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Governor George W. Bush



Elizabeth Dole

Analyzing candidates for president

The Republicans

by Gip Plaster
Special to Q-Notes

[Ed. Note: The next American president will take office during a pivotal time for the GLBT community. Clearly, this is an important election. In the first installment of this two-part series, we focused on the Democrats. This issue, we'll examine the Republican presidential candidates and their positions.]

If fundraising ability is an indicator, analysts predicting that Republican presidential candidate and Texas governor George W. Bush has wrapped up his party's nomination may be right.

Bush has raised more money than the combined takes of Vice President Al Gore and the other Democratic candidate, Sen. Bill Bradley (D-NJ). And Bush's \$36.2 million in funds far exceeds what his own challengers have managed to raise.

On gay and lesbian issues, none of the Republican candidates have good records. Two of the candidates have made recent statements that could be interpreted as supportive of the gay and lesbian community. Another has publicly proclaimed support of gay candidates in the past while voting against gay and lesbian issues.

The frontrunner

Although he and his father claim Texas as home, George Walker Bush, son of former

president George Herbert Walker Bush, was born in New Haven, Connecticut on July 6, 1946. His undergraduate degree is from Yale and his MBA came from Harvard. Before going into politics, he was an oilman and the owner of the Texas Rangers baseball team from 1989 to 1994.

Even before his father won the White House, he came from a political family. He's the grandson of the late Sen. Prescott Bush (R-CT). His brother, Jeb (R-FL) is now a governor, too.

Texas gays and lesbians had a strained relationship with the governor from the beginning because he defeated flamboyant and gay-friendly governor Ann Richards in 1995. His actions since, however, have given them reason for their dislike of the governor.

As recently as May, he refused to use his influence to get comprehensive hate crimes legislation through the Texas Senate, despite pleas from the family of an African-American man dragged to death behind a pick-up truck and an appeal from President Clinton.

"I wish Gov. Bush would have shown some leadership on this issue," said Texas State Rep. Senfronia Thompson, who proposed the House version of the bill, about Bush's refusal to intervene in the Senate. "Senators told us that the governor was using his influence to break the impasse. If that was using his influence, Lord help us if he becomes president."

Texas gay and lesbian leaders say Bush did
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Senate passes hate crimes bill, focus moves to joint committee

by David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

WASHINGTON, DC—In an historic vote, the US Senate approved the Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA) on July 22 without discussion or debate. If enacted, the legislation would expand the existing federal hate crimes law to cover disability status, gender and sexual orientation and make it easier for federal authorities to investigate and prosecute violent crimes.

"This is the first concrete action taken by either chamber since America buried Matthew Shepard, James Byrd Jr., Billy Jack Gaither and many transgendered people whose names and faces do not make the newspapers," said Kerry Lobel, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "It is a good first step. But we have a long way to go and we must now turn to the House and tell our representatives

how critically important this legislation is. In short, we must keep up the heat."

The Senate measure was passed as an amendment to S. 1217, the Commerce, Justice, and State appropriations bill. Because the House version of the bill does not include the amendment, final approval of HCPA in the current Congress will rest on the compromise reached by a joint House and Senate conference committee.

Winnie Stachelberg, political director of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), spoke optimistically about the bill's chances. "With strong administration backing and bipartisan support in both houses of Congress, we expect to be in a strong position in the conference committee to ensure final passage of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act."

In a separate, same-day vote — that ap-
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Kentucky soldier brutally murdered

by Dan Van Mourik
Q-Notes Staff

FORT CAMPBELL, KY—When it was first learned that a Fort Campbell soldier had been beaten to death, information was sketchy and the military refused to release any details. But within three days of the attack, phone calls were placed to the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) calling the murder an anti-gay hate crime. The callers said the victim was gay and was killed as rumors about his relationship with another man circulated on the post.

Pfc. Barry Winchell, 21, was allegedly bludgeoned with a baseball bat by one or more fellow soldiers in his unit on the night of July 5. He died the following morning at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, TN.

