

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 9, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

MEMORANDUM FOR LEON PANETTA
GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS
MIKE MCCURRY

SUBJECT:

FROM:

JACK QUINN *JQ*
STEVE NEUWIRTH *SN*

SUBJECT:

GAY MARRIAGE LEGISLATION

Yesterday, a bill was introduced in the House that would alter the definitions of "marriage" and "spouse" under federal law to cover only heterosexual marriage. Although we have not yet received a copy of the bill itself, we understand that the purpose of the bill would be to ensure that federal funds, including federal funds distributed by states, are not made available to same sex couples, regardless of whether those couples are recognized as "married" under state law. We understand that the bill also would provide that states need not give "full faith and credit" to other states' recognition of gay marriage -- although DOJ has already opined to us, internally, that the Constitution does not require states to recognize gay marriages granted by other states.

The House bill was sponsored by six Republicans, including Bob Barr, and two Democrats. We understand that Bob Dole and Don Nickles will be introducing a Senate version of the bill **today**.

We think the President may be asked about the gay marriage bill at his press conference this afternoon. One option would be for the President to say that he has not yet had an opportunity to review this legislation, but that he has long made clear that he is opposed to gay marriage.

Recommendation

That you approve the talking points set forth above.

AGREE

DISAGREE

DEFERS