



Campaign 2000

Media Reality ✓ Check

Expert Documentation of the Latest Liberal Media Bias ☆ Friday, September 29, 2000

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ABC, CBS, NBC Ignore Gore's Changing Stand for Gay "Civic Unions" In MTV/Time Youth Forum

Media Out to Lunch on Gore's Big Gay Shift

Media coverage of non-traditional talk-show spots by presidential candidates isn't always substantive. Al Gore's Tuesday night appearance on a joint MTV/Time magazine forum is one obvious example. Reporters were more likely to notice Gore's answer to the question "Paper or plastic?" than any news he might have made: namely, that he came out in favor of "same-sex marriage," a position he would not take during the primaries, and never advocated specifically in the Democratic platform.

But the networks on Tuesday night? "No, he wasn't asked boxers or briefs," was the complete MTV report from ABC's Peter Jennings. CBS's Bob Schieffer just mentioned the taping, and NBC ignored it.

The next morning, ABC's Antonio Mora said "subjects ranged from medical use of marijuana — Gore's against it — to the type of shopping bag he prefers — he said paper." CBS's Diana Olick said he "answered questions on education, racism, and gun control" and was "against the legalization of marijuana, even for medicinal purposes." NBC's Ann Curry cooed: "Gore appeared on MTV last night telling the twentysomethings to call him Al."

On Tuesday's *Inside Politics*, CNN's Jonathan Karl captured some of this exchange with student James Christie: "As a gay man, I can't fathom, and frankly I'm mad as hell, that why I don't have any guarantees to the kind of protections that marriage offers....You call yourself a champion of equal rights. Well, I'd like to know how you plan to protect my and my partner's rights to the benefits of marriage when I'm in a relationship."

Gore replied: **"I favor legally recognized civic unions that have the legal protections of the kind that marriage confers. The most literate statement I've seen on this is by the Vermont Supreme Court, that said it is unfair to discriminate against gays and lesbians in this whole area of the law, and it ordered the legislature to come out with some approach to equalize the legal protections, and that's my position."** (Vermonters called them "civil unions.")

MTV's John Norris asked Gore to take that left-wing position to a greater extreme: "Would you favor the INS relaxing its rules to include same-sex couples?"

Gore replied: "I favor legal protections for civic unions, and I think that the rights that are afforded to an American who gets married to someone from another country, should be afforded under a legally protected civic union in the same way. I think that our nation should debate the difference, I think there is a difference between marriage as

the institution has traditionally been known and celebrated and recognized, and civic unions, but I think the legal protections should be on an equal par." (Vermont's new law states gays will "obtain the same benefits and protections afforded by Vermont law to married opposite-sex

couples.")

On Wednesday's *Special Report with Brit Hume*, Fox's Jim Angle explored how "Gore aides shudder at the thought of leading a battle in Congress over something that controversial," turning Gore's statement into a gaffe.

In 1996, Gore stood silently by as President Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act and even put out a radio ad touting this fact. In 1999 interviews with the gay magazine *The Advocate*, Bill Bradley opposed a California ballot initiative banning "same-sex marriage." But when Gore was asked if the California initiative was "more than an attack on gay people," he only said: "I'm going to have to educate myself on that measure."

The networks clearly took the same view as *New York Times* reporter Kevin Sack: "Gore said little...that he had not said previously during the campaign." — *Tim Graham*

Gore Outdoes Democratic Platform

"We support the full inclusion of gay and lesbian families in the life of the nation. This would include an equitable alignment of benefits." —
The closest the 2000 Democratic platform comes to mentioning "civil unions."

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