

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 3, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR LEON E. PANETTA
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ALEXIS HERMAN
TODD STERN
RON KLAIN
DAVID STRAUSS
LORRAINE VOLES

FROM: George Stephanopoulos
Richard Socarides

RE: SAME-SEX MARRIAGE TALKING POINTS

The same-sex marriage bill is scheduled for Senate floor debate on Thursday. The Administration supports efforts by Senators Kennedy, Lieberman and Jeffords to amend the marriage bill to include the provisions of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

Slightly revised and re-formatted talking points for use in connection with these topics are attached.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

-- The President strongly opposes discrimination against any group of Americans, including gays and lesbians, and supports legislation to outlaw such discrimination in the workplace.

-- In 1992, the President stated his opposition to same-sex marriage and recently, as the issue was raised by some in Congress, has said that if a bill consistent with his previously stated position reached his desk, he would sign it.

-- The President also believes that raising this issue now is divisive and unnecessary, and is calculated only to score political points at the expense of this community. The President believes that it is an attempt to divert the American people from the urgent need to confront our challenges together.

-- [If asked how the President can both oppose discrimination and support DOMA: this bill makes it clear that states may decide for themselves whether or not to recognize same sex unions, and so is consistent with his position on same sex marriage. The President strongly supports efforts to ensure that all Americans can find and keep jobs based on their ability and the quality of their work.]

EMPLOYMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT

-- On October 19, 1995 the President endorsed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

-- This legislation would ensure that Americans, regardless of their sexual orientation, can find and keep their jobs based on their ability and the quality of their work.

-- The Act is careful to apply some exemptions in certain cases, such as small businesses, the Armed Forces, and religious organizations, including schools and other educational institutions. The bill also specifically prohibits preferential treatment on the basis of sexual orientation, including quotas.

-- Thus the President supports the efforts of Senators Kennedy, Lieberman, Jeffords and others to amend the so-called Defense of Marriage Act to include the provisions of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and the Administration is working actively for passage of the Amendment.