

# Petition foe blasts Glenn for violent terminology

Ada commissioner said, '... I'm going to man a foxhole.'

By Kim Eckart  
The Idaho Statesman

The state's elected officials should condemn the "rhetoric of violence" surrounding the campaign for the Idaho Citizens Alliance's anti-gay initiative, foes of the initiative said Thursday.

During a news conference outside the Statehouse, Brian Bergquist, co-chairman of "Don't Sign On," criticized recent comments by Ada County Commissioner Gary Glenn.

At an Idaho Family Forum banquet last week, Glenn said, "As long as I have the privilege of holding elected office, I'm going to man a foxhole. If the ACLU and Brian Bergquist are listening, the last time I was tested with an M-16, I shot 40 out of 40."

In a letter delivered Thursday, Bergquist asked Glenn to retract his statement and condemn violence. A similar letter was sent to Idaho Family Forum Executive Director Dennis Mansfield.

Bergquist said he did not interpret Glenn's comments as a serious personal threat and said he would not seek legal action.

"I wasn't looking at it as a personal issue of Brian vs. Gary," Bergquist said. "I am not looking for a personal apology. Rather, I ask that we work for our community and use this opportunity to make a unified call for an end to violence, an end to violent language, and an end to the encouragement of violence."

Glenn said Thursday that he does not advocate violence and was speaking metaphorically at the Family Forum event.

"This is a debate on principle, not personality," Glenn said. "I was speaking figuratively. I decry violence, and I think it's obvious to anyone that I was speaking metaphorically."

"However, I do believe there are values worth fighting for, and I still believe that most Idahoans feel the same."

Mansfield said Glenn's comments were taken out of context.

"It had nothing to do with violence against homosexuals. It was a military metaphor. The people that were there would have walked out if they'd heard a stand based on violence,"



Kevin Clark/The Idaho Statesman

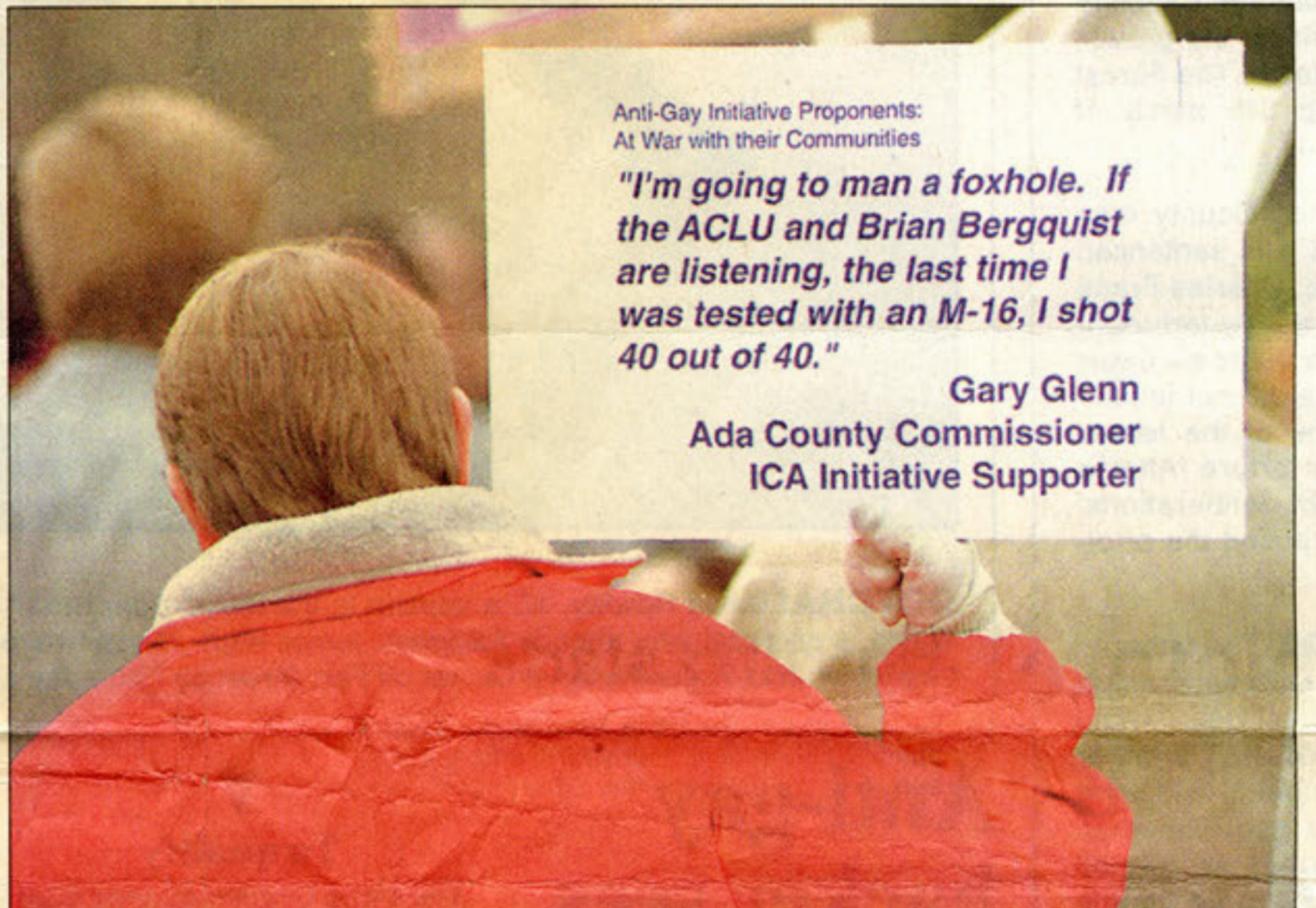
Brian Bergquist is hugged by friend Kay Hummel after a press conference denouncing Ada County Commissioner Gary Glenn's recent remarks about Bergquist and the ACLU. Hummel says she is worried about Bergquist's safety.

Mansfield said. "If I were Brian, and I was searching for sympathy among the electorate, I'd call a press conference like this, too."

About 50 people attended the "Don't Sign On" news conference, including Sen. John Peavey, D-Carey, NAACP chapter President Ken Monroe and the Rev. Cynthia Scanlin. Before the crowd, "Don't Sign On" members and representatives of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment urged a halt to physical and verbal violence against gays and lesbians.

Glenn helped write the ICA's initiative, which would prevent the state from granting civil rights protections based on sexual orientation and forbid public schools to teach that homosexuality is acceptable.

Kelly Walton says U.S. Supreme Court will uphold initiative/2C



Kevin Clark/The Idaho Statesman

Signs quoting Ada Commissioner Gary Glenn's recent comments about Brian Bergquist and the ACLU were evident as about 50 supporters of Bergquist met Thursday.