The calls came to SLDN from the Lesbian and Gay Coalition for Justice (LGCJ) in Nashville, soldiers at Fort Campbell and other local sources. But in spite of the calls, Fort Campbell spokeswoman Maj. Pamela Hart said Army investigators conducted interviews on the case and have "no conclusive evidence that this was a hate crime." The Army believes Winchell's death was a result of a "physical altercation" and nothing more.

But LGCJ and SLDN said their own interviews with enlisted people and civilians in Nashville and Clarksville, TN lead them to suspect more people were involved in Winchell's beating, and that the attackers' ire was related to Winchell's sexual orientation.

SLDN talked to 50 Fort Campbell soldiers and civilians and distributed 3000 fliers at gay bars and clubs in Middle Tennessee, asking for help with the investigation.

After SLDN intervened, the Army has changed its official stance to "[a]ll aspects of his death will be examined and the results of this investigation will be made public as appropriate."

On July 9, Post officials charged Pvt. Calvin N. Glover, 18, with premeditated murder for the attack which happened in a barracks hall-

way. Glover was transferred to Fort Knox, where he remains in custody pending a military hearing similar to a grand jury.

Fort Campbell officials later charged Spec. Justin R. Fisher, 25, in connection with Winchell's death. Fisher is charged with four offenses. He allegedly: 1) participated as a principal to premeditated murder by encouraging Pvt. Calvin N. Glover to strike Winchell; 2) acted as an accessory after the fact; 3) made false statements to Army investigators, while under oath, concerning Winchell's death; and 4) obstructed the investigation.

Fisher is Winchell's roommate and the person who brought Winchell into his first gay relationship, Winchell's boyfriend said.

On the post, rumors of Winchell's homosexuality foreshadowed the attack, said Calpernia Addams, who said he had dated Winchell since late March. Addams said he and Winchell were introduced by the man now accused of encouraging the beating.

It was Fisher who first introduced Winchell to The Connection, a gay nightclub in Nashville, Addams said. Addams said Fisher had already been to the club and talked to his buddies about a female impersonation act Addams performs on stage there.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) called upon the military to fully investigate and disclose the nature of the killing. "Pfc. Winchell pledged to protect and defend his country," said NGLTF Executive Director Kerry Lobel. "Who was protecting and defending Pfc. Winchell?"

This murder revives chilling memories of Allen Schindler, a sailor who was beaten to death by a fellow seaman in a homophobic rage. Schindler died in 1992, in Sasebo, Japan.

The investigation into this crime may be severely hampered by the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" policy. Individuals who may have information relevant to the crime may be reluctant to cooperate with Army officials out of fear for their safety and the possibility of losing their careers. ▼

Firm amends vendor policy to reward GLBT-supportive companies

by David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

GREENSBORO, NC—The out, male couple behind the nation's second-largest gay-owned business is quietly raising corporate America's fairness IQ through a new company policy that gives trade preferences to vendors with written sexual orientation non-discrimination policies.

The effort began when company President Bob Page, 54, decided that his china, crystal and flatware retailing company, Replacements, Ltd, had an obligation to support vendors that protect their gay and lesbian workers.

"It's something I've talked about for a long time," he recalled. "For the last several years I have been quite openly gay and I feel an obligation to help other [GLBT] people."

Page put his convictions into action by distributing approximately 300 letters in late June announcing that — whenever possible — his company would buy its goods and services from businesses with gay-positive employment policies.

The letter explained, in part, "I have instituted a policy which states that Replacements,

Ltd. wants to conduct business solely with those who can, at a minimum, show that they don't discriminate against employees in any way due to their sexual orientation. This, along with quality, pricing and service, now constitute our vendor selection criteria."

Recipients were asked to respond within 30 days, providing details of their employment regulations. Surprisingly, what Page discovered as the calls and letters began to come in was precisely how confused many employers were about federal and state employment protections relative to gays and lesbians.

"Most [employers] just said they never really thought about it," Page recalled. "But a lot of them said they already covered gays because they followed all state and federal employment

guidelines. I had to explain to them that there weren't any state or federal laws protecting gay employees. They didn't realize that a person could lose their job just for being gay."

The discussions convinced Page to do a follow-up letter clarifying the absence of government-mandated protections for gay and lesbian workers — under-
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Fredrickson