARPER:** I do, too.

**ANNISE** Definitely,

**PARKER:**

**RAY HILL:** It's not-- it's not that-- what it did, is it reminded a lot of conservative Republican voters who were going to come out in support of Sanchez anyway, that their opposition candidates were out there on an issue that they had been carefully schooled to oppose.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes.

**RAY HILL:** We tend to forget that Dave Wilson is just not the luckiest guy in the world. He is not very loved among conservatives, or liberals, or anything else.

But he has bought into an issue that is an old Hotze stalwart. And if anybody paid attention enough to hear what they were saying out at Second Baptist Church the last few Sundays before the election, they would have gotten a double trunk of some pretty horrible stuff. And I have a great deal of admiration for Annise and Mayor Brown for falling on their swords, almost--

**JIMMY CARPER:** Well--

**RAY HILL:** --to promote a cause that is good and worthy and deserving and all of that. But that means to me, as a member of the gay, lesbian, transgendered, and bisexual community, that we have a deep obligation in return for that loyalty, to get out there and work our ass off in this runoff election.

**JIMMY CARPER:** You bet ya.

**DEB ROGERS:** Absolutely.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Definitely.

**RAY HILL:** Because the Mayor is in a runoff. And we've got a runoff in District C.

**DEB ROGERS:** D, D.

**RAY HILL:** Yeah--

**DEB ROGERS:** Edwards.

**RAY HILL:** You see, they draw the lines and it takes me 20 years to catch up. But back when it was District C, the candidate had a-- the caucus had a very attractive candidate, Cathy Minberg. Remember that? And fresh off the school board, lots of gay and lesbian support.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes, yes.

**RAY HILL:** We were clearly leading by a greater margin than Ada is leading in this race. And Vince Ryan just run right over her. Those races-- district races, are fraught with examples where second runners prevail in the runoff. And what happens is that the runoff gives people a measure of confidence that is undeserved. Because a runoff is not an extension of the election that created it. A runoff is a whole new election.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes, it is.

**DEB ROGERS:** There has been some confusion about that. I've heard people say, well, gee, I didn't vote for the original election. I guess I can't vote in the run--

**JIMMY CARPER:** Wrong.

**DEB ROGERS:** No, you can go vote in the runoff.

**RAY HILL:** Every registered voter can vote in this runoff. And we need to make that a mantra. I'm telling you, everybody that is registered and lives in citywide can go vote for Mayor Brown in this election. And everyone that is registered in District D can vote for Ada. And we've got to make a mantra out of that.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah, well, you know that'll be on this show every week.

**RAY HILL:** Whether they voted-- whether they voted in their first election or not, it's irrelevant.

**ANNISE PARKER:** I was trailing-- I was about nine points down going into the runoff in '97, that I won. So it's not unusual at all. The trick is picking up the votes of the other folks in the race.

**RAY HILL:** That's one of the tricks. The other trick is-- excuse me for turning my dial to [INAUDIBLE], me and Scott Tillinghast to do this kind of academic thing that--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**DEB ROGERS:** One thing you do is you go after your opponent.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**JIMMY CARPER:** I want to get Deb Rogers--

**RAY HILL:** Turnout, turnout, turnout. Yeah, turnout, turnout, turnout. For instance, Montrose voted about 34%, overall, in the general election. And I would suspect because of the good work of PVA and the caucus, and a grant, and Ada's campaign, that gay and lesbian voters turned out, may be better than that. Maybe 40% of the gay and lesbian voters in Montrose turned out.

And the others turned out a little less, so it averaged out to 34%. So that means that 60% of the gay and lesbian voters that could have voted didn't bother to vote.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes.

**RAY HILL:** And I think we need to go after them with a vengeance.

**JIMMY CARPER:** You bet.

**RAY HILL:** And get them back to the polls. And then I think we need to do the kind of bridge-buildings that has-- we've been doing with Third Ward. Third Ward, which is the other significant nearby vote in District D, did very well on the referendum. And, however, the voter turnout was low. So we've got friends over there that, number one, had voted for the referendum, that we need to talk to about Ada, fellow travelers.

