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NATIONAL news

GAY REPUBLICANS FIGHT BACK

Log Cabin: Radical right has hijacked GOP by Rex Wockner

The gay Log Cabin Republicans are mad as hell, and they're not going to take it anymore.

Speaking Aug. 30 outside the Republican National Convention in New York City, executive director Patrick Guerriero said that the "radical right" has "hijacked" the GOP and that simple integrity requires gay Republicans to fight back. The group unveiled a television ad featuring President Ronald Reagan saying, "Whatever else history may say about me when I'm gone, I hope it will record that I appealed to your best hopes, not your worst fears."

"The Republican Party can't have it both ways," Guerriero said. "We cannot have the voices of exclusion crafting a vicious and mean-spirited platform, while at the same time putting the voices of inclusion in prime time."

Guerriero said President Bush's desire to amend the U.S. Constitution to ban same-sex marriage—combined with the party platform's rejection of civil unions and even domestic partner benefits—has launched a "fight for the heart and soul of the Republican Party."

"For too long we have watched while the radical right hijacked our party," he said. "This party platform is so outrageous and insulting to some of us that some of us have to call our own party on it. If we don't do it, nobody will. And if we don't do it now, we'll be back in four years at a convention with language that's even worse."

The day before the convention started, Log Cabin hosted a "Big Tent Event" that was attended by gay-friendly Republican politicians. Among the speakers was New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who denounced the Federal Marriage Amendment.

"I don't think we should ever use the Constitution to drive wedges between us," he said. "Quite the contrary, the Constitution is there to pull us together."

U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania said Republicans will see the light on gay equality sooner or later. "In the long sweep of history, or maybe even the short sweep of history, those who favor gay rights and those who favor equality are on the right side of the issue."

Former Massachusetts Gov. William Weld said he supports full marriage rights for same-sex couples. He noted that this is actually a conservative stance.

"It's making the same demands on gays and lesbians as are made on everyone else when they want to commit to each other for a lifetime," Weld said. "I'm surprised that that is not a more broadly held point of view. The fact that some people have gay/lesbian preferences is not something that's going to be changed based on what somebody in the legislature says. I don't know whether the percentage of the population is 10 percent or 5 percent or 15 percent or 1 percent. It doesn't matter. You're not going to repeal biology in the United States Senate or the House."

Log Cabin will not decide whether to endorse Bush until after the convention. But all indications are that the group will advise the

approximately 1 million queer U.S. citizens who voted for the president in 2000 not to do so again.

The Big Tent Event was picketed by a small group of left-leaning queer activists. Ann Northrup was particularly outraged that Bloomberg received credit for being pro-gay.

"He has done a lot of things: vetoing pro-gay legislation, criticizing his commissioners for doing pro-gay stuff, joining the Boy Scouts, marching in the St. Patrick's Day parade," she said. "He just talks out of both sides of his mouth."

In addition to calling for the Federal Marriage Amendment, the GOP platform also states: "We believe that neither federal nor state judges and bureaucrats should force states to recognize other living arrangements as equivalent to marriage. We believe, and the social science confirms, that the well-being of children is best accomplished in the environment of the home, nurtured by their mother and father anchored by the bonds of marriage. We further believe that the legal recognition and accompanying benefits should be preserved for the unique and special union of one man and one woman which has historically been called marriage."

The convention also featured several people who have made deeply offensive comments about queers:

- Gospel singer Donnie McClurkin, who entertained from the convention stage Sept. 2, says he is a former homosexual who became gay after being molested by an uncle. He has accused queers of "trying to kill our children" (*The 700 Club*, Sept. 23, 2003) and has called homosexuality a "curse" (*Charisma Magazine*, June 2002).

- In a *Meridian Magazine* article about same-sex marriage, Sheri Dew, who spoke before the convention Aug. 30, called for "a comparison between the atrocities of Hitler and what is happening in terms of contemporary threats against the family."

- In talking about the "gay lifestyle" last October, Bishop Keith Butler, who appeared on the convention stage Sept. 2, claimed that it "endangers family, children and the core of society." **JW**



Patrick Guerriero



Gospel singer Donnie McClurkin was among the anti-gay voices heard at the Republican National Convention

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