



GLBT Leaders Praise DNC Platform

By David Mariner
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GLBT Leaders are expressing strong support for the proposed Democratic National Platform. Two members of the LGBT community played a key role in drafting the platform: Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin [D-WI] and Diego Sanchez, the first-ever transgender member of the Platform Committee.

The national platform is an official statement of the Party's position on a wide variety of issues. A new platform is adopted every four years at the Democratic National Convention.

In separate statements, The Human Rights Campaign, **the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**, and the Stonewall Democrats all expressed strong support for the draft platform.

Rea Carey, **Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**, stated in part: **"It is a forward-looking platform in so many areas, including those relating to LGBT people. The Task Force Action Fund is certainly pleased to see that in the opening paragraph of the section titled 'A More Perfect Union,' for the first time the platform explicitly calls for an end to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. This demonstrates the success and unprecedented partnership between LGBT advocates and courageous public leaders, including Representative Baldwin, in educating the public and policymakers on the need for fully inclusive anti-discrimination protections."**

Joe Solmonese, Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, also noted the historic inclusion of gender identity in the platform, as well as many other issues important to the LGBT community: "The 2008 Platform reiterates and strengthens past support for legislation that would protect our community, including calls for the passage of hate crimes and comprehensive employment discrimination legislation, and the repeal of the discriminatory 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy in our nation's military... The platform also supports the full inclusion of same-sex couples and their families, with equal rights, benefits and responsibilities. For the first time, the platform opposes the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act, which bars federal recognition of even those same-sex couples legally married under state law. The platform also supports other issues of importance for GLBT, and all Americans, including a call for a national strategy to combat HIV/AIDS, support for fair and impartial judges not driven by ideology, and requirements that faith-based programs not use federal dollars to discriminate."

Jon Hoadley, Executive Director of the Stonewall Democrats stated: "This platform stands in stark contrast to a Republican Party which continues to marginalize millions of Americans from full inclusion in public life just because of who they are or the person they love."

Hoadley continued: "The 2008 Democratic National Platform will be a guiding document for policy and legislation that embodies the values of our Party. These advancements in our Party's binding document are thanks to the work and input of LGBT delegates, Senator [Barack] Obama and his campaign, LGBT advocates, and Stonewall Democrats across the country."