



Associated Press

Gov. Pete Wilson, flanked by security officers, catches an orange thrown by protesters during his speech at Stanford University's centennial.

Gay Rights Protest Disrupts Wilson Speech

By DANIEL M. WEINTRAUB
and SCOTT HARRIS
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

STANFORD—Gov. Pete Wilson was showered with debris and obscenity-laced taunts Tuesday by gay rights protesters angered by his veto of an anti-discrimination bill who crashed a ceremony commemorating Stanford University's centennial.

The author of the legislation, meanwhile, urged the gay community in California to refrain from violence. Democratic Assemblyman Terry Friedman of Los Angeles pledged to explore another legislative effort and said gays and lesbians should transform their ire into political power that could be used to win the battle next time around.

Wilson, who described the Stanford demonstration as a "fascist tactic," gamely completed a speech extolling family values and individual responsibility despite 15 minutes of unbroken screams, whistles and chants from about 200 protesters who massed below the stage.

Protected by a line of police in riot gear and his own security officers, Wilson made a one-handed catch of an orange hurled at him, then lobbed it back into the crowd. The invited guests rose in a standing ovation.

The confrontation was prompted by Wilson's rejection Sunday of legislation that would have prohibited employment discrimination against gays and lesbians. The bill would have added sexual orientation to the list of factors—including religious beliefs and physical handicaps—for which people cannot be denied a job.

Gay rights advocates were outraged by the veto and were angered all the more because Wilson had courted their support during the 1990 governor's race and had said earlier this year that he was

Please see WILSON, A15