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NATIONAL Marriage Amendment Tanks in Poll

A poll conducted in April by Peter D. Hart Research Associations indicates the Federal Marriage Amendment, scheduled for a Senate vote the week of June 5, ranks dead last for voters on a list of priorities on which they want Congress to focus. The polling also shows strong opposition to changing the Constitution among independent, senior and Catholic voters.

When asked about priorities in Congress, voters responded that among a list of top priorities for Congress, affordable health care (55 percent), the war in Iraq (55 percent), passing new ethics/lobbying laws (25 percent) and passing an amendment banning flag burning (20 percent) ranked higher than passing an amendment banning marriage for same-sex couples (18 percent).

"With key voting blocs opposed to the Federal Marriage Amendment, politicians would do better at the polls by focusing on the issues that matter to the electorate," said Jay Campbell, a senior analyst for the polling firm. "Over the years, numbers have gone up when it comes to support for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans. The Federal Marriage Amendment fight is looking more and more similar to the Terri Schiavo case, an unwise political maneuver."

The poll of 802 registered voters has a 3.5 percent margin of error.

Cheney's Daughter Opposes Bush on Marriage

The lesbian daughter of Vice President Dick Cheney, who worked on her father's 2004 reelection campaign, has publicly registered her opposition to the Bush administration's stance on same-sex marriage.



Mary Cheney poses with her father, Dick.

Speaking to Fox News, Mary Cheney described the proposed constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage as "a bad piece of legislation." The amendment was an ideological centerpiece of the 2004 Bush-Cheney campaign and is still supported by the administration.

"It is writing discrimination into the Constitution, and as I say, it is fundamentally wrong," Cheney, 37, said in an interview. "I would also hope that no one would think about trying to amend the Constitution as a political strategy."

Cheney recently wrote a book, *It's My Turn*, in which she describes her personal difficulties with the policies of the party she was promoting. "President Bush obviously feels very strongly about this issue.... Quite honestly, it was an issue I had some trouble with, as I talk about in the book. I came very close to quitting my job on the reelection campaign over this very issue."

NGLTF Rebukes DNC Chair Over Platform Gaffe

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force has returned a \$5,000 donation from the Democratic National Committee in protest of remarks made by chairman Howard Dean on Christian Broadcasting News.

In a segment that aired May 10 on *The 700 Club* concerning how Democrats are reaching out to evangelicals, Dean said: "The Democratic Party platform from 2004 says that marriage is between a man and a woman. That's what it says. I think where we may take exception with some religious leaders is that we believe in inclusion, that everybody deserves to live with dignity and respect, and that equal rights under the law are important."

NGLTF quickly pointed out that the DNC 2004 platform in fact 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 a statement, NGLTF executive director Matt Foreman said: "Gov. Dean is wrong about what the Democratic platform says about marriage equality.... In light of Gov. Dean's pandering and insulting interview today with the Christian Broadcasting Network, we have decided to return the DNC's recent \$5,000 contribution to us."

GEORGIA Everyone Should Get AIDS Test, Says CDC

In a dramatic shift in public health policy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will soon begin recommending that all people 13 and older be tested for HIV.

The change in testing guidelines was informally announced by Dr. Kevin Fenton, director of the CDC's National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention, at a news conference in Atlanta, where the CDC is based. The guidelines are expected to be officially released in June or July.

"Most HIV is transmitted by the 25 percent of infected people who do not even realize they are infected," Fenton said. "We need to dramatically expand access to HIV testing by making it a routine aspect of clinical care."

Health professionals often find it difficult to offer routine HIV testing to large numbers of patients because of the detailed pretest counseling called for under current

testing guidelines.

"What we want to do is to address barriers to testing in clinical sites," Fenton told Fox News. "We know that a barrier is the significant time it takes for pretest counseling.... HIV testing outside clinical settings will still bear the requirement for pretest counseling."

CALIFORNIA Gay Skating Partners Settle Lawsuit

A pair of male amateur figure skaters who were ejected from an ice rink for skating together have settled a lawsuit with the company that owns the rink.

John Manzon-Santos and Alan Lessik reached the settlement May 9 with ice skating rink company East Bay Iceland of Berkeley, Calif. They say they were harassed, discriminated against and eventually kicked out of the company's Berkeley rink for