



Press Advisory

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Why are there two Parades in South Boston on Sunday March 18?

**This is a question all Bostonians should be asking themselves
This is the question all politicians who participate in the morning roast
or will march in the 1st parade should be asking themselves
The press should ask all politicians and City of Boston leaders
Everyone associated with or watching should be asking themselves**

Well over a hundred years ago the Irish walked through the streets of Boston protesting “discrimination” against the Irish. Today, the organizers of the “traditional Saint Patrick’s Day Parade are discriminating against two groups who only wanted to walk in the first parade.

First, Veterans For Peace, a group of veterans of the U.S. military, who have dutifully served this country, many in time of war from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. These veterans, who have received numerous decorations for valiant service to this country, who know all too well the consequences of war, it’s violence, it’s brutality, the pain to veterans and their families. These veterans who now stand for and advocate peace have been denied to walk in the traditional parade and carry flags and banners some of which read: “Bring the Troops Home and Take Care of Them When the Get Here”, “Cut Military Spending, Save Jobs, Police, Fireman, Teachers”, “Peace is Patriotic”. For these sentiments their application to walk in the traditional parade were denied?

For Join the Impact a gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) group of young Bostonians who just want to walk in this parade and are denied because of who they are? In a time (2012) when Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell is history, when Gay Marriage is now law in the State of Massachusetts, when there is a large gay and lesbian population living in South Boston, yet are denied to walk as a group in the traditional parade. Discrimination against any group is a disgrace and should be unacceptable and an affront to all Americans, yet this exclusion continues as the politicians, the press, parade participants and residents of South Boston look the other way. It is easy to walk in a parade, it is fun to watch and hear all the pageantry of a parade. Sometimes it is difficult and uncomfortable to stand up and support what is right, even when the opportunity is staring you in the face as it marches by.

Several decades ago, Mayor Curley, the famous and flamboyant Mayor of the Great City of Boston turned over the operation of the Saint Patrick's Parade to the Allied War Veterans Council. Given that Evacuation Day and Saint Patrick's Day fell in the same time frame. It seemed to make sense, at that time, to have this group run the Saint Patrick's Day Parade. This move took the responsibility of organizing and running the traditional parade out of the hands of the city. This seemed like a good idea, but what was lost in the bargain? There are two parts to this parade, yet only one side is in total control of who can be in the first parade. This first part of the parade, the celebration of Saint Patrick, should be decided by the City of Boston, in partnership with the residents of South Boston. Saint Patrick was a man of peace, the patron Saint of Ireland. This part of the parade should be to honor the legacy and heritage of the Irish people and their contributions to this wonderful city; it should be open and welcoming to all groups, for we are all Irish on St. Pats Day.

The second side is the celebration of the British being run out of town, hence, Evacuation Day. The sad part is that only one side makes all the decisions as to who can be in the parade. Only, and exclusively, the Allied War Council has a say in who is in and who is out, no questions asked. Even though the City of Boston will contribute in excess of \$300,000.00 in tax payer money in support of this parade, for security, safety and clean up. Not Mayor Menino, local South Boston groups nor local residents, not the police, no one has a say in who can be in the parade other than this small group of white men (no women or minorities are listed in the literature) have a say in who is allowed into the parade. This small group has all their meetings regarding the parade in private, in a secluded and secret location. Community representatives are not invited nor allowed to participate in the selection process.

In a world-class city, such as the City of Boston, this last vestige of institutional bigotry, prejudice and exclusion should be an embarrassment to all our citizens, especially the politicians and our city and state leaders. South Boston has had a long painful and embarrassing history of racism, bigotry, prejudice and exclusion. A lot has changed in South Boston over the past twenty years. The neighborhood has changed, the residents have changed, it is much more integrated and multi-cultural. The attitudes have all changed, it is a much more welcoming and accepting community. The only thing that has not changed are the attitudes of this small group of men running the traditional parade.

In their one sentence denial to both Veterans For Peace and Join the Impact there was no reason given as to why their applications were denied. When John (Wacko) Hurley was directly asked by Kay Walsh, the chair of the community organizing meeting as to why Veterans For Peace were denied, he only repeated, as if pleading the fifth, "I can only refer you to the decision" referring to the 1995 decision of the U.S. Supreme court brought about because of their denial of the Gay and Lesbian group seventeen years ago. When directly asked by Kay to allow Veterans For Peace to walk in the parade, once again, he only repeated, "I refer you to the decision".

"Make no mistake about it, this is a very militaristic parade hiding behind the robes of Saint Patrick. We understand the legality the Allied War Council hide behind"

said Pat Scanlon the Coordinator of Veterans For Peace, “we do not understand the morality”. “We have some highly decorated veterans, who have put their lives on the line for this country and are not allowed, nor welcomed in the first parade because they now stand for peace? Shame on the Allied War Council for promoting division, exclusion and prejudice. Shame on the City of Boston for allowing such blatant discrimination to continue. Shame on any politician who participates in the first parade, knowing such flagrant narrow-minded bigotry against veterans and the GLBT community continues. The City of Boston should take back the running of the first parade. This type of exclusion is just not acceptable in 2012”.

On March 18 there will be two parades marching through the Streets of South Boston. The second parade, Saint Patrick’s Peace Parade will be walking for peace, equality, jobs, social and economic justice and will follow one mile behind the first parade. We are walking in the proud tradition that our Irish ancestors demonstrated over a century ago against discrimination. There are seven divisions, bands, small floats, a Duck Boat, trollies and a lot of positive energy. It looks like a wonderful day weather-wise, just a fantastic and magnificent day for a parade. Please join us.

Assemble: 1:00 pm, D Street, between 1st and 3rd Streets.

Directions: From the Broadway T Stop in South Boston, this location is just a few blocks east on West Broadway (Look for Veterans For Peace White Flags)

Parade: Scheduled to start at 2:00 pm (it may be a little later)

Directions:

FROM points North via I-93:

Take I-93 South to Exit 20A “South Station.” At the end of the ramp, take a left at signal, onto Summer Street at South Station. Follow Summer St. for approximately 1 mile, the Boston Convention Center will be on your right, D Street is just past the Convention Center. Make a right. go up to Louis Street. The parking lot will be on your left, look for parked truck trailers.

FROM points South via I-93:

Take I-93 North to Exit 20 "South Boston". Follow the signs to "I-90 East". Take the first tunnel exit to "South Boston". At the first set of lights, take a right onto Congress Street. Take the second right onto D Street. Continue on D Street, past the Convention on your right. Drive up D Street to Louis Street. The parking lot will be on your left, dirt lot with parked truck trailers.

The Smedley D. Butler Brigade Chapter 9 of Veterans For Peace was established in the mid-1980s and includes more than 200 Veterans from the Boston area who are involved in peace activities. The local chapter is part of the national Veterans For Peace and is named in honor of Marine Gen. Smedley D. Butler, the most decorated Marine in U.S. history, who turned against war and famously said “War is a racket. A few profit, the many pay.”

The website of the Smedley D. Butler Brigade of Veterans For Peace is www.SmedleyVFP.org. The national Veterans For Peace website is www.VeteransForPeace.org.

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