

OPINION

THE BATTALION

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A national problem

San Francisco's gay marriages will lead to an inconsistency across America



NICHOLAS DAVIS

It finally happened. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger emerged from under his desk and decided to uphold his sworn oath to enforce state laws by issuing a letter to California's attorney general stating, "San Francisco's actions are directly contrary to state law and present an imminent risk to civil order."

The attorney general is now taking the necessary steps to obtain a judicial resolution to the gay marriage controversy.

For many, it's about time. San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom clearly abused his authority and violated the state's family code

by initiating gay marriages.

Schwarzenegger should be ashamed for opting to test the political waters before taking a definitive stance on the issue. Schwarzenegger should have had Newsom arrested to demonstrate that laws are to be made by legislators, interpreted by the courts and followed by everyone, including mayors. If one wants to challenge a law, it should be contested in court.

No one should beguile themselves into believing that the actions that have recently transpired represent democracy in action. It's far from it.

For starters, proponents of gay marriage only represent less than half of the population. According to the nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California, only 44 percent of all Californians favor gay marriages. And this figure is considerably lower nationwide. A more appropriate term for flagrantly violating a law supported by the majority is anarchy. The mayor has conveyed the message that he will only abide by the laws that he personally agrees with and there is nothing anyone can do to make him change his mind — not even the governor.

What would happen if everyone followed the precedent set by Mayor Newsom?

Some people scoff at the controversy and perceive the dilemma as trivial, especially those who reside in other states.

Unfortunately, this mentality overlooks one glaring point: the newlyweds are not all California citizens. They are from all over the country, and it's unlikely that they will hang their hats in San Francisco to enjoy a fallacious marriage.

Instead, they will return to their home states and demand that their marriages be recognized. Subsequently, when the states refuse, lawsuits will inevitably follow, citing violations of equal-opportunity laws, and it will happen all over the country.

Make no mistake about it; homosexuals are not looking for a compromise. They are trying to cram a lifestyle down the public's throat in a fashion that conveys the message, "deal with it."

Gay people deserve the same legal benefits that married heterosexual couples enjoy, but addressing this issue is an arduous task. If one type of alternative marriage is allowed on the grounds of equal opportunity, all alternative lifestyles must be accepted. One cannot be hypocritical and favor only gay marriages. As a result, every nut in America will be afforded the luxury of marrying multiple partners, family members, adolescents, animals or other ridiculous unions. These examples may sound absurd, but they nonetheless logically follow.

The most appropriate response would be to enact civil unions. This would grant homosexual couples the same legal benefits married couples have while simultaneously excluding the radicals.

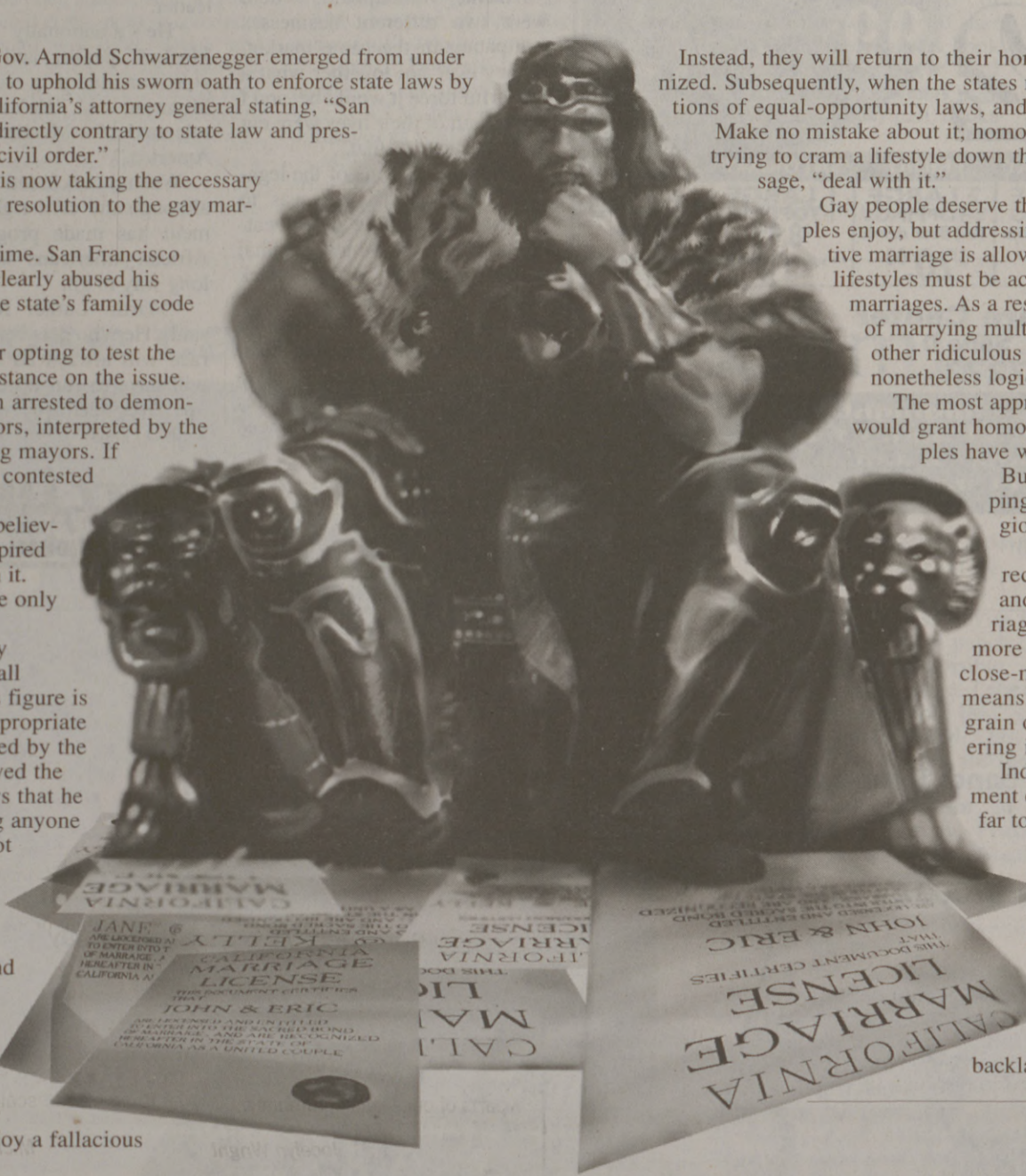
But most homosexuals seem to be dissatisfied at stopping at civil unions. They desire to utterly change a religious tradition that spans centuries.

