



Obama, Clinton, Cheney kick off gay pride

By OnTopMag.com

On the first day of Gay Pride, three major political actors reiterated their support for gay and lesbian rights, including former Vice President Dick Cheney.

In a proclamation that declares June Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride month, President Obama restated his pledge to gay rights, but failed to offer a timeline on action and continued to back civil unions for gay and lesbian couples over marriage.

"My Administration has partnered with the LGBT community to advance a wide range of initiatives. At the international level, I have joined efforts at the United Nations to decriminalize homosexuality around the world. Here at home, I continue to support measures to bring the full spectrum of equal rights to LGBT Americans. These measures include enhancing hate crimes laws, supporting civil unions and Federal rights for LGBT couples, outlawing discrimination in the workplace, ensuring adoption rights, and ending the existing 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy in a way that strengthens our Armed Forces and our national security. We must also commit ourselves to fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic by both reducing the number of HIV infections and providing care and support services to people living with HIV/AIDS across the United States."

Meanwhile, during a National Press Club appearance, former Vice President Dick Cheney said he supported the right of gay and lesbian couples to marry, a position that runs counter to the official Republican Party Platform adopted last summer.

"I think that freedom means freedom for everyone. As many of you know, one of my daughters is gay, and it is something we have lived with for a long time in our family. I think people ought to be free to enter into any kind of union they wish. Any kind of arrangement they wish," Cheney said.

But Cheney stopped short of calling for Congress to enact legislation, instead he said he backed a federalist approach that advocates states rights on social issues.

"The question of whether or not there ought to be a federal statute to protect this, I don't support. I do believe that ... historically the way marriage has been regulated is at the state level. It has always been a state issue and I think that is the way it ought to be handled, on a state-by-state basis. ... But I don't have any problem with that. People ought to get a shot at that."

And Secretary of State Hillary Clinton used the occasion to vow to fight for gay and lesbian rights across the globe.

"The persecution of gays and lesbians is a violation of human rights and an affront to human decency, and it must end," Clinton said.

"As secretary of state, I will advance a comprehensive human rights agenda that includes the elimination of violence and discrimination against people based on sexual orientation or gender identity," she added.

According to the United Nations, being gay is a crime in over 80 countries.