Plus the fact there's a bunch of folks over there that didn't go vote in the first place. And if I were blocking this out, and if I didn't have this old peg-leg, I'd go work Fiesta behind Sears every day. And get those folks out to vote. Because they will vote.

**JIMMY CARPER:** And now early voting is so easy.

**RAY HILL:** Yes.

**JIMMY CARPER:** You don't have to wait till election day.

**RAY HILL:** And I want to admonish all of the listeners, heck, we're going to have open polls in a couple of weeks here. Get your butt to an early voting place.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah, definitely

**RAY HILL:** Vote and get it out of the way.

**ANNISE** So, of course, we have the two at-large races and the mayor's race.

**PARKER:**

**DEB ROGERS:** Absolutely.

**ANNISE** We have one candidate in each of those races who is very gay-friendly and the other candidate who is not.

**PARKER:**

**RAY HILL:** Right.

**ANNISE PARKER:** You've got clearly in the mayor's race, Mayer Brown, who went all out for us in Prop 2. There's a long string of very pro-gay actions, the nondiscrimination ordinance that includes transgenders. All of this stuff on Brown's side, Orlando voted against all of that. It was--

**RAY HILL:** Till he voted-- he voted against straight discrimination.

**DEB ROGERS:** Right. Right. When you come right down to it--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**DEB ROGERS:** Mayor Brown has actually done what he said he would do, as well, just saying that he's actually done it.

**ANNISE** But--

**PARKER:**

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**ANNISE PARKER:** --Orlando talks against this and would actually vote against this. But I don't want to ignore those other two at-large races.

**DEB ROGERS:** Oh, no.

**ANNISE PARKER:** Claudia Williamson is on our side. Michael Berry may be a nice guy but he is taking a public position against our community. Shelley Sekula-Rodriguez has taken a public position against our community. Andrew Burks is taking a public position in support of our community. You've got to respond to that.

**DEB ROGERS:** Well, there you go. You can vote either way. But does it really make sense to vote against your own community?

**RAY HILL:** Now these races, of course, again, are citywide. If you were fortunate enough to be registered to vote and you go to the polls, you were lucky enough to vote for an Annise Parker. And I appreciate you doing that from the bottom of my heart.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes.

**RAY HILL:** Because I think the community is well represented on city council, primarily by Annise Parker, but not entirely. Because the other members of council are also concerned about our issues.

And, of course, there is the mayor. And Houston is a-- what do you say? --strong mayor form of government, which means exactly what it says. The agenda is basically set by the mayor.

Now the city council can ameliorate that to some degree. But you have to break a leg and bleed on the floor and do other kinds of things to do that.

The Mayor runs this city without a manager. And he or she, whomever the case may be from time to time, and someday I hope we get back into women mayors because I enjoyed Kathy's administration. And I'm looking forward to Annise's, someday. But this is important stuff.

**JIMMY CARPER:** We all are.

**RADIO HOST 1:** Yeah.

**BETH** For those of you not in the studio, Annise is kind of smiling.

**RICHARDS:**

**RAY HILL:** This is important stuff.

**ANNISE** We're also losing our second best council vote, Chris Bell. Other than my own position, Chris is the most pro-gay  
**PARKER:** council member. Gordon Quan is right behind him.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Good.

**ANNISE** But we have the possibility of losing ground on council, depending on how these at-large races go.  
**PARKER:**

**RAY HILL:** And we've got some serious needs within the Democratic party for progressive politicians to go for state offices. And that's going to-- it's kind of like the call up to the war. That's going to cost us. So we need to work on those margins. And it's very important that gay and lesbian people throughout the city, wherever you live, to get out there and vote. Deborah, How's-- what's the caucus plans?

**DEB ROGERS:** Well, the caucus right now, we've updated our website. And if you go to our website at [www.hglpc.com](http://www.hglpc.com) you will find a list of reasons why you might want to get to know Mr. Sanchez before you actually cast that vote. I think it'll be very illuminating for everyone.