Historically in the United States, marriage has been recognized as a union between a man and a woman, and it should remain that way. Undoubtedly, gay marriage proponents will dismiss this opinion as nothing more than the incessant babblings of a religious zealot, a close-minded bigot or any other clichéd term evoked as a means of discrediting an opinion that goes against the grain of the progressive liberal ideology to avoid considering it.

Indeed accommodations should be made, but the enactment of gay marriage is not the answer. It opens the door for far too many adverse social consequences.

Something has to give. If politicians such as

Schwarzenegger continue to buckle under political pressure and capitulate more and more traditional ground to the progressive movement, it will inevitably lead to the creation of an "anything goes society," where traditional values have long been abandoned, and individuals are discouraged from making distinctions between right and wrong. Subsequently, this may create a cultural backlash too complex to fix.



Nicholas Davis is a senior political science major. Graphic by Paul Wilson.

Blocks in the road

Kerry cannot overcome several obstacles

As Americans pick up their local paper and channel surf through the airwaves, one figure is becoming more popular as America moves closer to November's election: John Kerry. He has stolen the show in the eyes of many media and political pundits. Noted by many as the clear front-runner ready to battle President Bush in the coming 2004 presidential elections, experts are predicting Kerry to clean up in the last 30 caucuses and primaries. Although all seems well in Kerry's world, several roadblocks stand in the way of his final destination.

There are simply too many factors that will block Kerry's run for the presidency. Circumstances that he cannot control and his own political unsteadiness will ultimately sabotage his campaign.

Enter Ralph Nader. The off-the-wall champion of consumer rights has decided to vie for the captain's seat in the Oval Office once again.

Although he is running as an Independent, his platform appeals to the tree-hugging, efficiency-screaming, anti-gasoline burning voters. Many may write his cause off as unrealistic, extreme environmentalism, but Nader's contingent carried 2.8 percent of the electorate in the closest election this country has ever seen.

Those with sentimental attachment to the Green Party were much more likely to vote for Kerry before Nader's arrival, giving the nominee the confidence of the environmental vote. This is one curve ball the Massachusetts liberal Kerry does not want to face, battling someone even more partial to the environment than himself. This will clearly be detrimental to Kerry's cause because of his recent attempts to appear more moderate. He clearly cannot withstand the necessary challenge of appealing to the extreme environmentalists while trying to secure the vote of the blue-collared factory worker who makes a living by working a machine yielding a black fog into the environment. Kerry cannot have his cake and eat it too, and those who revere Earth as sacred will be loyal to their cause and the Green Party as well.

This is not to say that Nader has a shot at the presidency. But he will take thousands and even hundreds of thousands of votes if history repeats itself in November. In a race predicted to be close, every vote will be crucial in a number of swing states. Nader's emergence will diminish Kerry's chances and will give Bush an edge as the most liberal Americans struggle



MATT YOUNGER

between choosing the Democrat or Independent.

