

# OPPOSITION TO BUSH AMENDMENT

**Senator John Kerry (D-MA):** "George Bush, who promised to become a uniter, has become the great divider," Kerry said. "[Bush] proposed to amend the Constitution of the United States for political purposes, and we say that he has no right to misuse the most precious document in our history in an effort to divide this nation and distract us from our goals. We resoundingly reject the politics of fear and distortion."

**DNC Chairman Terry McAuliffe:** "President Bush is tinkering with America's most sacred document in a shameful attempt to turn our attention away from his record as president. The Democratic Party is opposed to this amendment. It is wrong to write discrimination into the U.S. Constitution and it is shameful to use attacks against gay and lesbian families as an election strategy. It appears that the conservative compassion he promised to deliver in 2000 has now officially run out."

**From the Democratic Leadership Council Newsletter:** "We've all seen those fire alarms that bear the inscription: 'In Case Of Emergency, Break Glass.' George W. Bush's decision yesterday to support, however vaguely, a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage is the political equivalent of breaking the glass: a clear sign that his re-election campaign is in a state of emergency. A president who cannot safely run on his own record, and who has little or no publicly identified agenda for his second term, is now changing the subject to a divisive and endlessly complex hot-button cultural issue."

**Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA):** "By endorsing this shameful effort to write discrimination back into the Constitution, President Bush has betrayed his campaign promise to be 'a uniter, not a divider.'"

"I'm optimistic that Congress will refuse to pass this shameful amendment. Many of us on both sides of the aisle have worked together to expand and defend the civil rights of gays and lesbians. Together, on a bipartisan basis, we have fought for a comprehensive federal prohibition on job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. We have fought together to expand the existing federal hate crimes law to include hate crimes based on this flagrant form of bigotry."

**House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA):** "I strongly oppose this amendment and will work to defeat it. The United States Constitution is not a place for political wedge issues. The Constitution is about freedom, not about limiting freedoms. Never before has a Constitutional amendment been used to discriminate against a group of people, and we must not start now."

"This is a classic case of the President trying to distract from his failures. Whether the issue is Iraq, the economy and jobs or health care, the President and the Republicans are in disarray and in desperate need of a distraction. The American people deserve better."

**Congressman James Clyburn (D-SC), Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus and member of the Congressional Black Caucus:** "I also hold sacred our nation's Constitution, and do not believe the amending of it should be used as fodder every

election cycle. Last cycle it was to ban flag burning. The cycle before it was to ban abortions. What will it be next cycle?"

**Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher (D-CA):** "I support equal rights for all Americans, including the right to the protections of marriage for long-term committed gay and lesbian couples. This is a civil rights issue. Just as our laws must be color blind, they must also be gender neutral.

"I am opposed to amending the United States Constitution to discriminate against any American. The proposed amendment would deny gay and lesbian couples and their children basic rights, protections and benefits, like hospital visitation and inheritance. It could also overturn civil unions or domestic partnership rights already enacted by states, including my own state of California. Marriage and family law has always been a state issue, and should remain a state issue."

**Congressman Robert Wexler (D-FL):** "President Bush's comments today are utterly disgraceful and potentially disastrous for millions of same-sex couples who desire their civil unions be recognized by the state in which they live. Rather than focus on our nation's priorities, this President has decided that he must place his political agenda before what is right for so many loving couples."

## **Labor, Civil Rights and Faith-Based Organizations Oppose Anti-Gay Amendment**

In addition to the NAACP, the following is a list of organizations who have publicly declared their opposition to the constitutional amendment:

Al-Fatiha  
Alliance for Justice  
American Association of University Professors  
American Bar Association  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Federation of Government Employees  
American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees  
American Federation of Teachers  
Americans for Democratic Action  
Americans United for Separation of Church and State  
Anti-Defamation League  
Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health  
Center for Women Policy Studies  
Central Conference of American Rabbis  
Communication Workers of America  
Children of Gays and Lesbians Everywhere  
Cuban American National Council  
Democratic National Committee  
Dignity USA  
Faith Temple Church  
Family Pride Coalition

