


NATIONAL news


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seeks a full-time news editor who will work with staff and free-lance writers to ensure that the biweekly news-magazine continues to publish timely and eye-catching articles about the sexual minorities community in Oregon and Southwest Washington. Other duties include compiling local, national and world newsbriefs and letters to the editor; writing obituaries; assigning photos; collaborating with the art director; and occasionally covering news events. The ideal candidate will have experience with both newspaper editing and writing; fluency in AP style; familiarity with and passion for local queer news and culture; and a wealth of dedication and creativity. Salary DOE. Good benefits package. Contact marty@justout.com.

NATIONAL

U.S. Sen. John Edwards, D-N.C., discussed his opposition to the Federal Marriage Amendment during the vice presidential debate Oct. 5.

"There is absolutely no purpose in the law and in reality for this amendment," he said. "It's nothing but a political tool. And it's being used in an effort to divide this country on an issue that we should not be dividing America on."

Per debate rules, Vice President Dick Cheney was given 90 seconds to respond to Edward's charges that President Bush's endorsement of the Federal Marriage Amendment was wrong. Cheney simply thanked Edwards for his earlier remarks toward Cheney's family, including his lesbian daughter, Mary, and then remained silent, refusing to defend Bush's decision, signaling a rift in the administration on this issue.

"When Bush's own vice president refuses to endorse a campaign of bigotry, it becomes clear that Bush is taking America in the wrong direction," said Brian Richardson, Democratic National Committee spokesman. "Not only is the Federal Marriage Amendment dividing the country, it's dividing Bush's own administration."

In addition, Cheney displayed his ignorance about the effect of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on communities of color. When moderator Gwen Ifill mentioned that black women between 25 and 44 years old are 13 times more likely to die of the disease than their counterparts, he admitted that he was unaware of the problem.

"Cheney's ignorance about the HIV/AIDS crisis is inexcusable," said Cheryl Jacques, Human Rights Campaign president. "Cheney was just one of 13 House members to vote against the precursor to the Ryan White CARE Act in 1988—the AIDS Federal Policy Act."

Republican members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights failed in their attempt to have a highly critical review of the Bush administration's record on civil rights removed from the public domain.

The comprehensive draft details the blatant lack of progress President Bush has made on civil rights during the past four years, placing special emphasis on his record of contempt for the sexual minorities community and the lack of progress made for queer rights during his administration. The opening summary of the report, prepared by staff for the commission's review at a meeting Oct. 8, states, "This report finds that President Bush has neither exhibited leadership on pressing civil rights issues, nor taken actions that matched his words."

"This new report makes clear what most Americans already know: George W. Bush is hostile to the gay and lesbian community," said Terry McAuliffe, Democratic National Committee chairman. "For the past four years, the Bush administration has taken us in the wrong direction, trying to limit the rights of GLBT Americans."

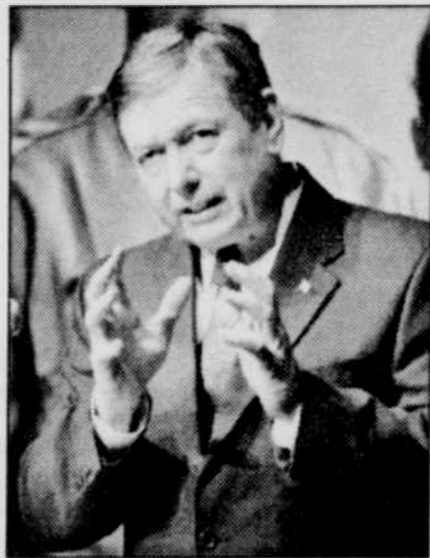
The commission's draft report cited a number of discriminatory actions taken by the White House:

- **Judicial appointments:** President Bush nominated William Pryor to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit. As Alabama's attorney general, he submitted a brief to the U.S. Supreme Court in favor of a Texas same-sex anti-sodomy law and labeled his postponement of a family vacation to avoid a day when many gay men and lesbians attended Disney World a "value judgment."

- **John Ashcroft:** The attorney general broke a promise to permit DOJ Pride, a voluntary organization of queer Department of Justice employees, to continue using agency facilities to celebrate Gay Pride Month.

- **Federal Marriage Amendment:** "This is an area of particular concern because it illustrates the president's willingness to restrict group and individual rights in an unprecedented manner," the report said. "If passed, the amendment would be the first in U.S. history to limit rather than preserve and expand the rights of a group."

- **Employment Nondiscrimination Act:** The Bush administration opposes legislation that would effectively prevent the unfair discharge of gay and lesbian employees. In addition, Bush appointee Scott Bloch removed in February all



The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights criticized Attorney General John Ashcroft for discriminating against queer Department of Justice employees

materials from the Office of Special Counsel's Web site relating to sexual orientation discrimination in the federal government and suspended enforcement of sexual orientation bias cases.

- **Faith-based initiatives:** The administration's initial proposals did not include any language to prohibit religious organizations receiving federal funds from discriminating against gay men and lesbians. Religious employers can do so by citing "religious incompatibility" to justify or cover up their actions.



Rita Sklar says the state of Arkansas is relying on unsupported negative stereotypes to defend an anti-gay foster care policy

said H. Alexander Robinson, strategic director of the National Black Justice Coalition, which conducted the study with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute.

"African Americans make up 13 percent of the U.S. population. Black same-sex couples are 14 percent of all same-sex couples in the U.S. We are you."

Black Same-Sex Households in the United States: A Report from the 2000 Census reveals important and sometimes startling facts, including:

- Three in five black female same-sex households (61 percent) are composed of mothers raising children. Black lesbian couples are raising children at nearly the same rate as black married opposite-sex couples (69 percent).

- Black same-sex couples earn about \$20,000 less per year than white same-sex couples and are less likely to own the home they live in.

- Black same-sex couples are more likely than white gay couples to hold public sector jobs, which may provide domestic partner health insurance. Eight of the 11 state anti-gay marriage amendments on the ballot Nov. 2 ban or threaten domestic partner benefits provided through state and local governmental entities.

- Black same-sex couples are almost as likely as black married opposite-sex couples to report living in the same residence as five years earlier, a key indicator of relationship stability.

LOUISIANA

A Louisiana district judge struck down the state's recently enacted anti-gay constitutional amendment Oct. 5.

William Morvant ruled that the amendment was flawed because it had more than one purpose.

The amendment was designed to prohibit not only equal marriage rights, but also civil unions and any legal recognition for same-sex couples. The Louisiana Constitution requires that amendments be confined to a single objective. The decision is expected to be appealed.

"All across the country, the



Vice President Dick Cheney (right, with wife Lynne and daughter Mary) refused to defend President Bush's endorsement of the Federal Marriage Amendment

forces of religious and political intolerance are trying to do the same thing they did in Louisiana—mislead voters about what's at stake," said Matt Foreman, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force executive director. "They say they are only interested in preserving marriage as a heterosexual institution. In reality, the measures they are putting forward not only seek to forbid same-sex marriage, they also seek to eliminate all other forms of partner recognition, such as domestic partnerships."

Anti-gay constitutional amendments on the November ballot in Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma and Utah would have the same or similarly sweeping impact as Louisiana's. Three other amendments in Oregon, Montana and Mississippi would deny equal marriage rights without explicitly mentioning civil unions or other protections for same-sex families.

"This is an important ruling for fairness," said Cheryl Jacques, Human Rights Campaign president. "These amendments...are a political attempt to use some families as a wedge in the upcoming elections and would deny couples the most basic legal protections to care for one another. Americans don't support