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## NATIONAL news

**NATIONAL**  
A Web site launched Feb. 13 thrust Vice President Dick Cheney's openly lesbian daughter, Mary, to the center of the nationwide debate concerning same-sex marriage.

DearMary.com is soliciting public letters that will be published on the Web site and in newspaper and magazine ads paid for by donations. It is the brainchild of the folks behind DontAmend.com and the successful StopDrLaura.com campaign.

Mary Cheney, 34, has been openly lesbian for years and advocated for the queer community while working as the paid gay liaison at Coors and serving on the Republican Unity Coalition board. She has since quit the coalition to run her father's re-election campaign, where she is reportedly earning \$100,000 a year.

"If the vice president thinks gay relationships are such a threat to society that we need to amend the U.S. Constitution, then he needs to explain why a lesbian in a same-sex relationship is running his re-election campaign," DearMary.com creator John Aravosis said. "Are we a threat or aren't we?"

During the 2000 election, then vice presidential candidate Cheney said he believed the same-sex marriage issue should be left to the states. Just last month in an interview with the Colorado press, he flip-flopped, saying he'd now support a federal constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage.

"Cheney attacks our families yet seems to think his family is irrelevant to the debate," Aravosis said. "The vice president is a hypocrite. He is selling his daughter to the highest bidder in the name of 'family values.' The American people have a right to know that this man is no role model for our families or our nation."

**Mary Cheney**  
WHO: Mary Cheney, 34, openly-gay daughter of VP Cheney.  
WHAT: Silent since her father endorsed anti-gay constitutional amendment making her and millions of Americans second-class citizens.  
PREVIOUS JOB: Professional homosexual.  
CURRENT JOB: Running anti-gay dad's re-election campaign in exchange for \$100,000/year.  
Find out more at: [DearMary.com](http://DearMary.com)

documentaries, including the Oscar-winning *A Time for Justice* and the critically acclaimed series *Eyes on the Prize*.

Bond is the second major black leader to announce his support for marriage equality in recent weeks. Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates told *The St. Petersburg Times* Jan. 18: "I don't understand why the movement to legitimize gay marriage would bother people so much.... We have to fight to educate people and transform that visceral response [because] one of the strengths of the black civil rights movement is that it's served as a model for so many other movements. We who have suffered so much should also be the most compassionate."

The office responsible for investigating and prosecuting federal workplace discrimination reportedly is retreating from looking into claims based on sexual orientation.

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel removed references to sexual orientation-based discrimination from its complaint form, its basic brochure, training slides and a two-page flier titled *Your Rights as a Federal Employee*. It also removed from its Web site a press release issued in June that announced the settlement of a case involving discrimination based on sexual orientation against an applicant to the Internal Revenue Service.

The office's long-established policy was to investigate and enforce disciplinary action against sexual orientation-based employment discrimination involving federal workers. The law, 5 USC 2302(b)(10), prohibits discrimination against federal employees or applicants

on the basis of off-duty conduct that does not affect job performance. Although the statute contains no explicit reference to sexual orientation, it has long been interpreted to include sexual orientation. Executive Order 13087—issued May 28, 1998—reaffirmed that position.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management continues to assert that the government has interpreted the statute "to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. Sexual orientation means homosexuality, bisexuality or heterosexuality."

"President Bush has spoken time and again about the importance of respect and tolerance," said Cheryl Jacques, Human Rights Campaign president. "Make no mistake, there is neither respect nor tolerance in robbing hard-working individuals of their workplace security.... It would be reprehensible for the government to turn the clock back on this progress for basic fairness."

### NEW YORK

In response to a case brought by the American Civil Liberties Union, the New York State Labor Department has agreed to recognize same-sex relationships in determining eligibility for unemployment insurance.

Jeanne Newland left her job in Rochester to be with her partner, who had accepted a higher-paying job in Virginia. After nine months of searching for a job, Newland was urged by the local unemployment office to file for benefits from the state of New York, which regularly grants such

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Julian Bond (left) and Henry Louis Gates are among the black leaders who support marriage equality



The National Black Justice Coalition announced Feb. 2 that civil rights leader Julian Bond has joined the ranks of African American public figures who support marriage equality. He was speaking in his personal capacity and not for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for which he serves as board chairman.

"I see this as a civil rights issue," Bond said. "That means I support gay civil marriage."

The coalition hopes Bond's statement will encourage other black leaders to come out against marriage discrimination. Coretta Scott King, Carol Moseley Braun, Al Sharpton and John Lewis already have signed on.

A key figure in the civil rights movement, Bond co-founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in 1960 and later served in the Georgia General Assembly. He also teaches at American University and University of Virginia and has narrated numerous