

Singles Rights Advocate

Newsletter of the Singles Rights Lobby for Unmarried Adults, Couples, Parents, and Families

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Second in a Series on Political Parties

Party Moderates Offer Hope to Unmarried Republicans

Somewhere between 34 and 36 percent of the 40 million registered Republicans in the United States are unmarried. That translates into 14 million unmarried Republicans nationally.

About 18 percent of registered Republicans have never been married, while 10 percent are divorcees and another eight percent are widowed.

While a majority of unmarried voters have tended to support Democratic candidates over Republican contenders, the singles' vote should not be taken for granted.

For example, in 1994, 52 percent of unmarried men voted for Republican congressional candidates, while 39 percent of unmarried women did the same.

However, unmarried support for Republicans running for Congress is declining. In 1996 and again in 1998, only 45 percent of unmarried men voted Republican while about 36 percent of unmarried women did the same.

It may be economics that cause single people to vote for specific Republican candidates since the official position of the Republic Party is quite hostile to unmarried Americans on a variety of social and legal issues.

Singles' rights has not found its way into the GOP's platform. Many Republican leaders push so-called "traditional family values" and show favoritism for married couples. But times are changing. A new breed of Republican leadership is beginning to pay attention to single people.

For example, New York Governor

George Pataki has stressed the importance of the Republic party to be inclusive and to respect the personal privacy of consenting adults.

"We believe in individual rights and limited government, we believe in getting government out of your wallets, but why in God's name should we ever care to have government of politicians involved in anybody's bedroom," Pataki told a gathering of Republicans in 1998.

Pataki's vision of inclusion is not a hollow dream. During his tenure as governor of New York, he expanded domestic partner benefits for state workers. He also signed a rent stabilization law that prevents landlords from evicting surviving family members, including a domestic partner, when the primary tenant dies.

While many Republican leaders are heavily influenced by conservative religious forces, a growing number of officials are taking a more moderate approach to legal and social issues.

New Jersey Governor Christie Todd Whitman has authorized unmarried couples to jointly adopt children in her state. Connecticut Governor John Rowland is doing the same.

Mayor Richard Riordan of Los Angeles and Mayor Rudy Giuliani of New York have signed into law some of the most progressive domestic partnership benefits laws in the nation.

While the Democratic Party has been more favorable to singles' rights, times are changing. The GOP is reshaping itself. Single people should take part in this transformation. Speak out. Demand reform. Participate!

GOP: End Marriage Penalty, Increase the Marriage Bonus

On April 27, 2000, the United States Senate failed to break an impasse over a \$248 billion Republican-backed tax cut for married couples that Democrats say is too costly and is skewed in favor of wealthy couples.

The bill would likely face a veto if it ever makes it to President Clinton's desk. Clinton has proposed more modest tax relief for working couples and some Democrats have suggested the problem could be eliminated by allowing couples the choice of filing their tax returns jointly or as single individuals.

A story published by the Christian Science Monitor on February 7, 2000, reports that under the current tax code almost an equal number of married couples gain tax bonuses as those who are penalized by marriage.

But a story published on January 31, 2000 in the Philadelphia Inquirer says more married couples gain bonuses under the current code than are penalized by it.

The article says that some 51 percent of married couples enjoy tax breaks totaling an estimated \$33 billion. The 42 percent of couples who suffer a marriage penalty pay about \$29 billion a year, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Both the congressional GOP and White House plans unveiled in recent weeks clearly favor married couples at the expense of singles.

These plans aggravate what some call the "singles' penalty," or unfair taxation for the unmarried. Singles' penalties, already paid by more than 40 million unmarried filers in 1999, would "significantly increase" under the new tax plans, according to a report issued by the United States Treasury Department.

GOP: End No-Fault Divorce, Push Abstinence-Only Sex Ed

On Valentine's Day, Republican state Rep. Jessie Dalman renewed an effort she began last year to weaken Michigan's 24-year-old no-fault divorce law. Her bills would require proof of fault – desertion, infidelity, abuse, a more than three-year prison sentence, alcoholism or drug addiction – if one spouse opposes the divorce.

If both spouses want to split, the no-fault system would remain. However, if children still live at home, the couple would first be required to get counseling and a parenting plan.

The speaker of the Michigan House, the Senate's majority leader and Gov. John Engler – all Republicans -- have endorsed her idea.

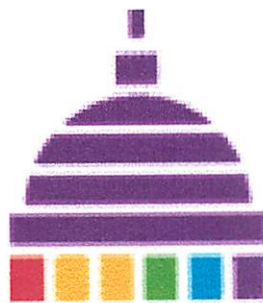
Efforts to change or repeal no-fault divorce are pending in Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Min-nesota, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington.

