

## Candidates

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not intervene because the bill included protection based on sexual orientation. Dianne Hardy-Garcia, the executive director of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, said after the bill's failure that she does think that people nationally will put up with "garbage" like the inaction Bush took on the bill.

"I am utterly and completely saddened that George Bush has shown his true colors on our issues. I had always hoped that deep down he was a good guy," she said in an interview. "Although I'm saddened by it, at least people know what kind of man he is."

He also openly opposes gay marriage and adoption by gays and lesbians. In April, he reaffirmed his stance on adoption to the *New York Times*. In the same article, when asked about President Clinton appointing openly-gay James Hormel to an ambassador post, he said appointments should be based on qualifications rather than sexual orientation.

"As a general statement, if someone can do a job, and a job that he's qualified for, that person ought to be allowed to do his job," Bush told the *Times*. "I think it's much different than gay adoption. I strongly believe that what's best for children is a married man or a married woman as their parents. That has nothing to do with whether or not I don't respect somebody."

Bush said he would not exclude gays and lesbians from posts "as long as they can do a good job, as long as their political agenda was the same as mine."

Rich Tafel, executive director of Log Cabin Republicans (LCR), a gay and lesbian group working for inclusion in the Republican party, said in a statement after the interview that Bush was taking a "Clintonesque" stance by trying to please all sides. "Many gay people will be very glad to hear his views on employment rights and gay appointments, but there is still a core inconsistency that says gays should have employment rights but can't be parents in any circumstances," he said.

Bush has already met with Pat Robertson of the Christian Coalition, Tafel said, challenging the candidate to also meet with LCR representatives.

### The not-so-newcomer

Although Elizabeth Dole is known to most as the wife of former Sen. Bob Dole (R-KS), and now benefits from her husband's role as ad pitchman for the anti-impotence drug Viagra, she has long had a professional career of her own.

While she has never been elected to a post and therefore has no firm record on gay and lesbian issues — or any other issues — she served from 1991 to 1999 as the high-profile president of the American Red Cross. Before that, she was Secretary of Labor under President Bush, Secretary of Transportation under President Reagan, a deputy assistant to President Nixon and began as a public defender. Born July 29, 1936, she got her law degree from

## Policy

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scoring why corporate non-discrimination measures are so important.

It is too soon to tell what the overall result of this campaign will be, Page said, but initial response to the new policy has been positive. And, at the least, even those business leaders who have only committed to "looking into it," are now thinking about gay employment issues — likely for the first time.

### Replacements in brief

Replacements, Ltd.'s new vendor policy is really just an extension of its progressive internal philosophies (like underwriting the costs of the NC Gay and Lesbian Film Festival each year or hiring 30 refugees from war-torn Yugoslavia then instituting an English-as-a-second-language program for them). And, simply put, the company has turned its social conscience into a gold mine.

Last year, Replacements, Ltd. sold \$70 million worth of old and discontinued china, crystal and flatware from its headquarters in suburban Greensboro. The facility is equivalent to four football fields in size; moves nearly 50,000 pieces each week and employs 580 (approximately 150 of whom are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender). Page has brought the company a long way from its humble beginnings in his

Harvard in 1965.

In an interview with NBC's Lisa Myers, broadcast on the *Today* show June 30, Dole said that she would not turn away a campaign contribution from LCR, something her husband did during his unsuccessful campaign for the presidency and later said he regretted.

"If they sent a check to my campaign, I would not turn it away. Because what that says to me is they're accepting my agenda," Dole said. "I think that you know, all people are welcome [in the Republican party.] In other words, I'm inclusive. I'm not a person who is divisive. I want to bring people together. I want to see healing in this country, in terms of being able to work together, toward good things for America."

She said that she, too, would not discriminate in her own appointments but would appoint "qualified conservatives." She said, "And that applies up and down the line."

That interview was Dole's first comment on gays and lesbians during her campaign, which became official in late June. Tafel of LCR, however, offered additional insights on Dole in a recent letter to LCR members outlining what he knows about each of the Republican candidates.

"On a more personal note, it is widely known in Washington that Dole has always had openly-gay staffers in key positions through her years in government and the American Red Cross. One Washingtonian pointed out to me that she gave a wonderful eulogy for a key staffer who died of AIDS," Tafel wrote.

### Contradictory evidence

Although Bush and Dole have both made positive statements regarding the gay and lesbian community recently, Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) has offered his support to three openly-gay Republican candidates in Arizona — while voting against gay and lesbian issues that have come before him as a senator.

McCain comes from a much different background than Bush or Dole. He was born August 29, 1936 in the Panama Canal Zone and educated at the US Naval Academy where he got a bachelor of science degree in 1958. He was a naval officer from 1958 to 1981, in the House of Representatives from 1983 to 1987 and in the Senate since 1987.

While many candidates tout their military service, McCain is considered a true war hero who was taken prisoner during Vietnam.

McCain has frequently opposed gay and lesbian issues that have come before him. The Human Rights Campaign gives him a lifetime rating on gay and lesbian issues of 33 percent.

He voted against ENDA when it came up in 1996 and opposed lifting the ban on gays in the military in 1996. His own congressional office, however, has a written policy of non-discrimination in employment that includes protection based on sexual orientation. He also opposes hate crime legislation.

"Crime is crime no matter who it is perpetrated for or against," said McCain's press secretary Howard Opinsky.

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attic in 1981.

So far, in fact, that in her book *In the Pink: The Making of Successful Gay and Lesbian Owned Businesses*, author Sue Levin reports that Replacements, Ltd. trails only Tim Gill's Colorado-based software firm Quark, Inc. among the nation's largest gay-owned companies.

Despite such wild success, however, Page is content to live modestly with his life and business partner of 10 years, Dale Fredrickson, 37 (a former teacher from Chattanooga, Tennessee whom he met through a personal ad). The couple still resides in the \$55,000 house Page bought 14 years ago and drives to the office in a nine-year-old Ford Explorer.

And Page is also mindful of the fact that, irrespective of his business accomplishments, in some people's eyes he is still just a "fag" — a word that was emblazoned in spray-paint across the company's generators one morning.

In the end, it seems that Page's refusal to be awed by his own success is precisely what has ensured it. Because his vision and integrity have never been consumed by his hubris nor his empire, he has been able to keep Replacements, Ltd. focused on its employees and patrons. And they, in turn, have rewarded him with their fierce loyalty and repeat business. Not bad for someone who simply enjoyed collecting china patterns.

For more information, call 1-800-REPLACE or access [www.replacements.com](http://www.replacements.com). ▼

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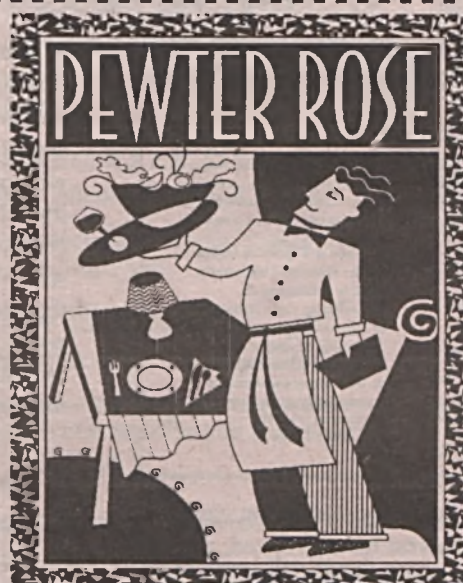
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