

# The Gayzette

LEXINGTON GAY SERVICES ORGANIZATION, INC. MAY 1980

## Kentucky Presidential Primary To Be Held May 27

### WHERE THE CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT STAND ON ISSUES OF CONCERN TO GAYS: A REPORT

On Tuesday, May 27, Kentucky will conduct its Presidential primary. Persons who are registered with either the Democratic or Republican parties will be eligible to vote in their respective party's primary. Independent voters are not eligible to participate. The major candidates in the Democratic primary will be Jimmy Carter and Ted Kennedy. (Jerry Brown, who has proven himself to be supportive of gay concerns as Governor of California, dropped out of the race in April, although he did so too late to get his name removed from the Democratic ballot in Kentucky.) The major candidates in the Republican primary will be Ronald Reagan and George Bush. (John Anderson, who has all but decided to run as an independent this fall, made his announcement too late to be removed from the Republican primary ballot in Kentucky.)

This election year may mark the point where the concerns of gay people (as well as some traditionalists' concerns about gay people) become campaign issues in their own right. While issues such as Iran and inflation continue to dominate the political dialogue, the stands of the various candidates on gay issues has been pursued by some reporters and by a variety of gay activist groups.

What follows is an attempt to encapsulate the public positions the candidates for President have taken on issues of concern to gay voters as well as to try to describe what the attitudes of the men who seek to lead our country might be toward gay Americans. Every possible attempt to maintain objectivity in this report will be made; neither The Gayzette nor the Lexington Gay Services Organization endorses any candidate for President.

**CARTER:** President Carter, during his 1976 campaign, "stated his opposition to employment discrimination in the federal government because of sexual orientation" said Carter campaign chairman Robert Strauss in responding to a National Gay Task Force survey. In his letter to NGTF, Strauss commits the Carter administration to "fully enforcing" 1978 Civil Service Reform Act provisions that "prohibits discrimination in federal personnel actions based on private, non-job-related behavior such as sexual orientation".

Strauss went on to cite several administrative actions which have taken place under the Carter administration which have had favorable implications for gays. Gay organizations now qualify for both tax-exempt

and tax-deductible status. The Federal Communications Commission has ordered broadcasters to take into account the views and concerns of all "significant" minority groups within their broadcast areas - including gay people. The Federal Bureau of Prisons will now permit prisoners to receive nonpornographic gay literature.

Recently, the practice by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service of excluding suspected homosexual aliens from entry into the U.S. has been a sensitive issue to gays. Carter has joined with Congress to establish a Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy to look into this situation.

The Strauss reply to the NGTF survey did not address the issue of a plank in the Democratic party platform supporting gay rights; nor did it set forth a Carter position on legislation pending in Congress which would amend the federal Civil Rights Act to provide protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation. With re-

#### AM I REGISTERED? WHERE DO I VOTE?

If you're not sure you are registered to vote in the primary or don't know where you go to vote next Tuesday, give the County Clerk's Voter Registration Office a call at 255-7563. They are open from 8:30 till 4:00 Mondays through Fridays. If you're not already registered, it is too late to do so for this primary election, but the Voter Registration people can tell you how to get registered for the general election this November.

spect to the five percent of government employees not covered under the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act, Carter says these positions are not subject to executive discretion and thus will not sign an executive order banning discrimination in those positions. NGTF leaders dispute this contention and Carter's position on an executive order.

In summary, Carter is on record as being in general support of equal rights for gay people and some (though not all) actions taken by federal agencies and Carter appointees thus far in his administration have been supportive. However, Carter appears to qualify his support and hesitates to take overt action with respect to certain issues of considerable concern to gay people. Some Carter aides say the President is walking a tightrope between dealing with gay concerns and attempting to alienate as few nongay voters as possible in the November election.

KENNEDY: While Edward Kennedy hasn't really developed much of any sort of record on gay-related issues during his years in the Senate (no Senator has), he has come forth with a number of pro-gay stands in his campaign thus far, which go beyond Carter's.

