

## The facts about Mary Cheney's sexual orientation in recent U.S. political discourse

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**1) Mary Cheney has been an openly gay spokesperson for years in two capacities, as gay liaison for Coors Brewing Company, and as a leader of the Republican Unity Coalition, a pro-gay Republican group founded during the 2000 election.**

Mary Cheney “has been openly lesbian for years,” according to an article in *The Advocate*, a gay newsweekly, from early 2004.<sup>1</sup> According to an article posted on the Republican Unity Coalition web site, Mary Cheney served as the lesbian and gay liaison for Coors Beer.<sup>2</sup> Coors refused to tell us when Cheney held this position. *Southern Political Report* writer Hastings Wyman, the author of the article posted on the RUC website, thinks Cheney stopped working for Coors in 2000 when her father was chosen as Bush’s running mate. A salon.com report states that Cheney worked for Coors in this capacity from at least 1999 through mid-2000.<sup>3</sup>

Mary Cheney served on the board of the Republican Unity Coalition (RUC), a pro-gay group aimed at “creating a gay-straight alliance within the Republican Party...[and] making being gay or lesbian a non-issue in the Republican Party...” from April 2002 to June 2003.<sup>4</sup> This was widely reported in both the mainstream and gay press, and criticized by anti-gay groups, such as Concerned Women for America.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Advocate* (2004, February 18). Mary Cheney gets the Dr. Laura treatment by gay rights group. [www.advocate.com/new\\_news.asp?ID=11347&sd=02/18/04](http://www.advocate.com/new_news.asp?ID=11347&sd=02/18/04). Accessed October 15, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Wyman, H. (no date). Charles Francis, a new kid on the block. Republican Unity Coalition website. [www.republicanunity.com/artel/ttc.htm](http://www.republicanunity.com/artel/ttc.htm). Accessed October 15, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Cullen, D. (2000, July 29). All in the family. <http://dir.salon.com/politics/feature/2000/07/29/mary/index.html>. Accessed October 15, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Lochhead, C., & Coile, Z. (2004, October 10). How gay GOP group lost its faith in Bush; High hopes in 2000 dissolve in dispute over marriage ban. *San Francisco Chronicle. Washington Blade* (2003, June 13). Mary Cheney leaves gay GOP group as David Rockefeller signs on. Reprinted on Republican Unity Coalition website. [www.republicanunity.com/archive/2003\\_07\\_06\\_archive.htm](http://www.republicanunity.com/archive/2003_07_06_archive.htm). Accessed October 15, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Concerned Women for America (2002, April 25). Mary Cheney joins homosexual activist group. Newsletter article, Culture and Family Institute report. [www.cwfa.org/articles/468/CFI/cfreport/](http://www.cwfa.org/articles/468/CFI/cfreport/) Accessed October 15, 2004.



## 2) Mary Cheney has repeatedly spoken out on gay issues

When Mary Cheney joined the RUC, she said in a statement, “Working together we can expand the Republican Party’s outreach to non-traditional Republicans. We can make sexual orientation a non-issue for the Republican Party, and we can help achieve equality for all gay and lesbian Americans.”<sup>6</sup>

Tim Russert, speaking on the NBC-TV “Today” show after Senator Rick Santorum made anti-gay comments regarding the *Lawrence v. Texas* sodomy law case pending before the U.S. Supreme Court, said that the Republican Unity Coalition was “headed by former President Gerry Ford and Mary Cheney...” Russert noted that the RUC had called on Senator Santorum to apologize for comparing homosexuality to pedophilia and “man on dog” bestiality.<sup>7</sup> Bill Press, on MSNBC’s Buchanan and Press, said “Mary Cheney’s group [the RUC] attacked Rick Santorum and said his comments were indefensible.”<sup>8</sup>

## 3) Mary Cheney’s sexuality has been publicly acknowledged by mainstream politicians and media outlets, pro- and anti-gay activists, as well as by her father the Vice President

At a January 2001 Republican Unity Coalition breakfast held to coincide with the inauguration of George Bush and Dick Cheney, former Republican U.S. Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming “spoke of having known Vice President Dick Cheney for more than 35 years, and of having watched his lesbian daughter Mary group up to be ‘one of the most remarkable women.’”<sup>9</sup>

*Newsweek* reported that, at the January 2001 RUC inaugural breakfast, “[Former U.S. Senator Alan] Simpson went out of his way to introduce everyone to Mary Cheney and her partner.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Grove, L. (2002, April 23). The reliable source. *Washington Post*.

<sup>7</sup> Interview: Tim Russert discusses Senator Rick Santorum’s anti-gay remarks and Bush’s tax cut proposal. NBC News: Today. April 24, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> MSNBC (2003, May 2). Buchanan and Press.

<sup>9</sup> Roehr, B. (2001, January 24). *Windy City Times*. GOP group forms: Republican unity Coalition seeks to “build bridges.”

<sup>10</sup> Brant, M. (2001, December 13). “A new GOP? Prominent gay Republicans look to make sexual orientation a nonissue. And the Bush administration is listening—quietly.” *Newsweek* Web Exclusive.



