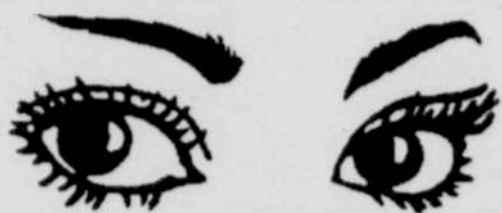


NATIONAL news

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NORTH CAROLINA

An attempt to amend the North Carolina Constitution to prohibit marriage between same-sex couples—as well as civil unions and domestic partnerships—failed when the Legislature adjourned July 18.

"No constitution should be used to discriminate," said Cheryl Jacques, Human Rights Campaign president. "Every North Carolinian deserves to have the same rights and freedoms under their constitution."

The statewide queer rights group Equality North Carolina worked arduously to defeat the measure. "This victory sends a message that our community can effectively mobilize to stop discriminatory state constitutional amendments," said Ian Palmquist, executive director of programs.

A total of 25 states introduced legislation this year that sought to amend their constitutions to prohibit the performance and/or recognition of marriages between same-sex couples and in some cases civil unions and domestic partnerships as well.

- Legislatures in 15 states staved off discriminatory amendments: Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Kansas, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Vermont and Washington.

- Amendments initiated by legislators or citizens will appear on ballots in 11 states: Oregon, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Montana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma and Utah.

- Signatures continue to be gathered in Ohio and North Dakota to put amendments on the November ballot.

- Three state legislatures—Massachusetts, Tennessee and Wisconsin—must reapprove amendments that were passed in the 2004 session in their upcoming sessions.

NATIONAL

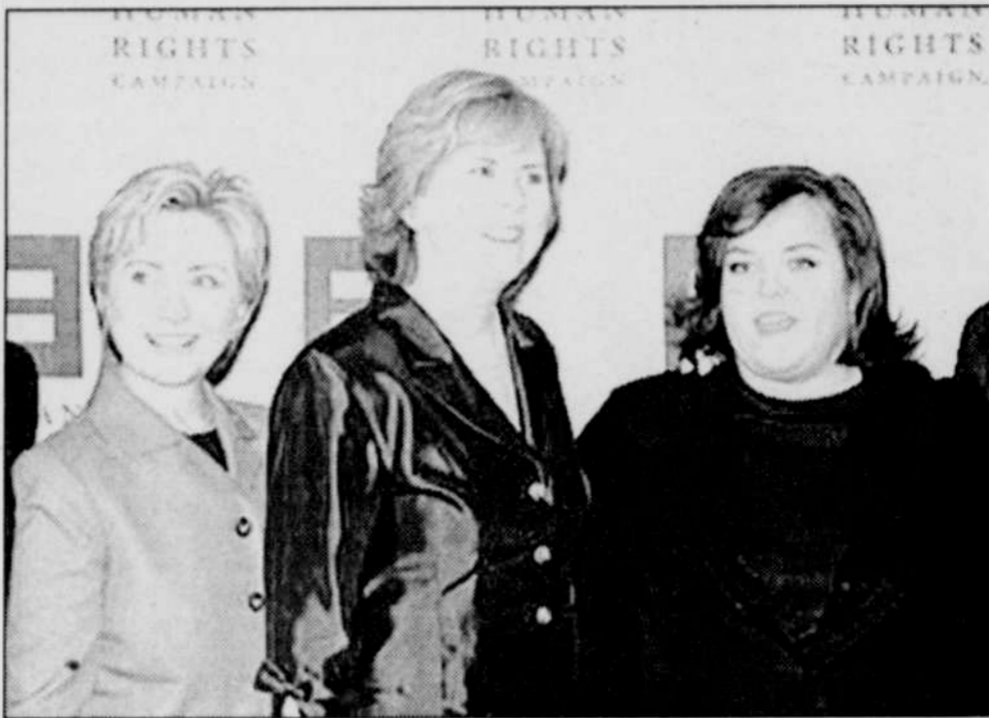
The National Black Justice Coalition cautioned President Bush not to use African Americans to spread his anti-gay message.

The organization issued the statement July 23 after he delivered one of the keynote addresses at the 2004 National Urban League Convention in Detroit. Bush was accompanied by the Rev. Keith Butler, pastor of Word of Faith Ministries in Southfield, Mich. He is one of the leaders of a coalition of African American clergy supporting the Federal Marriage Amendment.

"African Americans know better than anyone that separate does not mean equal," coalition member Jasmyne Cannick said. "Blacks are not interested in writing discrimination into a Constitution that never had our interests at heart to begin with but only made adjustments over the last few years to be more inclusive of some and not others."

