

It's "Mourning" in Gay America

Gays, Democrats Lose Big on Election Day; Bush Wins Popular Vote; Kerry Concedes Defeat in Ohio

By Bob Roehr
Contributing Writer

The political organizations of the gay community, and much of the rank and file, bet heavily on the Democratic Party in this election and lost big time.

It will be days, or perhaps weeks before all of the votes are officially tallied and certified but the outline is clear — Senator John F. Kerry has conceded, President George W. Bush has won reelection.

Republicans padded their majorities in both the House and Senate.

Bush lost the popular vote in 2000 by about a half million votes. This year, with turn out at an all time high, he reversed that and appears to have piled up a popular vote margin of about three and a half million, more than 51 percent of those cast. That is a higher percentage than Bill Clinton managed in either election.

And Bush padded the electoral vote total as well. Still, the country remains virtually evenly divided in its political choices.

Kerry was able to mount a competitive campaign in states roughly within the triangle stretching from Boston, to Minneapolis, to Washington, DC, as well as the Pacific coast. The rest of the country went strongly for Bush.

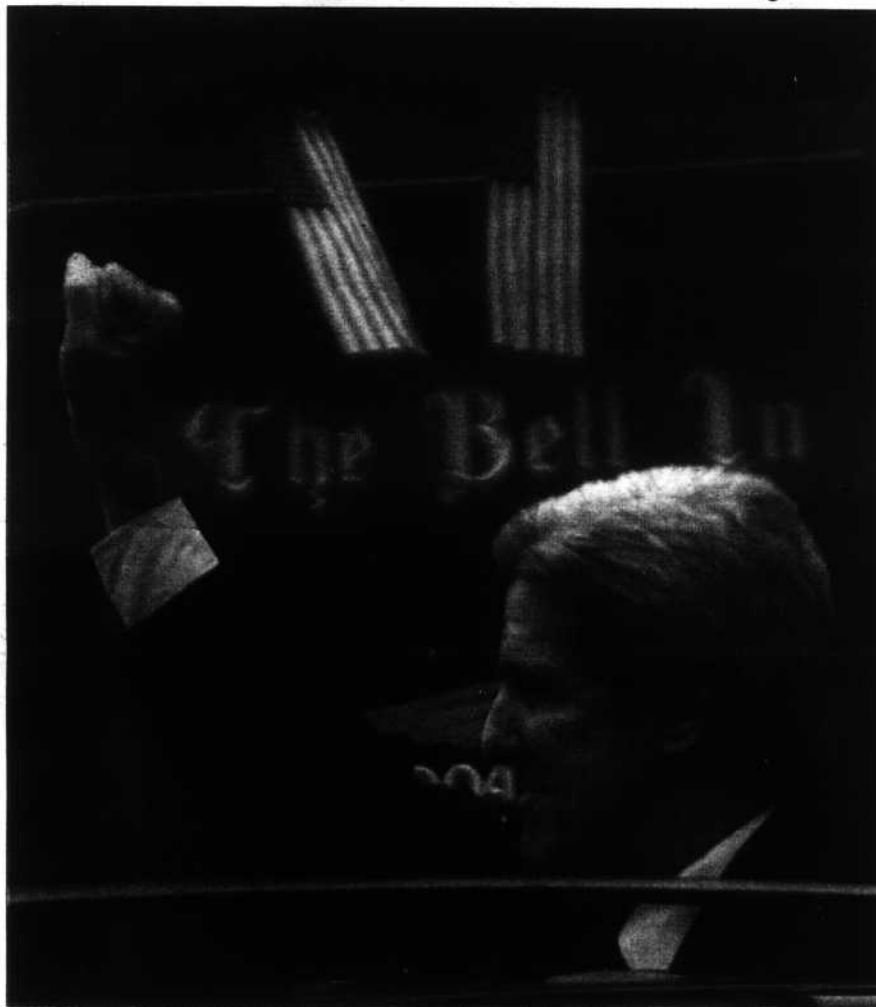
"I would not give up if there was a chance that we would prevail," Kerry said in his concession speech on Wednesday afternoon.

He spoke of his conversation earlier that morning with President Bush. "We talked about the division in our nation...Today I hope that we can begin the healing."

"I plan to do my part to try to bridge the partisan divide." He asked his supporters to do the same and closed with the prayer, "God bless America."

A short time later, at a rally in the Ronald Reagan Building, Vice President Dick Cheney recounted "a record turnout and a broad nationwide victory." Mary Cheney and her partner Heather Poe were among family members on the stage, behind the dais.

President Bush acknowledged, "With that trust comes a responsibility to serve all Americans, and I will do my



Four percent of voters in CNN's exit polls identified as gay or lesbian. Of those, 23% say they voted for Bush, 77% for Kerry. The Bush figure is down from 25% in 2000, but still indicates that over a million gays and lesbians voted for the Republican candidate. The gay vote in some states was greater than the margin of victory.

AP Photo of John Kerry

best to fulfill that duty every day as your president." Speaking directly to those who voted for Kerry he said, "To make this nation stronger and better, I will need your support and I will work to earn it...Working together there is no limit to the greatness of America."

Ralph Nader was not a factor, collecting less than 1 percent of the national vote total, compared with 3 percent in 2000.

"This is a really tough defeat," said Cheryl Jacques, president of the Human Rights Campaign. She urged the community to keep things in perspective, "We are reminded that this battle for equality is not a question of if, but of when."

With regard to the rout on marriage amendments she said, "The moral is that we can't win at the ballot box until we win at the water cooler."

Matt Daniels, president of the Alliance for Marriage, attributed Bush's increased support to social issues such as the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA).

He noted that in Ohio, Bush's support went from 9 to 16 percent among African Americans, while his support among Catholic women increased by 5 percent.

GLBT voters cast 23 percent of their ballots for Bush in 2000 and most community leaders felt that number would

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Marriage Amendments Pass in 11 States

"Mean-Spirited, Ugly Measures Will Hurt Thousands of Gay and Straight Families" says NGLTF Director

NEW YORK — State constitutional amendments seeking to ban same-sex marriage passed in all eleven states where the question was on the ballot.

In eight of the 11 contests, the measures also seek to ban other, more limited forms of partner recognition, including civil unions and domestic partnerships.

The margins of defeat, ranged from 86% to 14% in Mississippi to 54% to 46% in Oregon, based on early results figures.

"The results underscore why we have a Bill of Rights—because it is always wrong to put basic rights up to a popular vote. In fact, even today, 213 years after the Bill of Rights was ratified, it is doubtful Americans could win our freedoms of speech, press and religion at the ballot box," said Matt Foreman, Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (the "Task Force"). "In the end, we know the Bill of Rights will guarantee every American the freedom to marry. For now, we'll dig in and fight harder - we've been fighting the forces of intolerance for decades and have made enormous progress against enormous odds."

"Tonight, marriage equality took a right hook to the chin and tens of thousands of families will be hurt, but it's certainly not a knockout -

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