

Gay marriage a difficult issue for GOP hopefuls

By DAVID CRARY
AP National Writer

NEW YORK — For Democratic politicians, same-sex marriage has become an easy issue: They're for it. Many Republican VIPs — notably the presidential hopefuls — face a far more complicated landscape.

Looming ahead for these contenders are early contests in states such as Iowa and South Carolina, where a major role will be played by conservative Christian voters firmly opposed to same-sex marriage. Further down the road is the 2016 general election, where the nominee will likely need backing from independents and moderate Republicans who support gay unions.

"Republicans are trying to thread the needle on this, with varying degrees of skill. It doesn't take a genius to figure out why," said Gregory Angelo, executive director of Log Cabin Republicans,



AP Photo/Jim Cole
Former Arkansas Republican Gov. Mike Huckabee speaks at the Republican Leadership Summit in Nashua, N.H.

which represents gay conservatives and seeks to make the GOP more inclusive.

"The more shrewd members of the field know that in order to win the general election, they cannot be in absolute opposition to LGBT equality," Angelo said. "If that is their position, they automatically turn off a large portion of the electorate."

Some of the most conser-

vative contenders — such as Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee — are comfortable using forceful language in opposing gay marriage and railing against judges who have struck down state laws against it. Others, even while sharing disapproval of gay marriage, have used softer phrasing.

Sen. Marco Rubio of Flor-

ida says he'd attend a same-sex wedding of someone close to him, and remarked that sexual preference is something most people are born with, not a choice. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky has suggested gay couples could enter into civil contracts. And former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, after a court order made gay marriage legal in his home state, urged respect for the rule of law.

Bush added: "I hope that we can also show respect for the good people on all sides of the gay and lesbian marriage issue, including couples making lifetime commitments to each other who are seeking greater legal protections and those of us who believe marriage is a sacrament and want to safeguard religious liberty."

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in four states' same-sex marriage cases on April 28, and by the end of June is expected to rule on whether such mar-

riages — now allowed in 36 states — should be recognized nationwide. Cruz has signed a brief filed with the high court on behalf of 57 GOP lawmakers, urging the justices not to impose a nationwide rule and instead to let the political debate continue.

Opinion polls show that a majority of Americans, including young Republicans, favor nationwide legalization. A Supreme Court ruling to that effect might be a relief to some GOP candidates, such as Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, who has made clear that gay marriage is not a favorite topic.

"Jeb Bush and Scott Walker want to have this be settled law before the presidential election really gets going, so they can move on," said Marc Solomon, national campaign director for the advocacy group Freedom to Marry.

In the 2012 GOP primary campaign, most of the leading candidates endorsed the

idea of a federal constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage. The current contenders no longer broach that idea, instead urging the Supreme Court to avoid a nationwide ruling for gay marriage and leave the matter to the states.

"It's important that citizens, not judges, define marriage," said Ryan Anderson, a research fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation. "For all these candidates, that's the message I want to see."

However, some conservative leaders already are bracing for a possible Supreme Court decision in favor of same-sex marriage.

"I would want presidential candidates who understand the need to protect religious liberty in the aftermath of a Supreme Court decision," said the Rev. Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

HERMISTON



EO Media Group file photo
Karen Bragato, Angela Bragato, Frank Rodriguez, Jana Smith and Shelbi Hemphill pray together during a past National Day of Prayer gathering in Hermiston. This year's event is Thursday, May 7 at 6:30 p.m. at Hermiston High School.

Day of Prayer returns to McKenzie Park

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

A gathering of prayer and thanksgiving is planned in Hermiston in recognition of the National Day of Prayer.

Rob Lovett, who participates in the worship and praise team at New Beginnings Church, said a group of about 10 volunteers are organizing the event in hopes of attracting at least 1,000 people. During the past few years, Lovett said about 100 people have participated at a gathering at McKenzie Park during the National Day of Prayer, which is held the first Thursday in May.

This year's event is Thursday, May 7 at 6:30 p.m. in the gymnasium at Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St. There's no admission fee for the non-denominational gathering.

"It's an event that has its origins in the birth of our nation," Lovett said. "In 1789, the joint sessions of Congress asked then-president George Washington if he would proclaim a national day of thanksgiving and prayer."

The Jacob Looper band will play music prior to and

during the event. The gathering will include a presentation of the colors, including the American flag and the Christian flag, Lovett said. A Spanish-language translator will be on hand to interpret speakers and prayers throughout the event. In addition, Lovett said La Ley, Hermiston's Spanish-language radio station, will broadcast from the event.

Lovett said prayers will be said on behalf of the government — including the federal, state and local levels — the military, the media, the business community, educational institutions, churches and families.

"We believe prayer is a very necessary thing," Lovett said. "In the Bible, God tells us if my people will call my name, humble themselves, repent of sins and I will hear from heaven and I will heal the land."

For more information, contact Lovett at 541-571-7033 or rob@greaterhermistonareateaparty.com.

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Catholics say final farewell to Chicago's Cardinal George

CHICAGO (AP) — Cardinal Francis George was remembered Thursday as a man of deep faith, intellect and compassion as Catholics said their final goodbyes to the man who led the nation's third-largest archdiocese and was known as a vigorous defender of Roman Catholic orthodoxy.

George also didn't hesitate to speak his mind, even if it was unscripted and, at times, controversial, said Seattle Archbishop J. Peter Sartain, who delivered the homily at a packed funeral Mass.

"The cardinal's faith was



AP file photo
Cardinal Francis George

simple, direct, without pretense or embarrassment," Sartain said. "He was so utterly a Christian that no circumstance seemed inappropriate for him to give witness to Christ."

George, a Chicago native, died Friday at age 78, of

kidney cancer. He was to be buried Thursday in his family's plot at All Saints Cemetery in nearby Des Plaines.

After being appointed by Pope John Paul II in 1997 to lead the Chicago Archdiocese, George earned a reputation as an intellectual leader and a leading figure in some of the most prominent events in the U.S. Church.

At the height of the abuse crisis in 2002, George led a group of U.S. bishops who persuaded resistant Vatican officials to more quickly oust guilty priests — a policy at the core of reforms meant to restore trust in church

leaders. He also oversaw the contentious new English-language translation of the Roman Missal, one of the biggest changes in Catholic worship in generations.

And in his three years as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, George spearheaded opposition to the Affordable Care Act, arguing that the health insurance law would allow taxpayer money to fund abortion. The Chicago archdiocese's charitable arm helped sue the Obama administration in 2012 over the requirement that employers cover the cost of contraception.

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