

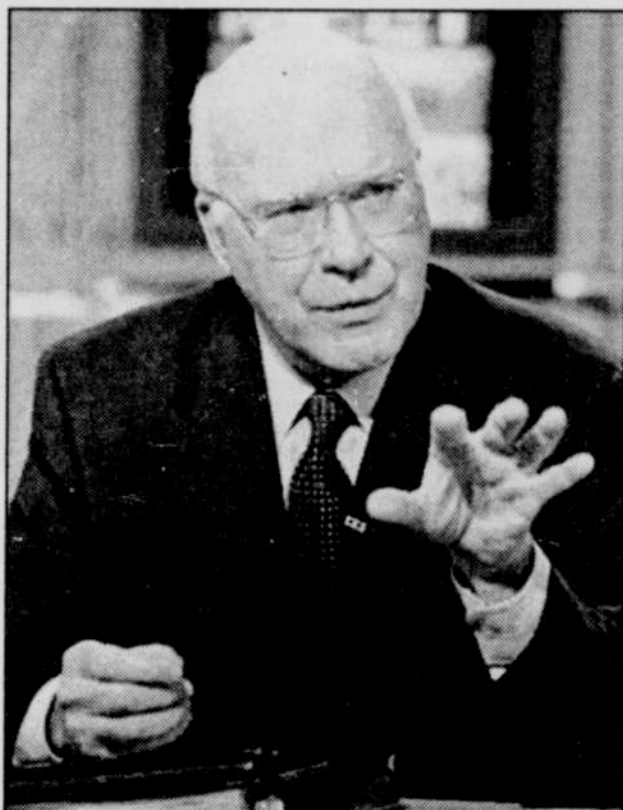
NATIONAL news

the amendment. Bob Barr and I see eye to eye that this amendment would undermine our Constitution."

Patrick Guerriero, executive director of Log Cabin Republicans, added: "Not one more dime of taxpayer money should be wasted debating a discriminatory amendment that its sponsors already admit has no chance of passing. It is an abuse of the constitutional process and a disservice to the American people to ignore the important business pending before the Senate in order to play politics with our nation's founding document."

Senate Republican leaders have said they will schedule a vote on the amendment in mid-July, although it is not clear what language will be put to a vote. The confusion is in part because the leadership is bypassing a vote in the Judiciary Committee to clarify the situation.

Two Republican members of the committee have stated their opposition to the amendment, so it is likely that the leadership would lose that vote. They have chosen a strategy



"This debate is not about preserving the sanctity of marriage, it is about preserving a Republican White House and Senate"

—Patrick Leahy

that avoids such a display of weakness.

Social conservatives continue to assert that politics is not involved in scheduling a vote on the amendment immediately prior to the Democratic National Convention, but few observers buy that argument, claiming it's all about politics.

One concern is whether Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, the presumed Democratic nominee for president, will be present to vote on the amendment or conveniently will be on the campaign trail.

There also is a growing fear among gay advocates that Democratic Leader Tom Daschle will renege on his stated opposition to the amendment and vote for it because of a tight re-election campaign

in South Dakota. If he caves in to right-wing pressure, then several other Democrats are likely to follow. [M]

BOB ROEHR is a free-lance reporter based in Washington, D.C.

MONEY TALKS

Analysis shows little impact of same-sex marriage on federal budget
by Bob Roehr

Recognizing same-sex marriages would actually reduce federal expenditures by a small amount, less than \$1 billion a year in the \$2.4 trillion budget. That was the surprising conclusion of "The Potential Budgetary Impact of Recognizing Same-Sex Marriages," an analysis performed by the Congressional Budget Office.

Rep. Steve Chabot, R-Ohio, chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, requested the analysis. It was released June 21.

"In some cases, recognizing same-sex marriages would increase outlays and revenues; in other cases, it would have the opposite effect," the analysis said. It assumed that same-sex marriage was recognized in all 50 states and by the federal government and that half of the 1.2 million adults identified in the 2000 census as living in same-sex households would marry.

"On balance, legalization of same-sex marriages would have only a small impact on federal tax revenues, CBO estimates," the analysis said. "Revenues would be slightly higher; by less than \$400 million a year.... Those amounts represent less than 0.1 percent of total federal revenues."

"Recognizing same-sex marriages would increase outlays for Social Security and for the Federal Employees Health Benefits program, CBO estimates, but would reduce spending for Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid and Medicare. Effects on other programs would be negligible. Altogether, CBO

concludes, recognizing same-sex marriage would affect outlays by less than \$50 million a year in either direction through 2009 and reduce them by about \$100 million to \$200 million annually from 2010 through 2014."

The analysis continued, "As a general rule, married people fare better under Social Security than single people do, and married couples with one earner fare better than two-earner couples do." But same-sex couples would see only modest gains in this area, first because they are more likely to have two wage earners and ones who make more similar incomes than traditional two-income households, and second because widows generally outlive their spouses by six to seven years while same-sex couples are likely to have more similar life expectancies.

"Congress' own analysis shows America would benefit from equal protection," said Cheryl Jacques, president of the Human Rights Campaign. "It's clear that giving all American families equal protection won't harm the bottom line."

Some social conservatives have asserted recently that allowing same-sex marriage will cost a fortune. Rep. Spencer Bachus, R-Ala., raised that bugaboo during a House hearing May 13 when he ticked off a list of federal benefits and said extending those to same-sex couples will "just break the bank.... It will cost billions of dollars."

The report should lay that line of accusations to rest. But because right-wing opposition to same-sex marriage is based on faith and not reason, don't hold your breath. [M]



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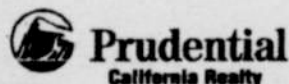


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