The other thing that I wanted to address is the city itself and the outlying areas. We're pretty sprawled out. When I was working my precinct out in Bear Creek during the election on Tuesday, a number of people were upset that they couldn't vote in the city election because they don't live in the city limits. And that happens quite a bit around the outlying edges.

They were frustrated, thinking that they didn't have a way to cast their opinion or cast their vote. Because, even though we live outside of the city limits, most of us work inside the city and spend 95% of our time in the city. Personally, I was kind of happy because they were all going to vote for Sanchez. So that didn't ruin my parade at all.

But for those of you who are progressive voters and you're living outside of the city limits, you're probably thinking, well, what can I do? I can't even vote.

And the thing is, you can actually do something that's even more powerful than voting. You can make that contribution to any of the campaigns that are running. You can go out and volunteer for their campaigns. You can do something as simple as talking to your coworkers that you work with downtown, or in the Galleria, or wherever it is, and educate them on what's going on with the issues.

**RADIO HOST 1:** Well, another very important thing, also, is during the election day itself, actually, even though you live outside the city limits, there's nothing that says you can't take a bunch of push cards and stand in front of a precinct that is inside city limits and hand them out to people.

**DEB ROGERS:** Exactly, exactly. There are a lot of things you can do that can be equally effective and sometimes even more effective than just the single vote.



**RAY HILL:** My sister actually controls Precinct 455 with push cards. And she has done that for 30 years because my mother did it before she did. And they go over there and here is redneck city cloverleaf, all these blue-collar, conservative folks that have voted for all these amazingly liberal candidates.

As a matter of fact, Jack Fields has never carried that precinct when he was running for election, because my sister wouldn't let him. And so you can make an impact at a precinct [INAUDIBLE]. But there's one thing, I was excoriated today on Han-Net.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Today?

**RAY HILL:** Well, I get excoriated.

**DEB ROGERS:** For shame.

**RAY HILL:** And I get I get excoriated frequently. But this was a tender subject. Young fellow accused me of being anti-Hispanic because I did not support a candidate who calls himself Orlando "San-chez" Now, how Hispanic is a guy that can't even pronounce his last name?

**ANNISE PARKER:** I called him "Son-chez" the first few times I talked to him, and then he corrected me.

**RAY HILL:** He corrected you. It's not "Son-chez" It's "San-chez". And, actually, I have paid far more dues to Hispanic equality in Houston body politic than Orlando ever will or ever think about. Orlando is basically a political front-runner for some amazingly conservative and narrow-minded people.

The Steven Hotze faction of the Republican Party, which unfortunately controls Harris County Republican Party, they've only got about a third of the membership. But since they always vote in Gestapo-like lockstep unity, that one third block will control the whole organization.

And those are the people who have put "San-chez" up there, in the hopes that some Hispanic people will vote for him. And those that do are all the more fools. In addition, the Sanchez has somehow managed to get the enthusiastic support of the firefighters union, who really do not understand that the people who pull the string for their puppet mayor candidate are not in favor of any union--

**JIMMY CARPER:** Right.

**RAY HILL:** --firefighters notwithstanding. And so my concern is that a lot of people are going to vote for a Hispanic surname, or some kind of thing. And not only does he not honor that by pronouncing it correctly, he doesn't have any sentiments that are over there. And the in-the-know Houston Hispanic political organizations are fully aware of that.

And so, follow the leadership of the people who have been contributing to Hispanic equality for a long time.

**ANNISE PARKER:** Every Hispanic elected official in the county, I think, has endorsed Mayer Brown.

**DEB ROGERS:** Ray just said something that made me wonder about something else. Back to the Proposition Two question, one thing that I think is universally accepted among all the voters, whether they voted for or against it, was that the wording was very confusing.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh, yes.

