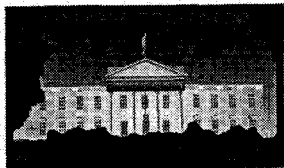


Dialogue Series Presents:

Democrat or Republican?



\*Are you a Democrat or a Republican? Not sure? Then come take a test and see where you stand!

\*Do you care about the upcoming elections? You should! Join us for this informal discussion.

Speaker: Kevin LeCount, Political Consultant

Wednesday, March 17 @ 6pm, Kresge

Sponsored by the Office of Student Activities and Leadership Development, 202 Cate Center

The MEREDITH HERALD

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NATIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

Gay Marriage Controversy Continues

KATIE O'NEAL Staff Writer

President Bush has sparked major controversy by placing his support behind a constitutional amendment that will ban same-sex marriages. Bush maintains that same-sex marriages are detrimental to society and to the foundation of marriage. Christian conservatives, who have been fighting for years to ban same-sex marriages, are pleased with Bush's decision. Family Research Council, an organization for social conservatives, has announced that they hope

the president will commit as much of his time and support to passing a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriages as he did to cutting taxes and dealing with Medicare issues.

The amendment Bush is in favor of would bar same-sex couples from receiving the legal contract of marriage, but would allow state legislatures to decide whether or not the couples could be considered a civil union and receive certain benefits. Scott McClellan, White House press secretary, stated that a previous amendment to ban gay marriages proposed by Representative Marilyn

Musgrave from Colorado is similar to one Bush is suggesting. The former proposal, which was termed the Federal Marriage Amendment, would have restricted marriage to one man and one woman, but would have allowed each state the right to grant couples a civil union.

Americans seem to be split on the issue of same-sex marriages. In a recent poll conducted by the Washington Post, it was found that 46 percent of participants favored the amendment, 45 percent opposed it and 9 percent had no opinion.

Democratic candidates

have also expressed their views on the amendment. John Kerry has stated that while he believes the union of marriage should serve only a man and a woman, he does not believe a constitutional amendment is needed to ban same-sex marriages. John Edwards has expressed similar feelings by stating that the government should play no role in marriages.

Another interesting perspective is that of Vice President Dick Cheney, whose own daughter is openly gay. Cheney has stated that he does not believe the federal govern-

ment should be involved in the area of marriage.

It could take years for an amendment banning same-sex marriages to actually become part of the Constitution. In order to be passed, an amendment must have two-thirds vote in the House and in the Senate. It must also be ratified in 38 states. If passed, this amendment would be the first since the 1919 prohibition amendment to limit individual rights.