



## Cheney Accused Of Flip Flopping On Gay Marriage In VP Debate

By [365gay.com](http://365gay.com)

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Washington, D.C. - The Vice Presidential candidates went toe to toe Tuesday night in a debate that produced no clear winner but also was not punctuated with the same gaffes made by President Bush in the first Presidential debate.

Sen. John Edwards sparred with Vice President Dick Cheney on Iraq and the economy in the debate televised from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

That Edwards held his own with veteran politician Cheney was seen as a plus for the Kerry camp.

When the candidates were asked about same-sex marriage and the need for a constitutional amendment that is being pushed by Bush, Cheney reiterated his position from earlier in the campaign.

Cheney, with his daughter Mary an out lesbian in the audience, spoke supportively about gay relationships and said that "people ought to be free to choose any arrangement they want." But, he acknowledged that Bush supports passage of a constitutional marriage to ban gay marriage, and said, "He sets policy for this administration, and I support him."

Edwards said it was obvious that the Cheneys loved their daughter and that "you can't have anything but respect" for them. "I believe marriage is between a man and a woman and so does John Kerry," Edwards said. But, he added, "We should not use the Constitution to divide this country."

Cheney was offered an opportunity to respond and used it to thank Edwards for his "kind remarks" about his family, but declined to refute Edwards charge that Republicans were using gays to maintain support from the party's conservative base.

"Tonight we saw the worst kind of flip flop," said Human Rights Campaign President Cheryl Jacques.

"Vice President Cheney said he supported his daughter, but then said he supported President Bush's effort to discriminate against her."

HRC has endorsed the Kerry Edwards ticket.

"John Edwards affirmed his and Senator Kerry's support for protections for same-sex couples and chastised President Bush for using the Constitution to divide the American people," Jacques said.

That Cheney declined to Edwards assertion Republicans were using same-sex marriage to divide the nation drew sharp criticism from the Democratic National Committee.

"When Bush's own vice president refuses to endorse a campaign of bigotry, it becomes clear that Bush is taking America in the wrong direction," said DNC spokesperson Brian Richardson.

"Not only is the Federal Marriage Amendment dividing the country, it's dividing Bush's own administration."

Earlier in the day Log Cabin Republicans called on the GOP to stop using "anti-gay scare tactics." ([365gay.com story](http://365gay.com/story))

Activists also took Cheney to task for comments he made about HIV/AIDS.

Moderator Gwen Ifill first addressed Vice President Cheney during the debate, saying, "... I want to talk to you about AIDS, and not about AIDS in China or Africa, but AIDS right here in this country, where black women between the ages of 25 and 44 are 13 times more likely to die of the disease than their counterparts."

Vice President Cheney responded first about the crisis in Africa, but then answered, "Here in the United States, we've made significant progress. I have not heard those numbers with respect to African-American women. I was not aware that it was -- that they're in epidemic there ..."

"Vice President Cheney's ignorance about the HIV/AIDS crisis is inexcusable," said HRC President Cheryl Jacques.

"He failed the question, but he's also failed millions of Americans at risk for or living with HIV infection. The administration has an abysmal record on the domestic epidemic, cutting funds for key prevention programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and failing to adequately fund health care coverage for people with HIV."

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