Concerned Women for America reported on April 25, 2002, that “Mary Cheney, the lesbian daughter of Vice President Dick Cheney, has joined the board of a homosexual activist Republican group that seeks to make homosexuality a ‘non-issue’ in the GOP...”<sup>11</sup>

September 5, 2002, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, reporting on an RUC fundraising dinner in Los Angeles, called Mary Cheney “the vice president’s gay daughter.”<sup>12</sup>

May 2, 2003, Bill Press of MSNBC’s “Buchanan and Press” asked anti-gay activist Peter LaBarbera “...can [Republican National Committee Chair] Marc Racicot meet with Mary Cheney, Dick Cheney’s daughter?...Is she welcome in the Republican Party, the vice president’s daughter under your rules?...She’s an active lesbian; she’s proud of it. Is she welcome?”<sup>13</sup> (LaBarbera said his objection was to Mary Cheney’s gay activism, not the fact that she is gay.)

Vice President Dick Cheney acknowledged his daughter is gay during a campaign appearance in Davenport, Iowa in August 2004. Asked about gay marriage, Cheney responded: “Lynne and I have a gay daughter, so it’s an issue our family is very familiar with.”<sup>14</sup>

#### **4) Mary Cheney, as an openly gay person, has helped raise significant amounts of money to elect an anti-gay Republican Congress and to help re-elect an anti-gay administration**

From the day Bush and Cheney were sworn in in January 2001 to mid-2003, Mary Cheney spoke at prominent fundraising breakfasts and dinners for the Republican Unity Coalition and other Republican Party causes.

January 20, 2001: Mary Cheney and her partner appear at a Republican Unity Coalition dinner celebrating the Bush-Cheney inauguration. She and her partner are acknowledged by former Republican U.S. Senator Alan Simpson.

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<sup>11</sup> Concerned Women for America (2002, April 25). Mary Cheney joins homosexual activist group. Newsletter article, Culture and Family Institute report. [www.cwfa.org/articles/468/CFI/cfreport/](http://www.cwfa.org/articles/468/CFI/cfreport/) Accessed October 15, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Wildermuth, J., & Marinucci, C. (2002, September 5). Simon blames staff for fiasco on gay survey; Candidate now insists he never saw questionnaire. *San Francisco Chronicle*.

<sup>13</sup> (2003, May 2). Buchanan and Press.

<sup>14</sup> Associated Press (2004, October 15). Campaign feud continues over Cheney’s daughter: Mary Cheney finds herself in eye of political storm.



September 2002: Mary Cheney speaks at an RUC fundraising event in Los Angeles.<sup>15</sup>

During the 2002 mid-term election cycle, the Republican Unity Coalition “provided record-setting support for the Republican Party, with \$50,000 RUC checks each to the National Republican Senatorial Committee and the National Republican Congressional Committee.” This included a fund-raiser attended by Mary Cheney at the home of Arizona Republican Tom Synhorst.<sup>16</sup> The Republican Unity Coalition set a goal of raising \$1 million for the 2002 Congressional elections.<sup>17</sup> In 2003-2004 the Republican Congress Mary Cheney and the RUC helped elect then proceeded to promote and vote in favor of the anti-gay Federal Marriage Amendment and the Marriage Protection Act, a court-stripping bill. It also increased spending on abstinence-only-until-marriage education and sought to defund AIDS service providers and research on health issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Now Mary Cheney is a paid staffer of the Bush-Cheney re-election campaign, earning a \$100,000-a-year salary.<sup>18</sup> The Bush-Cheney administration is the most anti-gay in modern history. It opposes nondiscrimination laws, hate crimes laws, partner recognition, marriage, adoption, and sex education. Its faith-based initiative has sought an explicit right to discriminate against gay people in social service employment with federal tax dollars. It has appointed numerous anti-gay judges and refused to speak up for gay rights in international forums.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Morrison, P. (2002, September 9). Inside politics: Also-ran in Diddlys: Does it get any worse? *Los Angeles Times*.

<sup>16</sup> The Center for Media and Democracy (no date). Republican Unity Coalition. *Disinfopedia: An encyclopedia of people, issues and groups shaping the political agenda*. [www.dysinfopedia.org](http://www.dysinfopedia.org). Accessed October 15, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Werner, E. (2002, September 4). GOP group drops Simon from lineup of speakers. *San Jose Mercury News*. Wyman, H. (no date). Charles Francis, a new kid on the block. Republican Unity Coalition website. [www.republicanunity.com/artcl/ttc.htm](http://www.republicanunity.com/artcl/ttc.htm). Accessed October 15, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> *The Advocate* (2004, February 18). Mary Cheney gets the Dr. Laura treatment by gay rights group. [www.advocate.com/new\\_news.asp?ID=11347&sd=02/18/04](http://www.advocate.com/new_news.asp?ID=11347&sd=02/18/04). Accessed October 15, 2004

<sup>19</sup> Cianciotto, J & Colvin, R. (2004). *The Bush-Cheney Administration on 12 key issues of concern to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people*. New York: Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. [www.thetaskforce.org](http://www.thetaskforce.org). Accessed October 15, 2004.