During his speech, Bush asserted his support for strong families and marriage.

"President Bush challenged us to look at his agenda," said H. Alexander Robinson, the coalition's strategic director, who attended the convention. "Well, we have looked, and



HRC president Cheryl Jacques (center, with U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., and entertainer Rosie O'Donnell) expressed relief that the North Carolina Constitution won't be amended

his agenda of promoting discrimination and division undermines our families."

Coalition vice president Donna Payne added: "President Bush is selling wolf tickets to the African American community by using the faith-based initiative and black ministers to discriminate against black gays and lesbians. We are offended that President Bush has used Rev. Butler to accompany him at the convention."

Several recently released polls hold some promising—and some depressing—news for queer voters:

- **Black Entertainment Television/CBS News:** When it comes to education, jobs and illegal drugs, African American voters largely support government programs to help with these concerns. But they take a more conservative position than the public overall on one issue: same-sex marriage. More than half (53 percent) think there should be no legal recognition—neither marriage nor civil unions—of same-sex relationships. Among the nation's voters as a whole, 39 percent share this view. About 43 percent of black voters support some type of legal recognition for same-sex couples; among all voters, 59 percent do. Much of the objections are religious ones: Among devout African Americans who attend church weekly, more than seven in 10 oppose legal recognition of same-sex relationships.

- **Terra.com:** Young adult Latinos set aside taboos and are open to homosexuality; however, 52.8 percent oppose same-sex marriage. "It's been my experience that Latinos tend to oppose discrimination against any segment, but this response to the issue of gay marriages can likely be attributed to the strength of our cultural traditions," said Daniela Resendez, a 22-year-old student at University of Texas Pan American in Edinburg.

- **Association for the Advancement of Retired People:** 26 percent of the 77 million strong baby boomer generation support same-sex marriage, compared with only 11 percent of the G1 generation.

- **Newsweek:** Coming out of the final two days of the Democratic National Convention, U.S. Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts leads President Bush 52 percent to 44 percent, reflecting a four-point



Donna Payne criticized President Bush for using the faith-based initiative and black ministers to discriminate against African American gays and lesbians

bounce since early July. As for who will handle issues better, among registered voters, 46 percent say Bush is closer to their view on same-sex marriage; 33 percent side with Kerry.

Prohibiting marriage equality is discriminatory and unfairly denies same-sex couples and their families more than 1,000 federal benefits, rights and privileges, the nation's largest association of psychologists said in a resolution adopted July 28 at its annual meeting in Hawaii.

The American Psychological Association also expressed opposition to discrimination against gay and lesbian parents in adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care and reproductive health services.

"Discrimination of all kinds takes a toll on people's health and psychological well-being," said Armand R. Cerbone, a Chicago psychologist who led the working group that developed the policy recommendations.

"In the context of the huge social and political debate that is currently going on, APA and psychologists had to grapple with the issue of what psychology believes is in the public interest in this controversy."

The APA support follows similar gay- and family-friendly resolutions from other respected professional organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, National Association of Social Workers, National Council on Adoptable Children and American Psychoanalytic Association.

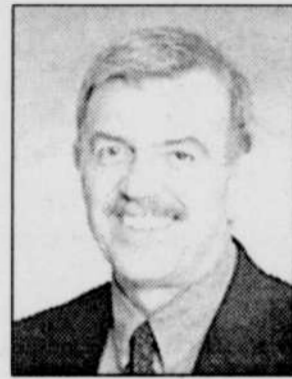
"Utilizing sound information and research, the APA continues to support full equality for our families," said Aimee Gelnaw, Family Pride Coalition executive director. "They share our understanding that families are best served when they have access to all the protections that come with marriage and that children are best served when raised in stable and loving families. Our families are helped, and no one else is harmed, when we are treated equally."

OHIO

Lambda Legal asked an Ohio appeals court July 13 to follow state law and allow a lesbian couple to protect their relationship with the child they are raising together.

Cheryl and Jennifer McKetrick were denied a shared custody agreement for their child, "Baby J," by a Warren County court last year. Breaking from legal precedent, the lower court found that because the couple might provide some security for "Baby J" through other documents like powers of attorney or wills, it didn't need to approve a formal custody agreement.

"The judge made a mistake," attorney Heather Sawyer said. "Cheryl and Jennifer are loving parents, and 'Baby J' is thriving in their care. But an agreement like this assures them the security and protection every family needs. The patchwork of other documents suggested by the court does not excuse its refusal to allow them to have the formal agreement they want and need. Ohio law clearly favors custody



Armand R. Cerbone



Heather Sawyer