

NR_key_name: E8E18798B0ADEB5185256659004217F0
SendTo: CN=Andrew Funk/O=ARRB @ ARRB;CN=Mosemarie Boyd/O=ARRB @ ARRB
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BlindCopyTo: CN=R ecord/O=ARRB
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Subject: Sesame Street Shakeup

Mirth you may have Missed...NEW YORK--A spokesperson for the letter D announced Monday that theconsonant is withdrawing sponsorship from Sesame Street following aChildren's Television Workshop announcement that a homosexual muppet willsoon join the show's cast. "The letter D is proud to have brought you many wonderful SesameStreet episodes throughout the program's 28-year history," said PatriciaWillis, public-relations director for D. "But the letter D does not condone the sort of morally questionable lifestyles that Sesame Streetis advocating with the introduction of this new character. It can nolonger in good conscience associate itself with the show." Willis said D's withdrawal is effective immediately, and appliesto both capital and lower-case versions of the letter. The gay muppet, "Roger," will be introduced on Sesame Street Dec.23, CTW director Leslie Charren said. Thus far, no other sponsors havepulled out, though the number seven has requested an advance tape of theepisode before it makes a decision. Many public-television insiders believe D's withdrawal wasmotivated by a desire not to alienate religious conservatives, a sectionof the population that employs the letter frequently. "D is for, among other things, demagoguery, dogma and doctrine, words crucial to right-wing groups like the Christian Coalition," saidYale University political-science professor J. Wright Franklin. "It islikely that D felt it could ill afford to offend such a large segment ofits users." While a long-term replacement for D has not yet been secured bySesame Street, the number three will temporarily fill in for it in anumber of the show's animated shorts. Other pieces will simply skip fromC to E, with vocalists stretching out C into two syllables to match therhythm of the alphabet song. Sesame Street is stung by the sudden departure of its longtime supporter. Speaking to reporters, cast member Cookie Monster said: "Medisappointed letter D choose to end relationship with Sesame Street dueto pressure from extremely vocal minority. We accused of endorsingdeviant lifestyle. Me say homosexuality natural, not immoral. Diversityand enrichment. That's good enough for me."

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