

sometimes are difficult doesn't mean that they're not going to happen. They will."

She continued: "If my child ever came to me and told me, 'Mom, this is who we are and this is what I'm going to do,' then I would feel, as a mother, free to share my joy, my pride, with all my friends, no matter the circumstances or religion or their understanding or their culture, in the same way that I would if my son said, 'I'm marrying this wonderful girl.' You know what? What we owe one another is respect, dignity, civil rights and the generosity of spirit that always has been a great American trait."

"Two months ago I was in Sonoma [Calif.] for a fund-raiser, and after I spoke, a guy came up to me and said, 'I wish you were my mom,'" Heinz Kerry said. "At least if nothing else, you will have a mom in the White House.... I will always have an ear, I will always have a heart, and I will always respect and want you to be loved.... You can call me Mama T anytime."

The caucuses also were addressed by Maine Gov. John Baldacci; U.S. Reps. Jerrold Nadler and Carolyn Maloney of New York, Robert Matsui of California, Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas and Eleanor Holmes Norton of Washington, D.C.; U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer of California; and actors Robert Gant of *Queer as Folk* and Steve Buscemi of *The Sopranos*.

"Our nominee for president is the most pro-gay nominee for president in U.S. history," said lesbian U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, who also addressed the convention in prime time, discussing health care. She was appointed one of the convention's co-chairs, a queer first.

Like several other speakers, '70s pop singer Carole King expressed disagreement with Kerry's marriage positions.

"But I think that with our support and our love and our openness and encouragement, I think he will eventually come to where we are on it," she said. "This is a good man who has been your advocate for many, many years."

The official Democratic Party platform weighed in with a host of pro-gay positions.

It says: "We support full inclusion of gay and lesbian families in the life of our nation and seek equal responsibilities, benefits and protections for these families. In our country, marriage has been defined at the state level for 200 years, and we believe it should continue to be defined there. We repudiate President Bush's divisive effort to politicize the Constitution by pursuing a 'Federal Marriage Amendment.' Our goal is to bring Americans together, not drive them apart."

The platform continues: "We will enact the bipartisan legislation barring workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation. We are committed to equal treatment of all service-members and believe all patriotic Americans should be allowed to serve our country without discrimination, persecution or violence. We



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support the appointment of judges who will uphold our laws and constitutional rights, not their own narrow agendas."

The platform failed to support trans issues, to the distress of the convention's seven trans delegates.

Gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank of Massachusetts addressed the convention on the final night. He did not give the speech that was on the TelePrompTer, which did not reference same-sex marriage. Instead he winged it and talked extensively about marriage.

"I'm going to be honest with you now," Frank said, "the fact is, we who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered, we do have an agenda. And here it is: We think we should be able to fight for our country like John Kerry and serve in the military. We believe, revolutionary as it may sound to Rick Santorum and Tom DeLay and Jerry Fal-

well, we believe people ought to be able to be hired for a job and be judged solely on how well they do the work and not on what somebody else thinks about who they are. We go so far as to believe that a 15-year-old who is different in a lot of ways sexually from others ought to be able to go to high

school without being beaten up. I admit it, we believe that. And we even believe, it's true, that when two people are in love and they are willing to be morally and legally committed to each other and financially responsible to each other, that if they are prepared to get married, it's a good thing for the stability of society."

part from same-sex marriage, the only other queer conflict at the convention concerned the Human Rights Campaign's decision to uninvite comedian Margaret Cho from headlining the week's biggest gay party, a fund-raiser and delegate reception at a nightclub. HRC communications chief Steven Fisher said she was dumped because "we were apprised to expect an incendiary and controversial performance."

HRC's action caused the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to withdraw as a sponsor of the event and gave 17 members of DontAmend.com a second reason to picket it. The group also demonstrated outside the party to highlight Kerry's anti-gay position on marriage.

"The leading political organizations in our community have chosen to politely downplay the Democrats' attacks on our equal marriage rights, all while using the marriage issue in fund-raising letters to swell their treasuries," DontAmend's Andy Thayer said. "Can you imagine the [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] endorsing a candidate who opposed legal equality for African Americans [or the National Organization for Women] endorsing a candidate who opposed legal equality for women?"

Fisher conceded that HRC's action may not have been the best move.

"I can't say it's 100 percent that Cho's performance would have created a bigger media firestorm than what's going on now," he said. "But I think the risk was very real. And I think our taking a hit in the community is worth avoiding even a 30 percent chance of distracting from the efforts to defeat George W. Bush. Our community is their target, and we can't give them any opportunities. If I were a Republican operative and I heard that Margaret Cho was going to be debuting new material at the gay event at the convention, I'd make sure press was there.... We have to keep our eye on the prize." □



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