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Election '88: Know The Candidates

by Greg Winston
Q-Notes Staff

In 1988, there are many crucial issues facing the presidential candidates. The gay rights issue is only in the race as a true force as a result of the AIDS issue.

Whether or not we agree with the public's opinion on who AIDS affects, we are on the public's mind as a result of it. Thus, the gay issue has become twofold. First, a candidate must decide on what sort of funding should be provided for AIDS victims. Secondly, they must take a stance on gay civil rights.

While the Democratic candidates have been straightforward with forming an opinion, the Republican candidates have been more evasive.

DEMOCRATS

On Super Tuesday, the field of Democratic candidates was narrowed for all practical purposes to Jesse Jackson and Michael Dukakis. Both candidates have taken clear stands publicly on the gay rights issue as well as on AIDS.

Jesse Jackson, a force in the civil rights movement since the 60's, has come out in clear support of gay rights legislation currently before the Congress. He supports the position that Crimes Against Nature laws should be unconstitutional because the U.S. government has no right to violate our privacy in our sexual lives.

He feels that the current treatment of gays and lesbians can be likened to the treatment that gays and lesbians in Hitler's Germany.

He stated that "the humanity of lesbians and gay men must be recognized . . . and their rights fully respected."

Michael Dukakis, currently governor of Massachusetts, is less clear on his stance. Publicly, he is very supportive of our cause; however, if actions speak louder than words, then Gov. Dukakis' true positive must be re-evaluated.

Publicly, in Massachusetts, he supported gay rights legislation that came before the legislature. In private, however, he failed to lobby the legislators for the necessary votes. In a State of the State address, he talked of his immigrant heritage and the opportunity that America offered him as a Greek man. He feels he was given the same opportunity as a WASP. As far as gays and lesbians are concerned, in his opinion, this should also be the case.

Both candidates support federal funding for AIDS research. Rev. Jackson stresses the need for a "massive" educational program to accompany his research program. Gov. Dukakis as governor spent \$7.3 million on AIDS, and has allocated another 6.8 million for FY '88.

His educational program has included mass mailing of literature dealing with the situation in a frank and straightforward manner.

REPUBLICANS

For the Republicans, the front-runner, George Bush, is being trailed actively by Bob Dole. Neither of the candidates has addressed the issue of gay rights.

Pertaining to AIDS, both candidates realize the magnitude of this disease. Mr. Dole supports mandatory testing of immigrants, prisoners and aliens; and does not oppose quarantining those persons with the disease who act with "reckless disregard."

Mr. Dole supports a strong education program as well.

Mr. Bush feels that education

pertaining to AIDS is a local matter, not one that the Federal government should concern itself with.

Editor's Note: The new political action group in Charlotte, First Tuesday, has recently mailed out a questionnaire to all candidates running for office in North Carolina. Results will appear in future issues of Q-Notes.

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