Republicans in Arizona and Louisiana pushed through covenant marriage laws that allow couples to sign rigid marriage contracts permitting divorce only for adultery, abuse, abandonment, imprisonment, or long separation.

Abstinence-only sex education, which promotes abstinence until marriage and ignores altogether the issue of birth control, is another hot topic with Republican legislators in many states.

In Ohio, for example, Republican lawmakers believed so strongly that abstinence is the only policy to teach kids when it comes to sex education, this year they rejected a federal grant of \$855,321 for comprehensive sex education.

The American Medical Association (AMA), the American Nurses Association (ANA), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) all support comprehensive sex education classes.



Positions of the Republican Party on Issues Affecting Single People

✓ Single Parents

The Republican Party generally supports “traditional family values” which includes opposition to sex outside of marriage and unwed parenthood. Republicans in Utah enacted a law prohibiting unmarried couples from adopting children or becoming foster parents. Republicans in Congress have tried to impose a similar adoption restriction on the District of Columbia.

However, the party seems to have backed off Dan Quayle’s broad attack on single-parent families. The platform of the California Party promotes married-couple families, but adds: “We commend and support those single parents who struggle to maintain stable homes for their families.”

✓ Domestic Partners

A Republican-controlled Congress has for 10 years prohibited the District of Columbia from implementing its domestic partner benefits program for district employees. Governor Pete Wilson twice vetoed domestic partner legislation in California. The Pennsylvania Legislature voted to prohibit state colleges from giving such benefits to faculty. Presidential candidate George Bush opposes domestic partner benefits.

✓ No-Fault Divorce

Ronald Reagan signed the first no-fault divorce bill into law when he was governor of California in 1969. All 50 states now have such statutes.

Republican legislators have recently been pushing legislation in several states to modify or repeal no fault divorce laws.

✓ Income Taxes

Congressional Republicans want to end the marriage penalty imposed on some married couples while increasing the marriage bonus which federal income tax law gives to spouses. According to the accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche, the Republican tax plan would reduce taxes for married couples earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000 – with or without children – by 6.8% to 17.9%. Single people in the same income categories, however, would only receive a tax cut of 4.4% to 5.8%.

✓ Death Taxes

Single people would benefit if the Republican plan to abolish federal estate taxes ever passes. Under current law which contains a marriage exemption, there is no tax imposed for a bequest to a spouse, no matter how large it is. Transfers to anyone other than a spouse, however, can result in up to a 60% tax bite.

✓ Minimum Wage

Republican legislators generally oppose increases in the mandatory minimum wage. Research has shown that single workers are the ones who benefit the most from a minimum wage boost.

✓ Religious Discrimination

Republicans in Congress and in many states are pushing for a broad religious exemption to civil rights laws. They want business owners to be able to cite religious beliefs as legitimate grounds to discriminate against tenants or employees.

Excerpts from the Texas Republican Party Platform

Family

The Party supports the traditional definition of marriage as a God-ordained, legal and moral commitment only between a man and a woman, which is the foundational unit of a healthy society.

Marriage and Divorce

We believe in the sanctity of marriage and that the integrity of this institution should be defended, protected, strengthened, and nurtured at all levels of government. No fault divorce laws have caused untold hardships on American families, by reducing their standard of living, and by harming the emotional and physical well-being of children. It has contributed to an increase in government assistance of all kinds. We call upon the Texas Legislature to rescind no-fault divorce laws. We urge the repeal of laws that place an unfair tax burden on families. We call upon Congress to remove the marriage penalty in the tax code, whereby a married couple receives a smaller standard deduction than their unmarried counterparts living together. We also oppose the recognition of and granting of benefits to people who represent themselves as domestic partners without being legally married. The primary family unit consists of those related by blood, heterosexual marriage, or adoption. The family is responsible for its own welfare, education, moral training, conduct, and property.

Texas Sodomy Statute

The Party opposes the decriminalization of sodomy. (*Ed. Private sex of consenting adults.*)

Minimum Wage

The Party believes the minimum wage law should be repealed.

Some Republican Leaders Hostile to Singles Rights



Dan Quayle

Former Vice President

Stirred up a hornet's nest when he criticized sitcom "Murphy Brown" for showing in a positive light the leading star's choice to have a baby outside of marriage.



Pete Wilson

Former California Governor

Instituted regulations prohibiting joint adoptions by unmarried couples. Twice vetoed bills giving basic rights to domestic partners.



John Engler

Michigan Governor

Supports the repeal of no-fault divorce laws. Does not want state universities to give domestic partnership benefits to faculty and staff.