**RAY HILL:** Definitely.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Can we talk about that?

**DEB ROGERS:** And I have a theory on that. And that is that it was intended to be confusing for the sole purpose of keeping the average voter from taking the time to analyze it. And instead let them listen to their trusted source, whoever that might be.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Well, it--

**DEB ROGERS:** And in the case of those people who Ray had mentioned, who were sitting there in Second Baptist Church, that's their trusted source.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah, but it's my understanding that city council has the last word on wording. So what happened?

**RAY HILL:** Actually, this passed their wording. It's very difficult. The language is not designed, nor has it evolved over the eons that the English language has evolved--

**DEB ROGERS:** Well, that's--

**RAY HILL:** --to express encouragement for discrimination.

**ANNISE PARKER:** Council does have the last word. And by virtue of my position on council, I was able to have a number of conversations with our legal department and include Grant Martin, just to kind of get the implications of the wording.

What happened is we virtually tracked the caption language off the petition and there is some sort of stylized language or boilerplate language that starts off all of these that, "Shall the charter of the city of Houston be amended?" And, well, our concern was that--

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh, I see what you mean.

**ANNISE** Yeah, you can't really--

**PARKER:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** You start off with that wording. And--

**RAY HILL:** And the council is not in a position to change the yes vote to a no vote. That is not at their discretion.

**ANNISE PARKER:** Well, basically, you've got all these signatures on a petition. And if you come off with language that doesn't match what's in the petition, more or less, then I'm sure those people have something to say about it.

**DEB ROGERS:** In the affirmative action vote which was litigated to an extreme--

**ANNISE** I'll bet.

**PARKER:**

**DEB ROGERS:** Council won, this was Mayor Lanier. But we do have the ability to draft the language. But the language has to convey the intent of those who passed the petition.

In the affirmative action case, the language that was on the petition was, essentially, that the city of Houston wouldn't discriminate on any basis. And what council did was read rephrase that and say "Shall the city do away with its affirmative action program?" which would have been the intent. We really did capture the intent.

And if you read the ballot language, it was clear what you needed to do. But most people didn't take the time to read it.

The scary part, though, is that was the caption on the petition. The actual wording of the entire petition not only targets the gay community, it defines a nuclear family. It cuts off any possibility of benefits to heterosexuals, as well.

And the way it defines a nuclear family, we actually are going to have some fits at the council table trying to figure out how to interpret it. There are grandparents out there that may be bounced-- have their dependent grandchildren bounced off our insurance.

**ANNISE** Oh, fabulous.

**PARKER:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Whoa.

**RAY HILL:** Well, this is what-- you know, whenever you get into this kind of thing. The other-- one of the other semantic problems is that you do a campaign, no on Prop Two. And the word on the ballot, itself, is against. And so--

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes. That's--

**RAY HILL:** So that leads to a gap there. But I really think that we're in error to assume that the narrow margin by which we lost is a semantic failure.

I think that we need to understand that there is an extremely well organized, even though they didn't pour any money into this official campaign, in every block, in every Black neighborhood in this city, somebody got on the pulpit Sunday, before the Tuesday election, and told people to vote for this resolution.

Now we had a fine group of Black ministers led by the usual suspects, Bill Lawson and other folks. Good Lutherans and some Catholics and everybody else come out on our side. But the fact of the matter is, the overwhelming majority of churches with political input suggested that people vote against us on this related issue.

And so, whether they've got money for campaigns or not, because Dave Wilson by then-- and Dave Wilson's in deep debt. Dave has got to go find some gainful employment or something so that he can pay off the debts that he has borrowed. He borrowed this money personally to get this thing on the ballot.

And he thought that the Republican Party and the resource would kick in. They didn't give him any because he's a wild card in their deck. And they're afraid that he's going to cause them problems down the stream. They're not a Republican politician. And I take some comfort in the turmoil on the other side. Annise?

**ANNISE** Well, the positive-- there are a lot of positive things to be taken in the vote. Clearly, we lost. And it was a blow to  
**PARKER:** the community. But 51--

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah, and there's a lot of anger.