In his response to the NGTF survey, Kennedy said that he would sign an executive order banning discrimination against gay people in government employment and services; this would include those jobs currently excluded from the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act. Kennedy also pledged to support a plank in the Democratic Party platform supporting "the rights of gay men and lesbians to full participation in the social, economic, and political life of the nation." Kennedy has also said he will support legislation in Congress to add gays to the groups protected under the Civil Rights Act.

In some states, such as Georgia, gays have been actively involved in the Kennedy campaign - even to the point of running as Kennedy electors. However, some Kennedy people were reportedly uneasy with gay visibility in the campaign in the Georgia state.

In short, while Kennedy has a considerably briefer track record with respect to gay issues than Carter, he has been quite supportive of our concerns thus far in his campaign.

REAGAN: While the conservative ex-Governor of California would not be expected to be in the front lines of the battle for gay rights, there was some indication some time ago that his attitude would at least be neutral and open-minded; unfortunately, this has not proven to be the case thus far in his campaign.

In 1978, Reagan opposed Proposition 6, the anti-gay teacher initiative which was defeated by California voters. This opposition was apparently based mainly on a sort of conservative/libertarian "government should not poke its nose in people's private affairs" stance rather than any pro-gay sentiments on Reagan's part.

While there can still be some doubt that Reagan would be inclined to lead a homophobic moral crusade as President, it is also doubtful that gays could count President Reagan as an ally. In a Los Angeles Times interview, Reagan stated: "My criticism of the gay rights movement is that it isn't asking for civil rights, it is asking for a recognition and acceptance of an alternative lifestyle which I do not believe society can condone, nor can I. ...in the Bible it says that in the eyes of the Lord, this (homosexuality) is an abomination."

Perhaps the most ominous portent with respect to the Reagan campaign is the announcement by Christian Voice, a right-wing group active in anti-gay, anti-ERA, and anti-abortion circles, that it will raise funds on Reagan's behalf. Left to his own devices, Reagan might well ignore gay issues altogether (not necessarily a bad prospect considering his attitudes), but he may well feel compelled to follow the wishes of any group such as Christian Voice which helps him out with money

and votes.

BUSH: George Bush's record on gay-related concerns is probably the least developed of any of the major candidates, but his few public statements to date are not encouraging. To a large extent, he appears to parallel Reagan in his personal distaste of homosexuality and opposition to affirmative steps and legislation to protect gay people and bring gays more fully into the mainstream of American society. At the same time, Bush also resembles Reagan in his assertion that he "wouldn't harrass" gays.

In the January Iowa Republican debate, Bush stated: "I don't think homosexuality is normal behavior and I oppose the codification of gay rights." Bush has also said: "I don't think American society should be asked to accept that homosexuality is a standard which should be held up for acceptance. I just don't believe that, and I'm not going to push for it."

ANDERSON: Anderson has dropped out of the Republican race and announced his intention to run as an independent candidate for President this fall. And while he is still on the ballot for the Kentucky Republican primary May 27, he will face legal obstacles in getting his name on the ballot in this state this fall as an independent.

Of the Republicans responding to the National Gay Task Force survey, only Anderson was forthrightly in favor of lesbian and gay rights. While doubtful of the impact of party platforms on public policy, Anderson said he would support a gay rights plank. He has been quoted in the Advocate as saying: "I think if rights are to mean anything in our society they ought to be codified." He says he favors adding sexual orientation to the categories covered by the Civil Rights Act. Anderson will cosponsor H.R. 6303 which aims to stop the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service from barring suspected gay foreigners from entry into this country.

As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for many years, Anderson has had a chance to vote on at least one gay-related issue. Anderson voted against a 1977 amendment that would have prohibited the use of federal Legal Services funds in cases arising out of disputes over the issue of homosexuality; the amendment would have also restricted such funds from going to gay groups. His 1978 primary opponent tried to smear Anderson as a gay advocate; Anderson refused to recant and now believes gay support helped him win reelection that year. Though his political future this year is still somewhat murky (particularly trying to get on the November ballot in Kentucky), Anderson might well be the most receptive candidate both in his support of gay rights and in his willingness to have gay people actively campaigning for him as an independent. \*\*\*\*\*Most of the information for this article came from the Advocate or It's Time (NGTF newsletter). The Gayzette will operate on a rather laid-back summer schedule. Look for the next issue sometime in July.