



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN

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2008 Presidential Questionnaire

"The Human Rights Campaign envisions an America where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are ensured of their basic equal rights, and can be open, honest and safe at home, at work, and in the community."

Please answer each of the following questions, and elaborate as much as you would like here, or on additional sheets.

Candidate Name: **JOHN EDWARDS**

1. Currently, there is no federal law protecting individuals from job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Qualified, hardworking Americans can still be denied job opportunities, fired or otherwise be discriminated against just because of their sexual orientation in 33 states and because of their gender identity in 42 states. As president, would you support and work for passage of a federal bill that would prohibit job discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity?

Support Oppose Comments:

Yes. Workers should be judged by the quality of their performance, not their sexual orientation or gender identity. While in the Senate, I cosponsored the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. I also believe that stronger enforcement is necessary to prevent employment discrimination by federal agencies.

2. Currently the federal hate crimes law does not protect all Americans from bias-motivated violence. Would you support federal legislation that adds sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and disability to existing federal law giving authority to the federal government to investigate and prosecute violent crimes (H.R. 1592)? This authority already exists for crimes committed because of the victim's race, color, religion and national origin and because they were attempting to exercise a federally protected right.

Support Oppose Comments:

Yes. Everyone is entitled to live in dignity without fear of violence. We should strengthen the ability of law enforcement to investigate and prosecute hate crimes based on race, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or gender identity. While in the Senate, I cosponsored legislation to give law enforcement agencies the tools they need to investigate and prosecute hate crimes.

3. New treatments have improved the quality of life for those living with HIV/AIDS, but those treatments are expensive, and not available to everyone who needs them. Years of flat-funding for the *Ryan White Care Act* has forced states across the country to institute waiting lists, limit formularies, and other cost containment measures. The CARE Act provides access to life-saving treatment and care for over half a million low-income Americans with HIV/AIDS. Would you support increased funding for this critical program?

Support Oppose Comments:

Yes. There is an urgent need for more resources in the fight against HIV/AIDS. As a member of the U.S. Senate, I was proud to fight for greater funding for the battle against HIV/AIDS, and I co-sponsored the Ryan White CARE Act. As president, I will continue the fight for the funding that this program critically needs.

4. Would you support the *Early Treatment for HIV Act (ETHA)*, S. 860, federal legislation that would allow states the option to provide Medicaid coverage to low-income, HIV positive Americans. Currently, only Americans that can be considered disabled are eligible for Medicaid coverage, excluding those who are HIV positive but have no symptoms of the disease?

Support Oppose Comments:

Would you support increased funding for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and research?

Support Oppose Comments:

Yes. The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to grow in the United States and around the world. I support allowing states to expand Medicaid coverage to low-income, HIV-positive Americans and more funding for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and research. My plan to guarantee quality affordable health care for every man, woman and child in America will empower people to prevent, test, and treat HIV without fear of losing benefits if they change or lose their job.

5. Would you support the *Responsible Education About Life (REAL) Act* which would create a federal grant program to channel money to states that choose to teach comprehensive and age-appropriate sex education for America's students that includes science-based prevention methods?

Support Oppose Comments:

Yes. I support comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education for young people that includes information on both abstinence and contraception.

6. Currently, only Massachusetts recognizes equal marriage rights for same sex couples. Do you believe the civil institution of marriage (with absolutely no requirements imposed on religious institutions) should be made legally available to two committed adults of the same sex?

Support Oppose Comments

If you do not believe that civil marriage for same-sex couples should be made available to same-sex couples on the same basis as opposite sex couples, is there any legal construct you do embrace that would extend legal recognition to same sex couples?

If a state has taken the steps to recognize same sex couples and their families for purposes of state-based benefits, rights, privileges and responsibilities (such as marriage in Massachusetts and civil unions in Vermont and Connecticut), should the federal government recognize the state's legal recognition of such couples and families for purposes of federal benefits and tax treatment?

Support Oppose Comments:

Yes. I believe that couples in committed, long-term relationships should have the same rights, benefits, and responsibilities, whether they are straight couples or same-sex couples. I support civil unions to guarantee gay and lesbian couples the same rights as straight couples, including inheritance rights, hospital visitation rights, equal pension and health care benefits, and all of the 1,100 other legal protections government affords married couples. I support the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act provision that prevents the federal government from recognizing same-sex relationships. Gay marriage is an issue I feel internal conflict about and I continue to struggle with it. However, I believe the right president could lead the country toward consensus around equal rights and benefits for all couples in committed, long-term relationships.

7. According to a 2004 GAO report, over 1,100 benefits, rights and privileges are provided to married couples and their families in federal law that are not available to same-sex couples. Do you support extending federal benefits, rights, privileges and responsibilities to same-sex couples (and their children) provided the partnership meets certain federal standards of commitment and mutuality of interest?

Support Oppose Comments:

Specifically, do you support the expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act to cover domestic partners and their children?

Support Oppose Comments:

Do you support modifying the Social Security System to pay survivor benefits to the same-sex partners of gay and lesbian people?

Support Oppose Comments:

Do you support fair and equal tax treatment of same sex couples on the same basis as married couples?

Support Oppose Comments:

8. Many gay and lesbian people serve in the federal government but do not receive the

same health insurance and other employee benefits of married couples. Do you support domestic partner coverage for gay and lesbian employees of the civilian federal workforce?

Support Oppose Comments:

Yes. I support extending health care and other benefits to the committed gay and lesbian partners of federal employees.

9. While 47 states allow gay and lesbian people to adopt children, some legislators are pushing to prohibit capable, committed adults from adopting because of their sexual orientation. As president, would you support giving appropriate judicial authorities the full authority to make decisions on adoption based on the best interest of the child, without bans based solely on sexual orientation?

Support Oppose Comments:

Yes. I believe that gay and lesbian parents should be able to adopt children just like any other parents. There are over 120,000 children waiting for homes in our nation's foster care system. Adoption placements should be decided by judges and adoption agencies based upon the best interests of the children. Both members of a same-sex couple raising children together should be able to form a legal relationship with their children.

10. Would you support the *Uniting American Families Act*, which would enable an American citizen to petition for immigration sponsorship for a same-sex partner, and the INS would treat the relationships between opposite and same-sex couples in the same manner under the immigration code?

Support Oppose Comments:

Yes. I believe that all families should be treated in the same manner by our immigration laws.

11. Would you support a congressional repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy which would allow gay, lesbian, and bisexual soldiers the right to serve openly in the military as is currently the policy in nearly every NATO country (H.R. 1246)?

Support Oppose Comments:

Yes. I oppose the current "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy on gays and lesbians serving in our military. The military ought to treat all service members equally and in a way that promotes national security,

without regard to their sexual orientation.