**ANNISE** 51-49. Two percentage points, instead of--  
**PARKER:**

**DEB ROGERS:** Clearly we lost, but how does that compare to the last time something like this came before the voters?

**RADIO HOST 1:** 4 to 1.

**ANNISE** Well, the other thing is that in June of this year, we passed a nondiscrimination ordinance which was the same  
**PARKER:** thing that was repealed in '85, slightly different wording, but the same effect. And it's passed. It's an ordinance. It's there.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes.

**ANNISE** So the bar has been moved much farther forward.  
**PARKER:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes, you're right. You're right.

**ANNISE** And I think the pollster and Rice Sociologist, Bob Stein, said it well in the paper, that this close, two percentage  
**PARKER:** points, it tells us that we can win this.

**RAY HILL:** Yeah, and as I told-- the amazing thing is that I actually know Dave Wilson. And I'm able to go to social events with Dave. He's not very sociable. But go there and carry on a decent conversation with him.

And he called me well in advance of all of this and told me what he was going to do. And I said, well, I don't think you'll have a lot of difficulty getting enough signatures. He did, actually, have a lot of difficulty getting signatures.

**DEB ROGERS:** Barely got signatures.

**RAY HILL:** And, then, I said, you may actually win it. And he did ultimately win it. But we can go through this every few years. All we've got to do is win one and it's over with.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah.

**RAY HILL:** It's like in a trial. The prosecution has got to win them all. The defense has only got to convince one member of the jury.

**JIMMY CARPER:** OK, let me ask you-- I'll ask a question, because it stated shall the city charter. And that sounds more permanent than just, shall we make a change? It sounds like a bylaws change that you would have in a corporation.

**DEB ROGERS:** A lot of the people who were not necessarily in favor of domestic partner benefits were against this, which is why the business community-- and that's the other difference from '85. You had the clergy and you had the business community. You had Harry Reasoner, Vinson and Elkins, you had the CEO of Shell on board. In '85, we had no one but the gay community.

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's true.

**DEB ROGERS:** But they didn't support it because it was a change to the city charter. And they think it's bad public policy.

**RADIO HOST 1:** So now the charter has changed.

**DEB ROGERS:** But we're stuck with it for two years.

**RADIO HOST 1:** JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK.

**RAY HILL:** At least two years.

**DEB ROGERS:** At least two years.

**RAY HILL:** And the thing about it is that, as Annise pointed out earlier in this interview, that there is some interpretive confusion that's got to be dealt with--

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**RAY HILL:** --because this makes a significant change in current benefits allocation.

**RADIO HOST 1:** I've got a question here.

**JIMMY CARPER:** OK.

**RADIO HOST 1:** Perhaps Denise, or Deb, or Ray can speak to it. It's my understanding, and having worked over there at Grant Martin's office and so forth, that we found enough errors--

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's what I was going to just get, yeah.

**RADIO HOST 1:** --that would drop it below the 20,000 threshold. Is it possible to now go to court and have the petition declared invalid because there were not enough signatures, even though Anna Russell allowed some of them that shouldn't have?

**ANNISE PARKER:** It is possible. You can't blame Anna Russell. Her job is to determine that there are enough signatures on the petition, not whether they're legal signatures. And she states that up front.

We found lots of evidence of signature fraud, mostly, I think unintentional, where you have a family member that signs for everybody in the family. But it clearly dropped them below the threshold. We don't think it's a valid petition. Yes, there are legal remedies available. We just need to sit down. The first priority is getting through this runoff.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes.

**ANNISE** We have--

**PARKER:**

**RADIO HOST 1:** Oh, definitely. Yeah, yeah.

**ANNISE** We have to get through this runoff.

**PARKER:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes.

**DEB ROGERS:** We have to get folks to vote against the anti-gay folks on the ballot. But then what we can look at, the legal option, there's a challenge to the petition. There's also a chal-- the signatures. There's also a challenge to the wording of the petition.

There's going to be issues of city legal, as Ray mentioned, on how we interpret it. And then there's also the question of, do we start now to try to repeal it or overturn it, not repeal it-- but to counter it in the future? And that's going to take leadership in the community to sit down and try to figure out what the best course of action is.