Feminist Majority  
Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders  
Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation  
Gay and Lesbian Defamation  
Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund  
Henry Cisneros  
Hispanic National Bar Association  
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities  
Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard, Chair, Congressional Hispanic Caucus  
Human Rights Campaign  
Inner City World Ministries  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston  
Jewish Labor Committee  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
Lambda Legal  
Latino Civil Rights Center  
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
Log Cabin Republicans  
Marriage Equality USA  
Metropolitan Community Churches  
Metropolitan Washington Employment Lawyers Association  
Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees  
National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People  
National Association for Bilingual Education  
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives  
National Association of Latino Elected & Appointed Officials  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Conference of Independent Catholic Bishops  
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women  
National Congress for Community Economic Development  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of La Raza  
National Education Association  
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators  
National Hispanic Media Coalition  
National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Organization  
National Organization for Women  
National Puerto Rica Coalition  
National Women's Political Caucus  
NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays  
People for the American Way  
Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Office  
Pride at Work

Service Employees International Union  
Soulforce, Inc.  
Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
Unitarian Universalist Association Foundation  
Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches  
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
Victory Church

## **Newspapers from All Across the Country Slam Bush for Endorsing Amendment**

Here is a sampling of what some papers had to say about Bush's request that Congress pass the anti-gay Federal Marriage Amendment:

**Boston Herald:** "That it could require a constitutional amendment to defend an institution that has existed throughout history boggles the mind. But it has come to this" (2/25).

**San Francisco Chronicle:** "President Bush made it official Tuesday: He wants to add an element of discrimination to the U.S. Constitution" (2/25).

**Miami Herald:** "The effort must be defeated because our Constitution stands for more than government-sanctioned meanness. It must be defeated because bias demeans Americans and is unworthy of a place in our Constitution" (2/25).

**St. Louis Post-Dispatch:** "You would never know it from the sound and fury over same-sex marriage, but President Bush and his Democratic opponents for the presidency agree on two key principles: Marriage is the union of a man and a woman, but states should be able to approve same-sex unions. Despite that consensus, the nation seems determined to have a nasty fight about it" (2/25).

**Washington Post:** "President Bush abandoned the Constitution to election-year politics" (2/25).

**San Jose Mercury News:** "The proposal ... should join a long list of past failures in the trash can of history" (2/25).

**New York Times:** "The president, who believes so strongly in states' rights in other contexts, should let the states do their jobs and work out their marriage laws before resorting to a constitutional amendment" (2/25).

**Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel:** "Maybe it's time government got out of the bedroom and out of the business of blessing personal unions between consenting adults. Let churches do that -- let them marry whom they will and refuse to marry whom they won't. ... Let government instead issue civil

union licenses to willing couples, all of whom would be treated equally before the law, which, after all, is the underlying theme of the Constitution" (2/25).

**Boulder Daily Camera:** "Once again the president has broken his promise to unite rather than divide. The nation is poorer, and will soon be angrier, because of it" (2/25).

**Newsday:** "Playing politics with the U.S. Constitution is a very bad idea" (2/25).

**Chicago Tribune:** "The shame in all this is that the U.S. has been on course toward greater acceptance and legal recognition of gays and lesbians. That process has been all but tossed aside as the country erupts in a cultural war that most Americans don't particularly want and certainly don't need" (2/25).

**Nashville Tennessean:** "The pursuit of the Federal Marriage Amendment will only serve to divide the nation" (2/25).

**Washington Times:** "An amendment is needed now because aggressive judges and bureaucrats are making new law out of thin air" (2/25).

**Detroit Free Press:** "There's nothing arbitrary about enforcing the Constitution, and it's fundamental concept that the law applies equally to everybody" (2/25).

**Detroit News:** "Setting aside the religious ceremony, marriage is a legal contract between two people. States have the responsibility to establish the parameters for such legal contracts, to enforce them and to dissolve them. The federal government has no business usurping that right, regardless of the cause" (2/25).

**Arizona Republic:** "If the president truly believes the confusion generated by this fast-forming debate over gay marriage will be resolved by an amendment to the U.S. Constitution, he simply is wrong" (2/25).

**Las Vegas Review-Journal:** "While the move may invigorate the president's support among social conservatives, this was a mistake" (2/25).