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GLAD hails Sen. Kennedy's steady support for LGBT rights

Longtime friend of LGBT community, Kennedy vows to continue the fight for gay equality

by Carisa Cunningham

Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) praised long-time civil rights champion Sen. Edward Kennedy for remarks he made in support of marriage rights for LGBT people and against workplace discrimination. Kennedy's comments came in a speech he made on the future of the Democratic Party, at the National Press Club on Jan. 12.

"Sen. Kennedy's comments encourage us as we continue to make progress in ending discrimination against LGBT people across the country," said Gary Buseck, Legal Director of GLAD. "He places support for the rights of GLBT people where it belongs — in the American tradition of fighting for fairness. Our community is blessed to enjoy the leadership of such an unwavering advocate."

Excerpts from Sen. Kennedy's remarks are below.

For the full text of his speech, "A Democratic Blueprint for America's Future," visit www.DemocraticMajority.com.

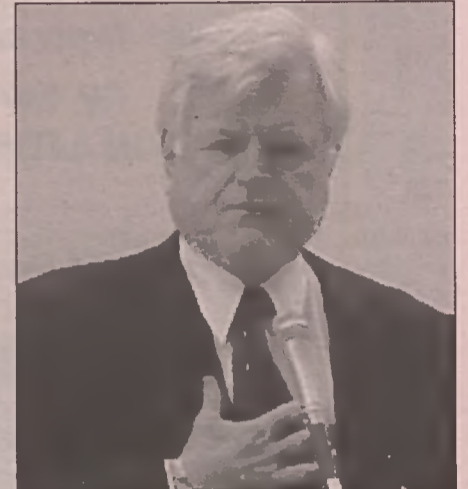
On Civil Marriage

"On the issue of gay rights, I continue to strongly support civil marriage. We cannot — and should not — require any religion or any church to accept gay marriage. But it is wrong for our civil laws to deny any American the basic right to be a part of a family, to have loved ones with whom to build a future and share life's joys and tears, and to be free from the stain of bigotry and discrimination."

On Workplace Discrimination

"A progressive economy also recognizes that Americans don't just want more. They want more of what matters in life,

which is the true American dream. They want greater flexibility on the job, with



Kennedy on gay marriage: 'I continue to strongly support civil marriage.'

more time for their families, more time for their children's schools, more time to volunteer in their communities and churches and synagogues and mosques.

"They want jobs that pay fairly and don't force them to work excessive hours without extra pay. They want safe workplaces and the right to join with fellow employees to bargain for a fair workplace. They want companies to stop marketing cigarettes and unhealthy foods to young Americans.

"They want workplaces free from all forms of bigotry and discrimination, including discrimination against gay and lesbian Americans."

Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders is dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status and gender identity and expression.

info:
www.glad.org

Political unrest

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als should serve as teachers in public schools."

The overturning of the sodomy laws in 2003 and court victories for same-sex marriage in Canada that same year rang hope in the hearts of gays and lesbians across this continent, while simultaneously striking fear in the ignorant minds of the evangelical right and politicians supported by them.

It is their fear that has fostered a growing anti-gay atmosphere in this country.

George Bush has waffled on the *Federal Marriage Amendment* so many times these days he looks like nothing more than a hand puppet for groups like Focus on the Family and the Traditional Values Coalition.

There's no doubt in my mind we were used as a pawn in a game of political poker so that Bush could recapture the White House. In an editor's note last

year I indicated that I felt Bush did not truly support a constitutional amendment and that he would likely drop his push for it after he was re-elected. I was right.

But then the right-wingers sprung into action, threatening all kinds of untold horrors for Bush and his Social Security reform if he didn't carry through with his initial support of the FMA.

Ever the spineless jellyfish, scared little boy Bush was quick to serve our heads up on a platter to ensure that his privatization plan that will pad the pockets of the wealthy has a chance at moving forward.

As long as this scheming man-boy is in power, hatred towards the LGBT community will continue to grow like a toxic mold in a damp basement.

— David Moore
Editor