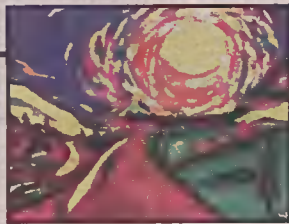


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Volume 22 . Number 08

www.q-notes.com

August 25 . 2007



LOGO hosts historic presidential candidates forum

All Democratic candidates offer monumental support for LGBT equality

by Donald Miller

While showing support for ending the military ban and other LGBT-friendly policies, top Democratic presidential contenders Sen. Hillary Clinton, John Edwards and Sen. Barack Obama failed to fully explain their opposition to marriage for same-sex couples at the gay presidential forum held Aug. 9 in Los Angeles. Also at the event, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson seemed to indicate he believed homosexuality was a choice, but later retracted his comments via a statement from his campaign.

Hosted by *Time* and CNN journalist Margaret Carlson, a small audience filled the Los Angeles studio for "The Visible Vote '08: A Presidential Forum." Panelists for the event were *Washington Post* columnist Jonathan Capehart, singer Melissa Etheridge and Human Rights Campaign (HRC) President Joe Solmonese.

During the course of the two-hour show the candidates appeared in the order they had personally chosen, which matched the order they had confirmed their appearances. Sen. Obama kicked off the event, followed by Edwards, Rep. Dennis Kucinich, Mike Gravel,

Gov. Bill Richardson and Sen. Clinton. "I'd like to thank HRC and LOGO for setting this up," Sen. Obama offered at the outset. "It's a historic moment for the LGBT community and America. I'm glad I'm participating and glad I got the ball rolling."

He gave his support for same-sex civil unions, but also indicated that he felt churches should not be forced to recognize the unions. "My sense is that civil unions would be great progress." When pressed on the prevalence of homophobia in the black community and questioned as to whether or not he talked about LGBT issues in non-gay related forums, he was quick to respond. "I talk about LGBT issues in many forums, not just HRC," he offered. "At a forum for black ministers in Tennessee, I talked about how the notion of gay marriage has been used to divide and distract. I specifically asked that if there was a pastor out there who has seen a marriage broken up by seeing two men or two women holding hands, please tell me because I've seen no evidence of that. I also told them that if they thought that was more important than the fact that there were so many black men out there without a job, that I profoundly disagreed with them."

Sen. Obama was warmly received and insisted that gays and lesbians could count on his sup-

port for civil unions, non-discrimination policies and hate crime laws, though he did not endorse same-sex marriage. "I have a track record of working with the LGBT community," said Obama. "I will continue to work to make sure there is equality for all."

Former N.C. Sen. and '04 vice presidential candidate Edwards raised the ire of some anti-gay groups with his response to Etheridge's question regarding educating students about the reality of children with same-sex parents. "Do you think we should teach kids about LGBT families in public schools?" she asked.

"Sure [we] should. Kids in public schools need to understand that families with same-sex parents are American families. Just like every American family. I do think it's important that their peers understand what's happening. That's a good thing and something that we as Americans embrace."

HRC's Solmonese cornered Edwards on earlier comments he had made regarding same-sex marriage. "You have said that you opposed



LOGO's "The Visible Vote '08: A Presidential Forum" forum was hosted by *Time* and CNN journalist Margaret Carlson, seen here with presidential hopeful Dennis Kucinich (right). Panelists for the event included *Washington Post* columnist Jonathan Capehart, singer Melissa Etheridge and Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese.

same-sex marriage," Solmonese offered. "Could you talk about what it is — in your religion — that is leading you to this position?"

"I shouldn't have said that," Edwards replied with a chuckle. "I believe to my core in equality. My campaign for the presidency is about equality, across the board. It makes perfect sense to me that gay and lesbian couples would feel that civil unions stop short of full equality. As a president, I would not impose my religion on the American people."

"I believe in the separation of church and state," Edwards continued. "I think we should get rid of DOMA and 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' It was wrong when it was imposed. I believe in all of these things and that's where I am. I strongly support civil unions."

Like Sen. Obama, Edwards confirmed that he does not support same-sex marriage.

Rep. Kucinich, who quite probably represents one of the best candidates for president

Karl Rove abandons Bush and the White House



Despite his alignment with the extreme right-wing, Rove reportedly 'did not consider himself a Christian.'

Bush's top advisor, like several others, leaves his post now that the president's last months in office are approaching

by Jack Kirven . Q-Notes staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Karl Rove, affectionately called "Turd Blossom" by President George W. Bush, announced in mid-August that he would be stepping down from his post at the end of the month. Rove is credited with the election and re-election of George W. Bush, as well as the accompanying majori-

ties that Republicans enjoyed in the government during the first half or more of the president's tenure.

During his years in Washington, Rove has also developed a reputation for being a singularly gifted and forward thinking strategist.

One reported example of his long-term tactics includes a 1995 interview with political columnist John B. Judis. During the interview Rove is said to have spoke highly of the candidate he was currently campaigning for

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