

Candidates2

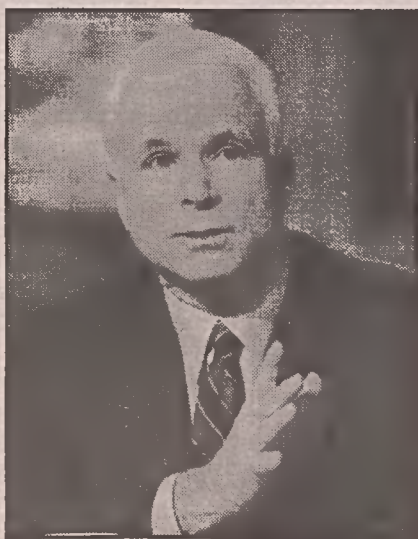
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While McCain's record shows he supports funding for AIDS research, he opposes gay marriages and adoptions by gays and lesbians, according to Opinsky. McCain has an adopted daughter.

He believes it is a president's prerogative to appoint whomever he wants, so he does not criticize the Hormel nomination, Opinsky said.

All of McCain's positions, however, are based on his record and not on anything he has said during the campaign.

"We haven't spent a great deal of time talking about specific issues that might impact the gay community," Opinsky said.



Sen. John McCain

McCain has said as recently as February that he supports the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

McCain has written letters of support for three openly-gay politicians in Arizona. He publicly supported Congressman Jim Kolbe (R-AZ) when he came out and he supported Steve May, an openly-gay candidate for state senator who won on his second try in 1998.

McCain also supported openly-gay Tempe mayor Neil Giuliano. Giuliano said McCain's support was crucial to his victory in the election. In an interview, Giuliano questioned whether McCain might vote differently on gay and lesbian issues in the future.

"I would be anxious for the senator to have an opportunity to learn more and comment today," Giuliano said. "The senator and his wife and family have been very supportive of me on a personal and political basis."

He said McCain's support of him and the other gay candidates means he is not a typical

Republican.

"I think most Republicans would run away from having personal and political contact with an openly-gay candidate," he said. "I think McCain believes in the worth of every individual and he clearly does not run away from gay people. He has supported three gay candidates and he has done so in a state where it would have been more politically popular not to do so or to go the other way."

And the rest

It is still not known exactly what role the billionaire Steve Forbes will play in the campaign. He does not need to raise any money to finance a campaign — although he's trying anyway. While Forbes' money was largely inherited from his flamboyant father, publishing magnate Malcolm Forbes, known

to be bisexual, Steve Forbes is generally considered an opponent of the gay community.

Businessman Lamar Alexander has "tenaciously avoided comment throughout his career" on gay and lesbian issues, Tafel noted.

The remaining candidates generally take strong stands in favor of families and opposed to gays and lesbians. They include Family Research Council President Gary Bauer, political commentator Pat Buchanan, columnist Alan Keyes, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), former Vice President Dan Quayle and Sen. Bob Smith (R-NH).

With so many candidates and so little good news on gay and lesbian issues, some question how LCR will be able to choose a candidate to endorse. But spokesperson Kevin Ivers said that is not the point.

"Endorsements come at the end of the process, not the beginning," he said. "Our role is to educate the candidates." ▼

Senate

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peared to be an odd compromise between Democrats and Republicans — the Senate passed an alternate hate crimes amendment by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) that does not cover sexual orientation, disability or gender and only expands federal jurisdiction to include hate crimes committed after the crossing of state lines. The conference committee will be responsible for resolving the bills' differences.

The Hatch measure was met with sharp criticism. HRC Executive Director Elizabeth Birch stated, "In light of recent brutal anti-gay murders and statistics that show an increase in violent assaults against gay Americans, it is highly irresponsible to exclude sexual orientation from a proposal to combat hate violence."

Stachelberg added, "I do not understand how Senator Hatch could sit through a hearing and listen to Judy Shepard speak of her murdered gay son and then offer legislation that does not address the problem of hate violence against gay people."

Those who oppose HCPA, including Sen. Hatch, have questioned the constitutionality of

enacting such legislation.

Proponents counter that the bill is consistent with established constitutional law, including First Amendment precedent and a previous Supreme Court ruling (*United States v. Lopez*). Also, the existing statute, that HCPA amends, has been upheld under the Commerce Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and the Thirteenth Amendment.

Besides, supporters argue, the Senate has previously adopted federal hate crime legislation similar to HCPA. In 1996, they, along with Sen. Hatch, voted 98-0 to pass the Church Arson Prevention Act — a bill that expanded the federal role in the investigation and prosecution of bias crimes based on ethnic or racial hatred targeted toward religious property. While HCPA does not cover property — only crimes against persons resulting in injury or death — both amendments contain identical language regarding federal authority.

The effort to pass HCPA was a bipartisan endeavor that included Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Gordon Smith (R-OR), Charles Schumer (D-NY), James Jeffords (R-VT), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) among others. ▼



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