A more substantial roadblock, however, is not subject to an outside force, but rather on the candidate himself. Kerry defines and exemplifies political flip-flopping. On a wide range of issues, one can find Kerry, at some point in his life, screaming for advocacy and support on opposite sides of the spectrum.

Take his stance on gay marriage for example: He was one of 14 senators who opposed the Defense of Marriage Act in Congress. This clearly implies a belief that the government should not define marriage. Then, two years ago, Kerry signed a letter issued by homosexual Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., "urging state lawmakers to drop an amendment limiting nuptials to a man and a woman."

Yet, as he has recently come under political crossfire, Kerry boldly claims that he does not support gay marriage. Candidates need majorities to win, and the majority in this case is against what Kerry once stood for. According to a recent poll, 62 percent of Americans oppose any legislation that legally equates heterosexual and homosexual marriages. This is a quintessential example of a political flip-flop, sacrificing principle for more votes.

Explaining the war in Iraq is perhaps Kerry's biggest obstacle. In October 2002, Kerry signed a bill giving the president authorization to use the U.S. Armed Forces "as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in order to ... defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq."

Kerry also voted against an alternative measure that would have required authorized force to be granted by the U.N. Security Council. This stands in stark contrast to the senator's current position on the war. Now one of Bush's harshest critics in security efforts, Kerry is simply allowing his opposition to attain ample examples of his flip-flopping nature.

It is true that Kerry has a lot going for him right now. He is the clear front-runner of the Democratic Party, but outside forces such as Nader's candidacy are looming on the horizon, and a history of unprincipled decisions have a good chance of coming back to haunt him. This senator knows how to politicize, and it is the responsibility of voters to determine whether this man has the moral clarity, proven record and decisiveness one must hold to run this country.

Matt Younger is a junior political science major.

MAIL CALL

Tolerance and acceptance differ

In response to a Feb. 24 mail call:

There is nothing wrong with being proud to be straight. However, having a straight pride day is wrong because the only reason for its existence is to spite homosexuals. It is like having a white pride day during Black History month. You can be proud that you are heterosexual without exhibiting ill will towards another person.

Also, Mr. Moore is confused on the notion of "tolerance." You can be tolerant of something with which you do not agree. If you had to agree with homosexuality or any other idea, the term would be acceptance. Being tolerant means recognizing and respecting the beliefs and practices of others.

Having a straight pride day or driving around with large signs on your car reading "Satan is a Flamer" is directly insulting to the gay community and hateful. If you do not agree with something, you don't have to accept, instead practice tolerance and show some respect.

David Johnson
Class of 2004

Gay pride week is maliciously timed

In response to a Feb. 24 mail call:

I don't understand why conservatives are so surprised that YCT's straight pride day is touted as being bigoted when they conducted it during gay awareness week. Yes, I think there is nothing wrong with being proud of your sexual orientation, but the timing of the event is very rude and inappropriate.

No matter how innocent the purpose was, it is easy for people to be suspicious and think that the event was a rebuttal against gay awareness week instead of a proactive action.

Free speech is no excuse for homophobia and bigotry. If you try to have a white pride week in



February you are a racist. If you try to have straight pride day on gay awareness week then admit it, you are a bigot.

Gita Zulkarnain
Class of 2005

Everyone should have similar beliefs

In response to a Feb. 24 mail call:

Ms. Mayfield makes an interesting point. She claims gays have the right to marry, just not to whom they choose. Perhaps it would be too much to suggest that everyone who wishes to practice religion should attend the same faith. Starting Sunday, everyone who would like to practice a religion should report to their nearest mosque.

Eric Matus
Class of 2004

Marriage is a sacred institution

In response to a Feb. 24 mail call:

The fact that homosexuals can marry someone of the opposite sex is true, but if we hold marriage to be of such a sacred union, wouldn't that be ironic? If gay people married straight people, it would create a system where marriage is a mockery.

The fact is that at some point interracial marriage was consid-

ered heinous; we now know nothing is wrong with it. People are different! Get over it and let people live like humans, not slaves to society. People should be able to marry people.

After all, if the tides were turned and only marriage between homosexuals was allowed, would you feel it is right to marry a person of the same sex? I should think not.

Brook Marshall
Class of 2007

Homosexuals seek civil rights equality

In response to a Feb. 24 mail call:

Human rights and civil rights are not synonymous, despite Ms. Marrs-Mayfield's use of the terms. Human rights are not in question in this issue, only civil rights.

Her inconsistency notwithstanding, Ms. Marrs-Mayfield's argument that homosexuals are not being denied civil rights is based on a faulty premise — that they are allowed to marry anyone of the opposite sex. The idea is that gays are denied the civil right to choose whom they marry. A homosexual person is no more inclined to marry a member of the opposite sex than she is inclined to marry someone of the same sex. If we based all civil rights on her concept, we would have the civil right to vote, as long as we voted for Howard Dean.

Matt Gindling
Class of 2005