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**NATIONAL news**

**NATIONAL**

The majority of Latino voters are against changing the Constitution to ban same-sex marriage and support nondiscrimination and civil union laws for same-sex couples, according to a poll released Sept. 28 by Bendixen & Associates.

The survey of 800 registered Latino voters found that 55 percent oppose a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, according to the Human Rights Campaign, which commissioned the poll with the National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization.

Additionally, 73 percent of John Kerry's supporters and 64 percent of President Bush's supporters polled said they support laws protecting gays from discrimination. About 54 percent of voters polled said they would support allowing same-sex couples to legally form civil unions.

"We do not support any type of constitutional amendment that hinders the civil rights of any individual. Any constitutional amendment should be progressive, not regressive," said Gabriela Lemus, director of policy and legislation at the League of United Latin American Citizens. "This poll shows that the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment is an ineffective wedge among Latino voters."

The Republican National Committee distributed letters last month showing a banned Bible and one man proposing to another, asking voters to "vote Republican to protect our families."

The Democratic National Committee denounced the move as "a coordinated effort to target and discriminate against GLBT Americans" and said the Bush-Cheney campaign had been linked to anti-gay state ballot measures across the nation. "Instead of running on his failed record, Bush is dividing the country," DNC chairman Terry McAuliffe said. "On Nov. 2, Americans will show Bush that we will not be hoodwinked by his hateful politics."

The Human Rights Campaign also denounced a television advertisement released in late September that criticizes U.S. Sen. John Kerry's record on same-sex marriage. The ads are believed to be the first election season ads targeting Kerry on same-sex marriage. *The New York Times* reported Sept. 25 that the ads are funded by a group headed by Gary Bauer and that \$500,000 is being spent to run them on television stations in Michigan and Pennsylvania. The two are considered battleground states in the November presidential election.

HRC president Cheryl Jacques said the ad campaign "tears at families with gay loved ones, like the Cheneys," referring to Vice President Dick Cheney's lesbian daughter, Mary.

The Abe Lincoln Black Republican Caucus, a group of young, urban, African American, gay Republicans, voted Sept. 22 to endorse President Bush for re-election. The group's co-founder, Don Sneed, challenged Patrick Guerriero, executive director of Log Cabin Republicans, to a debate about the endorsement two days later. Log Cabin, a group of gay and lesbian Republicans, voted not to endorse Bush in this election.

"Unfortunately, we have received many ugly, belligerent and hostile phone calls from gays across the nation condemning our decision to

endorse and support the president for re-election," Sneed said. "Some callers have questioned our right to independent thought and decision with such statements as: 'You're blacks; you should have endorsed him as blacks! No gays should support him.'"

Abe Lincoln national spokesman Anthony Falls said the group will stand by its endorsement. The caucus does not support same-sex marriage.

"We respect the rights of all, but we do not believe that marriage for gays is right for gays, right for America or right in the eyes of God," Falls said.

Media news stories are leaving bisexuals out of the debate on marriage equality, "making the record factually incomplete" and oversimplifying a complex issue, according to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

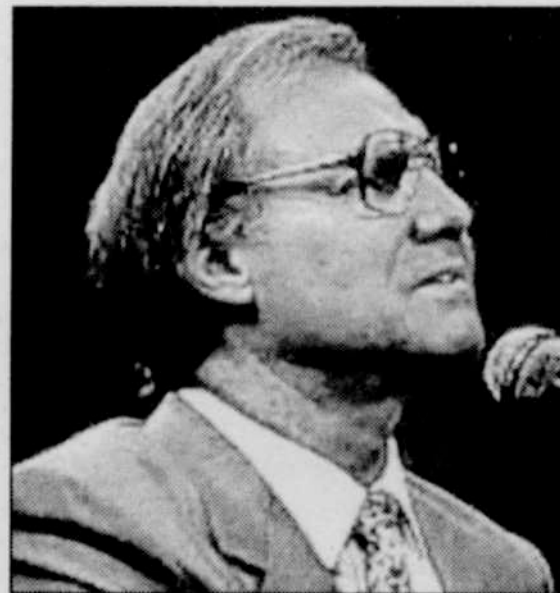
The group cited several articles in major newspapers that referred to same-sex couples as lesbians even though the women had emphasized their bisexuality to reporters.

"Same-sex marriage is more than a lesbian or gay issue. The marriage issue is a big deal for bisexuals who haven't found their life partner yet," said Toby Adams, chairwoman of the Placer County Chapter of Marriage Equality California. When she married her partner, Jean, in San Francisco last February, most news stories referred to the pair as lesbians.

"On a first date, with everything else going through your mind, who wants to be thinking, 'So if this is the one, I get to look forward to either (a) A life of wedded bliss, or (b) A life of second-class citizenship, depending on what the sex that date happens to be,'" Adams said.

**LOUISIANA**

Televangelist Jimmy Swaggart apologized after telling a New Orleans congregation that he would kill any gay man who looked at him "and tell God that he died."



Televangelist Jimmy Swaggart apologized after saying he would kill gays

Swaggart made the comments during a televised worship service Sept. 12. He apologized after complaints were filed with a Canadian broadcasting group that had aired the program, and after his Louisiana-based Jimmy Swaggart Ministries received complaints from several queer groups.

During the broadcast, Swaggart said: "I've never seen a man in my life I wanted to marry. And I'm going to be blunt and plain: If one ever looks at

me like that, I'm going to kill him and tell God he died." The audience laughed and cheered.

Swaggart later told *The Associated Press* that he jokingly used the expression "killing someone and telling God they died" many times about all kinds of people and that it wasn't meant to harm anyone.

Cheryl Jacques, president of the Human Rights Campaign, said Swaggart's apology fell short.

"Apologies don't discourage violence, action does," she said. "We urge Jimmy Swaggart to affirmatively preach against hate violence. He should use his position in the pulpit to speak up for equal treatment for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. His initial comments encourage an environment where hate crimes occur. We appreciate his apology, but it's imperative that he do more."