

On the Campaign Trail: "Unprecedented" Positions Taken on Both Democratic and Republican Sides

WASHINGTON - In a move labelled "unprecedented" by many activists, President Clinton has invited gay and lesbian Democrats to play a significant role in his re-election bid.

Brian Bond, Coordinator of the Democratic National Committee's Lesbian and Gay Outreach office, was quoted in the *Washington Blade* as saying, "This year, gays and lesbians will be involved in the campaign state by state, in a fully organized, systematic way." Bond also noted that gay activists would be recruited to help Democrats recover legislative seats lost to the Republicans in the 1994 elections.

A meeting at Clinton/Gore re-election headquarters in Burlington on Sunday, March 3, served to initiate discussion of the upcoming campaign here in Vermont. Fifteen prominent gay men and lesbians gathered to talk with Clinton campaign organizer Marty Rouse, who had been working on drumming up Democratic support for the primaries. Future meetings are expected to take place shortly after Clinton officially accepts his nomination at the Democratic Convention this summer.

In related news, gay and lesbian Republicans were also treated to an unprecedented campaign move when Richard Tafel, Executive Director of the Log Cabin Republican Club, officially denounced the candidacy of Patrick Buchanan. Tafel declared that the Log Cabin Club stood "opposed to any candidate for President who campaigns not on people's hopes, but capitalizes on their fears. We are opposed to any candidate

who builds a political base by scapegoating and bashing Jews, gays, immigrants and other Americans."

Tafel made his comments at a Washington press conference featuring a wide array of Republican and conservative voices, all condemning Buchanan's campaign for the White House. Representatives from a number of groups stood "in absolute unity in the belief that Pat Buchanan is in a league of his own, outside the realm of any of the traditional tenets of the Republican Party," Tafel said.

Buchanan has consistently spoken out against equal rights for gay and lesbian Americans and continues to spread his anti-gay message on the campaign trail. He and other Republican presidential contenders attended an anti-marriage rally held in Des Moines, Iowa, and signed a pledge to prohibit gay and lesbian marriage.

At a recent press conference, a Democratic spokesperson also reiterated Bill Clinton's opposition to federal recognition of gay and lesbian marriages.

Here in Vermont on Town Meeting Day, President Clinton received nearly a third of all votes cast in the state, more than any other candidate. Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole was the clear choice on the Republican ballot at the polls. Though he appears to be the easy favorite in the Republican primary process, both Buchanan and Steve Forbes have vowed to hang on until the very end. ▼

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Primary Trivia

As a public service after the March primaries, *OITM* offers its readers an opportunity to test their political savvy with these questions:

- Which presidential candidate accepted campaign money from a gay group, then returned it, then took it back?
- Which presidential candidate called last summer's International Women's Conference in Beijing a "crazy dingbat conference" overrun by homosexual and bisexual women, then further remarked, "It was a horrible thing, dreadful. It looked like the bar scene in *Star Wars*?"
- Who recently slammed Pat Buchanan and demanded that he apologize for "attacks on people on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, and religion?"
- Which presidential candidate was financing his campaign almost completely with "gay money?"
- Which of the following has spoken out against recognizing gay and lesbian marriages?
 - Pat Buchanan
 - Bob Dole
 - Bill Clinton
 - All of the above
 - None of the above

Answers:

- Bob Dole, on support from the Log Cabin Club.
- Pat Buchanan. (Now really, did you even have to check?)
- Who hasn't?! [But the speaker quoted is - surprise! - Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R) of New York.]
- Steve Forbes, thanks to inheriting Daddy Malcolm's fortune.
- D. Sorry, folks; it's true!

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