

November's Views

Confessions of a Gay Republican

I will cast my ballot for Ronald Reagan and Jesse Helms come election day. This is no major surprise, coming from a conservative Republican, but it is coming from someone who also happens to be gay. Being a conservative Republican has often put me at odds with my friends in the gay community who can't understand why I am pro-life or support other conservative causes. By examining my beliefs, though, I am even more convinced that conservatism is best for the health of America and that conservatism (if not necessarily the Republican Party), is a far better method of assimilating the gay community into the American mainstream than that of the radical left.

One basic philosophical underpinning that separates most conservatives (and Republicans) from most liberals (and Democrats) is the belief that a transcendent, moral order is necessary for the survival of society. A divine tactic, however barely detectable, is at work in society, and any such tactic must place a high priority on the sanctity of human life if society is to endure. The gay community, in its rush to embrace any cause associated, rightly or wrongly, with sexual freedom has fallen for feminist claims that abortion is merely an issue of privacy and sexual freedom, without examining the issue closely enough. Abortion is an issue of the sanctity of life; the right to act in a particular manner ends when it causes physical harm to an innocent party. I cannot endorse or support a Party whose platform endorses such a callous disregard for human life, as does the Democrats' affirmation of abortion.

If there is a link between my sexuality and non-sexual issues it is in that I value civil freedom as a gay man. It would be hypocritical of me to value civil freedom for myself and not for others. Hence, my unswerving opposition to Marxist doctrine and Soviet expansionism, a view more in line with the Republican Party. The value I place on civil freedom leads me to value economic freedom and oppose the tax and special policies of the Democrats.

"I ALSO BELIEVE THAT JESSE HELMS IS NOT TOTALLY ANTI-GAY."

As for candidates in particular, I do not believe that, while perhaps opposed to federal gay rights legislation, President Reagan is anti-gay. In 1978 Reagan came out in opposition to California's homophobic Briggs Initiative (which would have required the firing of gay teachers) and did so long before President Carter. A resolution supporting anti-discrimination

legislation passed at this year's conference of mayors was introduced by a Republican, acting in consultation with White House staff.

I also believe that Jesse Helms is not totally anti-gay. Granted, he is not a friend of gay rights. Although I believe his extension to be carried to the extreme, his opposition stems in part from the conservative belief that an individual should be judged solely on his or her abilities, not because they belong to a minority group. This is not an altogether bad premise. Opposition to gay rights does not automatically mean hatred of gays and lesbians. The National Congressional Club, Helms' fundraising arm, contributed heavily to Rep. Bob Baumann's losing re-election campaign, even after the Congressman's homosexuality became public knowledge.

(see GAY REPUBLICAN on page 12)

Sooners Premature

According to an AP release dated Oct. 2, 1984, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed on Oct. 1 to decide whether teachers in public schools may be fired for promoting or advocating homosexuality. This will be the first time the Court addresses issues of gay rights since 1967.

The Court, as it issued orders in about 1000 cases as its 1984-85 term began, agreed to judge the validity of a law in Oklahoma that allowed school boards to fire teachers for conduct promoting or advocating homosexuality. The law was struck down by a federal appeals court which ruled that it violated teacher's rights to free speech.

The invalidated law stated that teachers could be fired or otherwise denied work for engaging in "public homosexuality conduct or activity." The law defined these terms as "advocating, soliciting, imposing, encouraging or promoting public or private homosexual activity in a manner that creates a substantial risk that such conduct will come to the attention of school children or school employees."

In a test case against the Oklahoma City School Board, the National Gay Task Force challenged the legality of the law without alleging that it had ever been used against any teacher or teacher-applicant. In 1982 a federal judge ruled that the law was valid, but the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals cited past decisions of the Supreme Court which hold that "the Constitution's First Amendment does not permit someone to be punished for advocating illegal conduct at some indefinite future time."