Jesse Helms

United States Senator

Introduced a bill (SB 682) in the Senate to make it illegal for anyone other than a married couple to adopt children from other countries. The bill would outlaw foreign adoptions by all unmarried Americans.

Some Republicans Who Have Joined AASP

Richard Butler, age 63, single, bank trust officer, attorney, active in local Rep. party politics, Christian (Arkansas)

Joel M. Fisher, age 65, divorced, director of special projects at Hollywood Palace, former author and law professor, Episcopal (California)

Joel Wachs, single, Los Angeles city councilman, current mayoral candidate (California)

Ramona A. Cortese, age 60, single, welfare director of West Haven, CT, former justice of the peace, active in Rep. party politics (Connecticut)

G. Thomas Sandbach, age 53, single, former attorney for state Republican Party, practicing attorney, Catholic, political activist (Delaware)

Dominick J. Salfi, age 62, divorced, practicing Attorney, former circuit court judge (1970-1986), Catholic (Florida)

Susan J. Haase, age 58, divorced, clerk of Wheatland Township, and member of the State Republican Central Committee (Illinois)

Charles Lee Hatfield, age 47, single, director of Citizens for Senior Advocacy, county Republican Central Committee, Methodist (Illinois)

Jeffrey M. Brown, age 38, single, currently a lobbyist for state professional firefighters assn., former constable, Catholic (New Hampshire)

Thomas A. Varrell, age 65, divorced, currently a state legislator, served in the military, Protestant (New Hampshire)

George D. Mariarz, age 47, single, NY state senator, Catholic (New York)

Robert K. Wilson, age 71, divorced, chair of the development committee of local hospital, former Republican state party treasurer, Episcopal (Ohio)

Earl F. Patterson, age 70, single, city controller of Reading, PA from 1963-67, city councilman 70-73, active in Rep. party politics (Pennsylvania)

Kathleen D. Koch, age 51, divorced, associate counsel to President of the United States (1987-88) (Virginia)
(The people listed above have given permission for AASP to use their names in publicity.)

Some Republican Leaders Supporting Singles Rights



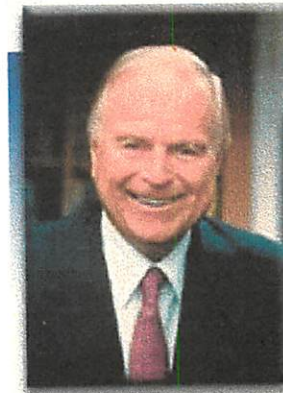
Rudolph Giuliani
New York City Mayor

Signed a comprehensive domestic partnership law, so that all city laws that apply to married couples also apply to domestic partners.



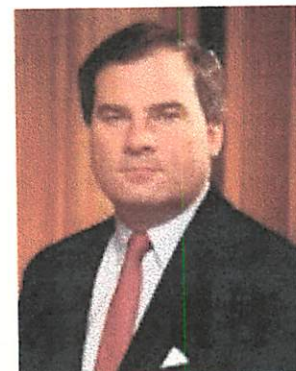
George Pataki
New York Governor

Extended domestic partner benefits to non-union state workers. Supported tenant survivorship rights to domestic partners. Wants an inclusive GOP.



Richard Riordan
Los Angeles Mayor

Approved health and pension benefits for the domestic partners of city employees. Signed law requiring city contractors to provide same benefits to domestic partners as they do to spouses.



John Rowland
Connecticut Governor

This year the Legislature passed a bill allowing unmarried adults – gay or heterosexual -- to adopt their partners' children. Rowland has promised to sign the bill into law.

California Republicans: A Political House Divided

California law prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of marital status. In 1994, a majority of the California Supreme Court – including appointees of Republican governors – ruled that the law protected unmarried couples.

In the following legislative session, a group of Republican Assembly members introduced a bill to remove the term “marital status” from the state fair housing laws. Even though Republicans controlled the Assembly, the bill failed, with 28 yes-votes and 41 no-votes. Moderate Republicans were crucial to this defeat.

In 1998, Spectrum Institute analyzed the voting records of legislators up for reelection. Votes on bills prohibiting marital status discrimination or protecting domestic partner rights were tabulated. The results: all Republican incumbents had voted against all such bills. All Democratic incumbents had voted for all of them.

In 1998, Assemblyman Jim Cunneen was the only Republican legislator to vote in favor of

a domestic partnership bill. The bill passed by one vote. However, then-Gov. Pete Wilson, a Republican, vetoed the measure.

Lawmakers passed a bill in 1999 to create a statewide domestic partner registry with hospital visitation rights for registered couples. As the table below shows, a majority of Republican voters would support such a bill. And yet not one Republican legislator voted yes.

