

Campaign 80

7

Most of the following information is based on the presidential candidates' responses to a National Gay Task Force survey.

☆ Anderson ☆

John Anderson, Representative from Illinois, said that the appointments and policies of his administration would be open to all, irrespective of race, creed, affectional preference, or any other arbitrary distinctions.

Anderson said that although he questions the effectiveness of party platforms, he would be inclined to support a plank in the Republican Party platform for rights of lesbians and gay men.

In 1977, an amendment was offered to a Legal Services Corporation bill on the House Floor that would have prohibited federally-funded legal assistance in cases arising out of disputes over the issue of homosexuality. On a voice (unrecorded) vote, the amendment was resoundingly defeated; but the proponents of the amendment succeeded in forcing a roll call recorded vote, at which time the amendment passed. On both the voice vote and the recorded vote, Anderson opposed the measure.

"I regard such questions as sexual preference as a personal and private matter among adults, and I will continue to do everything I can to keep the government's intrusive hand from interfering in the lives of our citizens," Anderson said.

☆ Bush ☆

George Bush, former CIA director, has expressed opposition to any discrimination against or harassment of gays. He does not support specific civil rights legislation because Bush believes constitutional safeguards and existing legislation adequately address the issue.

According to Blade (Feb. 21, 1980), in an internal Bush campaign memorandum uncovered by United Press International, Bush's strategists outlined a plan to accuse presidential candidate John Connally of supporting gay civil rights. This was an effort to cut into Connally's strength in the South Carolina primary.

The memorandum suggests that Bush supporters attack statements that Connally had made to reporters at various times when asked about gay rights. It was written by former Nixon White House political aide Harry Dent and by Dick Greer, Bush's South Carolina campaign chairperson.

Bush agrees with Connally that homosexuals have legal rights, but says that he is opposed to "codifying" gay rights.

Bush said during the Iowa campaign that he was sorry, but simply did not believe that homosexuality was "normal" behavior.

Later in a Los Angeles Times interview, written by Robert Scheer, Bush said, "I don't think we need a codification, kind of putting a stamp of approval on that lifestyle. I don't think that American society should be asked to accept that homosexuality is a standard which should be held up for acceptance."

The position is not markedly different from that of Connally, who also thinks gays have "rights" but should not be allowed to teach children or hold "sensitive" jobs in the federal government.

☆ Carter ☆

Jimmy Carter, incumbent President of the United States, responded to the NGTF inquiry with his record of past actions relating to gay concerns.

Three months after the beginning of Carter's administration, senior White House advisors met with representatives of NGTF. There followed a series of discussions at different levels of the federal government, including more White House meetings.

In 1978, Carter signed into law the Civil Service Reform Act. This federal statute prohibits discrimination in approximately 95% of federal jobs based on private, non-job related behavior, such as sexual orientation.

The Bureau of Prisons will soon permit the receipt of non-pornographic gay literature in federal correctional institutions. This follows from the inquiry of the NGTF at its December meeting with White House officials.

In conjunction with the Congress, the President has established a select Commission on Immigration and Refugee policy to review the need for

(Campaign, cont. p. 14)