**JIMMY CARPER:** You bet.

**RADIO HOST 1:** There's one caution there. We're going from here to the attorney general's office, or secretary of state's office, in Austin, who deals with such matters on a kind of a bureaucratic level. And that is a real snake pit as far--

**JIMMY CARPER:** Sure.

**RADIO HOST 1:** --as our issues are concerned. So we're not going to get any pay dirt on that trail until we go maybe second or third round. And we can hit some pay dirt.

But it brings up another issue, is that we need to rethink the vigor with which we are involved in politics. Over the years, we've become lax. We've gotten away. Finally, the caucus has got some real motivated, well motivated, and focused leadership. And I think we need to support that and encourage that.

But over the years, we have actually lost some considerable ground in progressive, gay lesbian politics, not just in Houston, but statewide. There is not a Democratic judge sitting on a bench in Harris County. There are no Democratic judges. And you say, well, it's just a party thing. No, it's not just a party thing. When it comes to issues like ours, we're walking into courtrooms where we've got an uphill, hostile environment.

**DEB ROGERS:** Most of them owe their elections to Hotze. That's just not that they're Republicans, it's they're Hotze Republicans.

**RAY HILL:** In Harris County, Hotze runs the place.

**JIMMY CARPER:** This is a transgender show. And I've got to point out that there's no way a transgendered person can get a name change in this county.

**DEB ROGERS:** In Harris County.

**RAY HILL:** Which is incredible because not very many years ago, Harris County was the most lucrative place for that process to go through.

**RADIO HOST 1:** To do it. Yeah, exactly.

**DEB ROGERS:** For approximately the last three years, there has been a single--

**RAY HILL:** So we are losing ground.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah.

**RAY HILL:** And well, see, I don't have any concerns about transgender involvement. One thing, for sure, that has changed significantly in this community is the transgender political involvement.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Has it ever, woo.

**RAY HILL:** Because they were struggling, not only with the outside, but they were struggling with large portions of the community for inclusion within the community.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes.

**RAY HILL:** So maybe you find somebody on the outside, trying to struggle in. And those are the people to whom the principles of justice, and equality, and the constitutional rights are important. And they're very well motivated.

And they have staffed so many campaigns, and so many political efforts, and so many efforts to organize and outreach. What we need to do is go back and wake up the rest of the community, like we had it woke up whenever those police officers were pushing them around in the bar.

**DEB ROGERS:** Well, the situation with the transgenders, it really, honestly, is a matter of life and death for these people in a lot of cases.

**RADIO HOST 1:** Definitely.

**DEB ROGERS:** And so what's going on here is you've had for a long time in this city, members of the transgender community fighting for their own rights, with no support at all from the wider gay and lesbian community. And as soon as some cracks began evolving in those walls, that people looked in and saw the energy and the focus that they could gain from having the transgendered among them, those walls fell down.

**RADIO HOST 1:** Yes, yes.

**DEB ROGERS:** And that took a long time to happen. But once it did, everybody now acts like they're horribly surprised to see all the transgender involvement. It's not a surprise. It's just if you let us in, we'll be there.

**ANNISE PARKER:** Well, and the thing that our people need to understand the most is that their vote carries incredible power at the local level. I talk to people all the time who feel very frustrated, especially after the last presidential election, or in large state-wide elections, where they feel that their vote is lost among the shuffle, lost in the electoral college, or lost for any other reasons.

I can empathize with that to a point. But in the local elections, where things are won and lost with such close margins--

**DEB ROGERS:** Local, even the presidential election was extremely close, extremely close.

**ANNISE** Exactly.

**PARKER:**

**DEB ROGERS:** And that right there tells me that individual's votes make a difference.

**ANNISE** But we've got-- we've got to carry some gusto in, though, to the runoff. Because when we come out of the runoff,

**PARKER:** we have maybe two or three weeks to celebrate Christmas. And then we're back on our feet again in preparation for the March primaries. And we're looking at [INAUDIBLE].