But some local Republican officials have shown their independence. For example, Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan signed a law giving health and pension benefits to unmarried partners of city workers. He also approved a law requiring businesses contracting with the city to give the same benefits to domestic partners which they give to the spouses of their workers.

As time passes, it is likely that more Republicans in public office will support legislation to guarantee equal rights to all adults regardless of their marital status.

Position of California Adults on Domestic Partnership Rights

Grant Legal Recognition in Areas of Family Rights, Such as Hospital Visitation, Medical Power of Attorney, and Conservatorships

	Favor	Oppose	No Opinion
Statewide	67	24	09
Democrats	72	19	09
Republicans	64	29	07
Other	61	24	15

Grant Financial Dependence Status to Domestic Partners to Receive Benefits Such as Pensions, Health and Dental Coverage, Family Leave, and Death Benefits

	Favor	Oppose	No Opinion
Statewide	59	35	06
Democrats	68	27	05
Republicans	47	48	05
Other	58	29	13

Statewide survey of 1,045 California adults by the Field Poll, results released March 3, 1997.

Marital Status and Political Participation

Marital Status of Adults

Marital Status	Number*	%
Adult Population	195.4	100.0
Married	116.5	59.6
Unmarried	78.9	40.4

March 1997 Current Population Survey, United States Census Bureau * Numbers in millions

Marital Status and Major Parties

Status	Republican	Democrat
Married	66%	56%
Unmarried	34%	44%

A Washington Post national poll of 1514 adults conducted during November and December of 1995 in cooperation with the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and the Harvard Law School. (*Washington Post*, Jan. 31, 1996)

Likely Voters – 2000 Primary

Marital Status	%
Married	59
Unmarried	41
Never married	21
Divorced	11
Widowed	9

Voter.com / Battleground XIV Survey, March 12-13, 2000. Tarrance Group / Lake Snell Perry & Associates, of 1,000 likely voters nationwide.

1998 Congressional Elections

Marital Status	% of All Voters	
Married	67	
Unmarried	33	
Voted For ⇒	Dem	Rep
Married	46	51
Unmarried	62	35

Exit poll data, as reported by MSNBC "Decision 98"

Marital Status and Participation in Federal Elections

Races	Married	Unmarried	Married Men	Married Women	Unmarried Men	Unmarried Women
1996 President	66	34	33	33	15	20
1998 Congress	67	33	35	32	14	19

"Portrait of the 1996 Electorate," *New York Times*, based on exit poll by Voters News Service. "A look at voting patters of 115 demographic groups in House races," *New York Times*, Nov. 9, 1998.

Marital Status and Presidential Elections

Candidate	1984		1988		1992			1996		
	Rea.	Mon.	Bush	Duk.	Clin.	Bush	Per.	Clin.	Dole	Per.
Total Vote	59	40	53	45	43	38	19	49	41	08
Married	62	38	57	42	40	41	20	44	46	09
Unmarried	52	47	46	53	51	30	19	57	31	09
Married Men	65	35	60	39	38	42	21	40	48	10
Married Women	59	41	54	46	41	40	19	48	43	07
Unmarried Men	55	42	51	47	48	29	22	49	35	12
Unmarried Women	49	50	42	57	53	31	15	62	28	07

Data for 1996 and 1992 were collected in exit polls and questionnaires done by Voter News Service. Data for 1980 through 1988 were based on surveys conducted by the New York Times and CBS News.

Support Singles Rights Lobby

Singles Rights Lobby is the legislative advocacy affiliate of the American Association for Single People. We are the only organization representing the political interests of the 80 million unmarried adults in the United States.

We invite you to support Singles Rights Lobby and to become a member of the American Association for Single People. AASP and Singles Rights Lobby work together as a team.

AASP is a tax-exempt nonprofit which works through educational means to promote the well being and civil rights of unmarried adults and domestic partners. Donations to AASP are tax deductible.

You can become a member of AASP by making a tax-deductible donation of \$10 or more to AASP. Call AASP at (800) 993-AASP for a brochure and application, or you can obtain an application form on the AASP website at www.unmarriedAmerica.com.

Singles Rights Lobby works in the political arena, promoting and opposing legislation as well as prodding politicians and political parties to pay attention to the needs of unmarried Americans.

Although Singles Rights Lobby is a nonprofit corporation, donations to it are not tax deductible because of the political nature of its work. All participants in the organization are volunteers. We have no paid staff. Please get involved. Become a volunteer. Do some research. Write some letters or e-mails. We will find a way to use your talents.

[] I would like to volunteer to help.

Please return this form to *Singles Rights Lobby*, P.O. Box 65756, Los Angeles, CA 90065. (323) 257-2277. E-mail: singlesrights@earthlink.net.

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