

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
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To: H
Subject: FW: More Gay Donors Drop Out of DNC Fundraiser, Protesting Justice Department Brief

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From: Toiv, Nora F
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2009 3:17 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: More Gay Donors Drop Out of DNC Fundraiser, Protesting Justice Department Brief

More Gay Donors Drop Out of DNC Fundraiser, Protesting Justice Department Brief

June 18, 2009 2:30 PM

"This is not appropriate time" for the Democratic party to be hitting up gays and lesbians for money, says Richard Socarides, a former Special Assistant to President Clinton, who's not attending next week's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) fundraiser for the Democratic National Committee.

Socarides tells ABC News that many members of the LGBT community are troubled by a brief filed by President Obama's Justice Department last week that argued – too vociferously, many believe – against same sex marriage.

"The brief was very troubling to a lot of people and rightfully so," Socarides says. "Supporters of the Democratic party and others who feel that gay and lesbian equality is an important issue for this administration to address are rightly concerned about this brief. Serious issues still need clarification."

Socarides says that even though President Obama yesterday signed a presidential memorandum extending some benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees, he was also aware of what the President did not do. "The president did not last night address what direction he would give the Justice Department when these issues come up in the future, he did not address the continued discharges of gay people from the military."

Socarides is just the latest in a list of prominent gay and lesbian Democrats withdrawing their support from the DNC event. Others include David Mixner, another former adviser to President Clinton; Andy Towle; and Alan Van Capelle, executive director of the Empire State Pride Agenda and Foundation.

And you can, as John Aravosis notes, add Vermont state senate president pro tem Peter Shumlin to the list of prominent gay and lesbian Democrats who will not be attending.

"One thing I have learned dealing with marriage equality in Vermont is that we all have a responsibility to stand up for the civil rights of all Americans," Shumlin said yesterday, according to the Times-Argus. "This memo from the Justice Department is more Bush than Bush. It takes the only minority group left in America that national politicians can publicly discriminate against and still see their numbers go up in the polls and it reinforces the horrible stereotypes about our friends and neighbors."

And add gay Democratic donor Bruce Bastian, who told the Washington Blade he "will continue to support certain congressmen, congresswomen and senators whom I believe will continue to fight for our rights, but I

don't think blanket donations to the Democratic Party right now are justified, at least not in my book." He said he found the filing "very offensive."

"The administration has said they have to support the federal government's stance," he said. "But in the brief, they go way beyond where they need to go to just defend DOMA. They basically go to terminology and language that you would expect from the Bush administration, not the Obama administration."

Others include **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force executive director Rea Carey** who decried "the malicious and outrageous arguments and language used in the Department of Justice's marriage brief are only serving to inflame and malign the humanity of same-sex couples and our families," and **the Human Rights Campaign's national field director Marty Rouse**, who told the Blade that he "like many people, personally offended by the words used in the [Justice Department] brief to defend DOMA. And I just can't see right now attending a fundraiser for the DNC at this time."

-jpt

Nora Toiv
Office of the Secretary
202-647-8633