**RADIO HOST 1:** Statewide stuff.

**RAY HILL:** In a severely redrawn redistricting business. Somebody's taking a meat ax to the districts of some of our dearest friends.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah, with everything else going on, that's taking a back seat.

**DEB ROGERS:** Yeah, well, it's coming.

**JIMMY CARPER:** We haven't heard much about all the redistricting and the problems there.

**DEB ROGERS:** Yeah, I'd really like to see the caucus educate the voters on the judicial races this year. Because that is one area that affects everyone, whether they know it or not. I think when you say judges to most people, the first thing that comes to their mind is, well, I'm not going to get arrested for anything. First of all, you don't know that.

**RAY HILL:** That's right.

**ANNISE** OK? With a lot of the laws changing--

**PARKER:**

**RAY HILL:** Well, if you'd listen to my show you'd know that.

**DEB ROGERS:** With a lot of the laws changing, sometimes after I read that one thing about how the FBI has the little thing that they can slip under hotel doors to determine who's in there and what's going on, I'm not certain that I'm not going to get arrested on 2106 or something like that.

**RAY HILL:** There you go.

**DEB ROGERS:** But regardless of that, there are civil issues that we deal with. There are probate issues. There's all of family court, for God's sakes.

And every gay and lesbian parent that's out there, and transgendered parent out there who's had to deal with custody cases, these are all things that affect them personally. And if it doesn't affect them personally, it's going to affect someone they know or love, personally. And this is where they can affect some real change.

**RAY HILL:** And read Wendy Grossman's article in the *Houston Press* current issue.

**DEB ROGERS:** Yeah, I concur with Ray on that.

**RAY HILL:** Wendy's article is a horror story. What is not in there is the fact every one of those kids have been before a judge.



**JIMMY CARPER:** Now, what are you talking about, Wendy Grossman?

**RAY HILL:** People being handcuffed and chained to their beds and beating their brains out. They have to put a football helmet over them to restrain their hands and keep them from taking it off. People with-- kids with mental--

**RADIO HOST 1:** It's mental illness, a mental illness thing. To elaborate on what Deb said, also, about the importance of the vote at the local level, if you'll look at the poll results and so forth like that, on your-- particularly on your district races for council, I don't think there was very many of them that there were more than 30,000 votes in any district. And the margin of victory in some of the close ones was extremely close. So, yes, your vote does count.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes, it does.

**ANNISE** Absolutely. I think there were 214,000 votes cast in my race. And I won by 1,508 votes.

**PARKER:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Wow.

**RAY HILL:** Well, see, I went before judges way back in the old days when I was the screening committee for the caucus. And they would say, well, how many-- you don't make up more than 5% or 6% of the vote. And I said, oh, you're planning on winning by a greater margin than that? And that's a rather-- that causes all kinds of buzz.

The fact of the matter is, votes only and always come one to a customer. There is no other way. You can have a lot of influence. But that vote is individually yours. And if you don't cast a vote, you are not helping.

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's right, you're-- in fact, you're hurting. You're hurting very much because you're losing your rights. And you don't even care about it.

**RAY HILL:** Well, Jackie and I, not that I want to give away anybody's age. But Jackie and I can-- Jackie can almost remember. And I remember very well when we did not even have the expectation--

**JIMMY CARPER:** No you're right.

**RAY HILL:** --of rights, or equal treatment, or fair treatment. We had the expectation of the opposite.

**JIMMY CARPER:** In fact, that Empower, the Gulf Coast Archives and Museum, had a display. And it was from-- most of it was from Scott Tillinghast, who with a couple of other people in 1972 sent out questionnaires to political candidates about how they felt about the gay community.

There were five questions. And they included things like, would you have a gay person on your staff? Do you know gay people? Do you-- are you social with gay people? And it is unbelievable how many said not only just no, but quoted Bible verses and were very rude.

**RADIO HOST 1:** In 1968, right here in Houston, Texas, I had this wild hair. And I talked to all.