

Washington, DC — In the aftermath of recent developments, by the President, the Massachusetts Supreme Court and the City of San Francisco, people are reassessing their feelings about gay marriage and public bodies are considering policy changes. Multnomah County is the most recent case. With a legal opinion stating that the country is violating the Oregon Constitution if it doesn't grant licenses to same-sex couples, Multnomah County will begin granting licenses to gay and lesbian couples. While some may debate the process that the County Commissioners used to reach this decision, their actions are not unexpected. As Vice President Cheney said during the last campaign, different states will reach different conclusions about same sex marriage.

It is clear to me that ultimately, we will have either civil unions or same sex marriage. Until we reach that point, it is important to allow the process to *move forward* and to avoid either destructive rhetoric or unfortunate efforts to prevent the public from adjusting to the changing national consensus.

At the national level, it is deeply disappointing to me that the President has seen fit to needlessly politicize the issue and divide the country by announcing his support for a constitutional amendment to prohibit same-sex marriage.

It is clear that the administration would rather avoid talking about critical matters facing Americans families; the continued underperforming U.S. economy, our exploding budget deficit, more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, and how their miscalculations got us into Iraq and the subsequent mismanagement has hurt our efforts at winning the peace. I suppose an effort to change the subject is understandable for a floundering administration.

At a time when we have the spectacle of Britney Spears' drunken midnight marriage in Las Vegas, the President sees fit to attack gays and lesbians who are interested in a committed relationship. This seems bizarre. As someone who recently married, I feel no threat to my relationship because others may want to pursue a lifelong and legal commitment to their partner. I support same-sex couples having this right, the same as any couple. Amending the Constitution, a document that provides for the equal treatment of all Americans, to deny rights to millions of Americans would be a travesty.

It is regrettable that the President has chosen to avoid important questions in order to play

partisan politics and divert attention away from the serious shortcomings of his own administration.