



## Social Issues Ignored at Freedom's Peril

Candidates in televised debates usually find it hard to stay within the narrow time limits allowed for answers to questions from a moderator or panel member. But one question in Wednesday night's hour-long debate between gubernatorial contenders in New Hampshire had both candidates sounding like reincarnations of the late, great Calvin Coolidge. The question was, should "gay" couples be allowed to be foster parents in New Hampshire?



"Yes," said three-term governor John Stephen, a Democrat.

"Yes," said Republican John Stephen, former Commissioner of the state Department of Health and Human Services.

That was it. No elaboration, no follow-up questions, just two identical, one-word answers and the debate moved on to other topics.

Now there are times when such brevity might be welcomed. On some of the other questions, the candidates spent so much time talking all around an issue that the questioner felt called upon to interrupt long enough to remind the speaker what the question was. But on the question of "gay" foster parents, the answer from both candidates was a simple, "Yes."

Maybe that really is how Calvin Coolidge would have answered the question. Being unenlightened as to the new meaning of "gay," he might have found no reason to prevent a couple from being foster parents simply because they are of a noticeably bright and cheerful disposition. But if anyone were to ask him if homosexual couples should be considered fit foster parents and role models for children, he might have been more than brief in his reply. He might have been dumbfounded.

Changes in both language and societal mores are often said to be evidence that human society is "evolving." The term is not to be taken too literally, but even as a metaphor it seems a bit strained. Evolution is supposed to happen slowly, at glacial not breakneck speed. And it was only about 20 years ago that allowing homosexual couples to take in foster children was one of the bright ideas being adopted in that in that land of loopy liberalism known as the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. But in the years since it has become the law in formerly conservative New Hampshire as well. And in the political arena, the wisdom of that decision now appears beyond debate.

Whether the candidates really believe it is self-evident that allowing "gays" to be foster parents is good policy, or whether they simply find it politically expedient to avoid reopening that old controversy is not certain. Obviously, they would rather, in this political season, talk about the economy, jobs, balancing budgets, restraining government spending, etcetera. Candidates for all offices these days want you to know they are fiscal conservatives, despite any or all evidence to the contrary. That is true of Democrats as well as Republicans. Chances are Nancy Pelosi is telling her constituents that she, too, is a fiscal conservative, having learned at her mother's knee the value of a penny saved and other lessons



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from *Poor Richard's Almanac*. And if you shake a tree in any New Hampshire forest, chances are excellent that at least two or three fiscal conservatives will fall out and begin telling you how determined they are to save the taxpayers' money. They're everywhere, these Frugal Franks and Tightwad Tinas. And a balanced budget is always only one election away.

The fiscal and economic issues are important, of course, especially in the kind of economy we find ourselves in now. But we neglect the social issues at our peril and thereby increase the long-term threat to our liberties. Consider what has happened in New Hampshire in the past few years. For one thing, our legislators passed and Governor Lynch signed the repeal of the state's parental notification law, deemed constitutionally flawed, and left nothing in its place. The state still has no law touching the subject of abortion. There is absolutely no legal protection, obviously, for the pre-born infants being aborted. But there is also nothing to protect the safety of a woman who may be exercising her "reproductive choice" at the hands of an inept "abortion provider." And there is no protection at all for parents who believe it is their right and duty to know what kind of trouble their underage daughter might be in and what she is planning to do about it. The Governor and the Legislature's response to that concern amounts to the following advice: Parents, take a hike!

Then the Legislature passed and the Governor signed a bill establishing same-sex marriage in New Hampshire. The Governor, who had said the previous year he was opposed to such a radical change in the state's marriage laws, said during last night's debate that his thoughts on the subject had been enlightened by a discussion with a member of the New Hampshire National Guard who had served in Iraq and believed he was fighting there for equal rights for all people. So apparently he and other like-minded soldiers have invaded and occupied Iraq to make New Hampshire safe for "gay" marriage. That news would no doubt go over big with the Muslim population in the Middle East.

In fact, it does not register well with voters here in the United States. More than 30 referenda have been held on the issue in various states across the land and in every one of them "gay" marriage lost. Majorities are not always right, but New Hampshire's Senators and Representatives, and its Governor, not only ignored the will of the people, they tossed aside a few thousand years of moral and religious tradition in order to thumb their respective noses at the laws of God and nature. Many of those same legislators now present themselves to voters as defenders of traditional "family values" in New Hampshire.

Such a callous attitude toward the moral law will likely have serious consequences for economic and other freedoms, not only in New Hampshire, but throughout America. The late columnist Joseph Sobran offered an interesting explanation of why the old sexual taboos have become the primary target of "progressive" thinkers in positions of power. "Why," Sobran asked, "should a government that increasingly limits the sphere of freedom, privacy, and choice in every other area show such consistent favor to sexual libertarianism alone? Because the traditional code is designed to support the family as the basic unit of society, and the family, like religion and private property, is one of the foundations of liberty and resistance to monolithic state power.

"Without religion, the state faces no rival moral authority. Without property, freedom has no material basis, and everyone becomes dependent on the state for support. And without the family, the individual belongs almost wholly to the state, with no stable competing loyalty."

The noise of election campaigns in which moral issues are either put on the back burner or forgotten altogether is drowning out the warning in a distant echo of voices crying out from the pages of Scripture and the history of ancient Israel — the voices crying ominously, "We have no king but



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Caesar.”



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