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# national

## NATIONAL Dem Candidates Polled

The Human Rights Campaign released its 2008 questionnaire June 2 outlining where the announced Democratic candidates for president stand on issues important to the sexual minorities community.

For the first time ever, all of them stated their support for extending federal benefits and equal tax treatment only available to heterosexual married couples to same-sex couples who are parties to a union legally recognized by their state. Additionally, the candidates expressed unanimous support for extending federal benefits for same-sex couples and their children.

This groundbreaking and unified position of all Democratic candidates would override Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, which states that for federal purposes, "the word 'marriage' means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife."

The questionnaire focused on a variety of issues including HIV/AIDS funding, employment non-discrimination, equal tax treatment, comprehensive sex education, adoption and foster parent issues and immigration equality. The respondents include U.S. Sens. Hillary Clinton of New York, Barack Obama of Illinois, John Edwards of North Carolina, Joe Biden of Delaware and Chris Dodd of Connecticut; and U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Ohio; and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson.

To view the report card showing where the candidates stand on these important issues, visit [tinyurl.com/2yt6vt](http://tinyurl.com/2yt6vt).

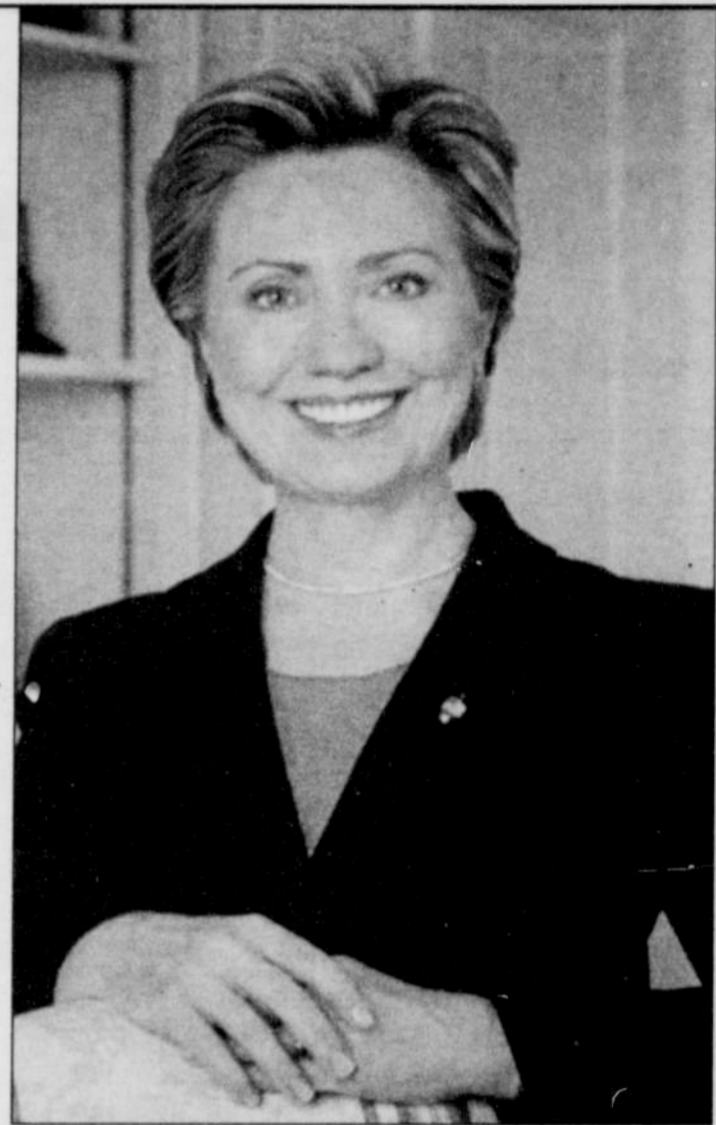
## CALIFORNIA Marriage Bill Passes in Assembly

The California Assembly on June 5 passed Assembly Bill 43, legislation that would give same-sex couples the ability to marry.

Authored by Assemblymember Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act would provide all California couples the legal protections, responsibilities and social support that come with marriage. The Assembly passed the legislation with a 42-34 vote.



California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger refuses to sign a bill passed in both legislative bodies granting marriage equality to same-sex couples.



Hillary Rodham Clinton is among the entire slate of 2008 Democratic presidential hopefuls who support extending federal benefits to same-sex couples.

The bill, which already passed in the Senate, will be vetoed by Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. In a statement, his press secretary, Margita Thompson, said he opposes the legislation because he thinks the matter should be decided by California's courts or its voters.

"Today's vote shows that support for ending the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage is growing. The people of California, through their elected representatives, are speaking on this issue, and they are coming down on the side of fairness," said Geoff Kors, Equality California executive director.

In 2005, the California Legislature became the first legislative body in the nation to approve a bill that would allow same-sex couples the choice to marry. This year's bill is identical to that landmark legislation, which the Assembly passed with a 41-35 vote, giving the bill the minimum number of votes needed. As was the case in 2005, this year's bill protects religious freedom by reaffirming that no religious institution would be required to solemnize marriages contrary to its fundamental beliefs.

## FLORIDA Anita Bryant Exhibit Opens

The exhibition *Days Without Sunshine: Anita Bryant's Anti-Gay Crusade* opened June 6 at Broward County Main Library in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., marking the 30th anniversary of the infamous showdown.

The exhibition explores singer Anita Bryant's Save Our Children campaign, which successfully repealed on June 7, 1977, a Miami-Dade ordinance that outlawed discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing and public accommodation. Bryant's self-styled crusade marked the beginning of a concerted backlash against America's increasingly vocal and organized gay and lesbian population, which was gaining political momentum.

The Save Our Children campaign set an example that would be repeated by religious conservatives throughout the coming decades. It also garnered unprecedented media attention for the growing gay rights movement and served as