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Q-Notes endorses John Edwards

Populist candidate the best choice for President

special to Q-Notes

After a series of meetings between the editors, the staff and the publisher, *Q-Notes* has endorsed John Edwards for President.

Our method for arriving at this decision began late last summer with a simple question: who's best on LGBT issues. In years past, this alone often narrowed the field to a single contender. This election cycle, however, has been decidedly different from years past.

Each of the Democrats vying for the nomination passed muster on our suitability test. They all support the Matthew Shepard Act and a transgender-inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act. They all oppose "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the *Defense of Marriage Act*. They all back legal recognition of same-sex relationships.

Rep. Dennis Kucinich earned bonus points for being the only candidate to support full marriage rights. Again, this alone might have sealed the deal in previous elections. However, the stakes today are too high for that. Two terms of President George W. Bush have America teetering on the brink of economic collapse, while the disastrous "War on Terror" expands and our precious civil liberties shrink.

Under these conditions, viability trumps degrees of support. Following the Jan. 3 Iowa caucus, it was down to John Edwards and Hillary Clinton.

Obama is out because he stepped on our necks to gain a political advantage. His campaign organized "Embrace the Change," a gospel tour in South Carolina to shore up support among the state's black evangelicals. Over a profusion of objections, "ex-gay" singer Rev. Donnie McClurkin — who claims that homosexuality is a "curse" and that gays "are trying to kill our children" — was booked to perform in Columbia.

To quell the uproar, Obama issued a tepid statement that "gays and lesbians are our brothers and sisters and should be provided the respect, dignity, and rights of all other citizens." McClurkin wasn't swayed and neither was the audience, who cheered loudly when the singer reiterated his anti-gay beliefs on-stage the night of the show.

Obama never apologized for facilitating this debacle. He simply moved on.

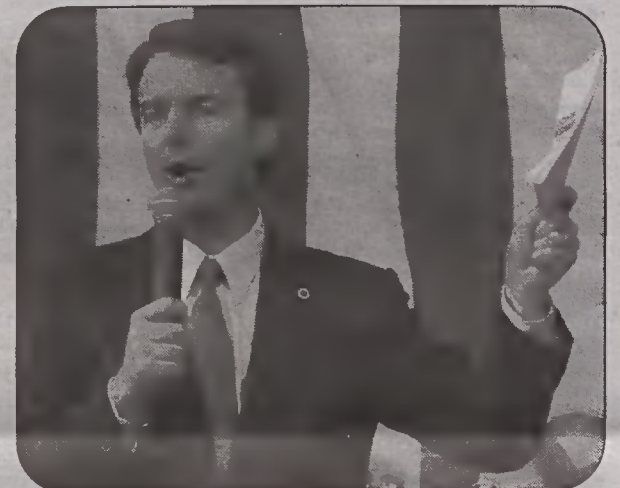
Clinton isn't acceptable due to her policy positions and negative polling numbers relative to the general election.

She is the most hawkish among the candidates. Her September 2007 vote in favor of the Bush-backed Kyl-Lieberman Amendment, declaring the Iranian Revolutionary Guard a terrorist organization, was a thorough disappointment.

Twenty Democratic senators, including presidential contenders Joe Biden, Christopher Dodd and Mike Gravel, voted against the amendment, labeling it the administration's first step toward its next military target, Iran. (Barack Obama missed the vote stumping in New Hampshire, but said he would have voted against it.)

Clinton's coziness with big business is also vexing. Through her record fundraising, which includes gifts from traditionally GOP-supportive industries and institutions, she has aligned herself with the special interests that have wrested control of this country from its citizens.

Finally, with her 48 percent unfavorability rating (based on a *USA Today*-Gallup Poll), a Clinton run at the White House likely gives the GOP its best shot at uniting the Party and rallying undecided and independent voters.



Bottom line: With Clinton as the nominee, the risks are too great for the potential returns.

In contrast, John Edwards has stumped on a bona fide progressive platform. His core issues include ending poverty and rebuilding the middle class, reversing global warming, ending the Iraq War, restoring civil liberties and establishing universal healthcare. Also central to his campaign is his pledge to reclaim the government from the control of lobbyists and multinational corporations.

These populist themes resonate deeply with us — and with working-class Americans from coast-to-coast, as national polling for the General Election makes plain.

Edwards fares best against all the potential Republican candidates in head-to-head match-ups. He puts more traditionally "red" states in play than any other Democratic contender. Significantly, his presence on the ballot will translate to additional votes for Democrats in tight down-ticket races across the country.

The choice is clear. John Edwards is the most progressive, most electable Democrat in the race. *Q-Notes* encourages all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender voters to support him in the primaries and beyond. ▀

Speak out!

Send your letter to the editor or any other thoughts to editor@q-notes.com.
Limit letters to 150 words or less and include
your name, city and state and a phone number where you can be reached.