**A Liberal’s View**

**Biden Pro Gay Marriage**

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**By S. Devereaux Sanford**

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Whether spokesman Richard Grenell resigned from the Romney campaign under pressure from the Republican Party because he is openly gay or because he felt he couldn’t “speak clearly about personal issues,” it is still a provoking story given how noticeable the gay marriage issue will be in this election.

Mitt Romney is against gay marriage, though he says he is for gay rights – just not marriage. However many who are gay consider marriage to be an equal right. Romney clearly doesn’t, but Vice President Joe Biden does and he made it known this past weekend. Joe Biden said in an interview on NBC’s “Meet the Press” Sunday that he is “absolutely comfortable” with gay couples who marry getting the same civil rights and liberties as heterosexual couples.

“I am vice president of the United States of America.  The president sets the policy.  I am absolutely comfortable with the fact that men marrying men, women marrying women, and heterosexual men and women marrying another are entitled to the same exact rights, all the civil rights, all the civil liberties.  And quite frankly, I don’t see much of a distinction– beyond that.”

For sure what Vice President Biden said is an endorsement of same-sex marriage, even though it is not automatically endorsed by President Obama, he is the highest-ranking member in the Obama administration to take that position and it will bode well for the election.

Romney on the other hand is kowtowing to the GOP and those who are threatened by gay marriage. Interesting that in 2012 this is still an issue since acceptance of gay marriage has grown steadily over the years. In the 2004 Bush/Kerry Presidential election, 60 percent of the American public opposed gay marriage, and only 29 percent supported it. But since then, many Americans have changed their minds, and a whole new generation has come of age with a different point of view on this issue.

According to the Pew Research Center today there is increased support for gay marriage and a growing public acceptance of homosexuality. In 1994, when Pew first began asking the public about societal acceptance, Americans were evenly divided as to whether homosexuality should be accepted or discouraged. By 2011, 58 percent of the public said it favored acceptance while just a third (33 percent) continued to favor discouragement.

Without a doubt views regarding homosexuality have changed significantly over the past 17 years. However, there is still a partisan divide on homosexuality in general, and gay marriage specifically, but not as much as there was years ago.

Not too many years ago, just to be Republican meant you were not accepting of homosexually in any way. Today that is not always the case. And while for many it still is, it is not overpoweringly as one sided as it used to be. Today there are almost as many strong supporters of gay marriage among Democrats (34 percent) as there are strong opponents among Republicans (40 percent).

Romney is still courting the conservative vote, but the conservative vote has slowly changed. If he is kneeling to those conservatives who are fearful of gay marriage then he will most likely not get the job he is seeking. He may pick up Santorum’s homophobic followers, but I doubt that will be enough to win him the election.

Whether Richard Grennel left on his own accord or because he was pushed out, what really counts here is that Romney is stuck on not giving homosexuals the same legal rights in marriage as heterosexuals have. Call it marriage or a gay union, all are equal to the same rights and as long as Romney disagrees he is the one that will be left behind.

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