

## BOOK REVIEW

# POLITICS, GAY RIGHTS AND THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW

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*The Politics of Gay Rights*, edited by Craig A. Rimmerman, Kenneth D. Wald & Clyde Wilcox. The University of Chicago Press (Chicago & London, 2000).

*First they ignore you.*

*Then they laugh at you.*

*Then they fight you.*

*Then you win.*

*--Mahatma Gandhi*

Legal scholars and practitioners concerned about the future of the law rather than merely its present know that successful strategies for advancing the law require not only a facility with the nuts and bolts of legal analysis but a sense of history and an awareness of the ways in which law is shaped by politics, public opinion, cultural norms, and moral and political philosophy.

Challenging those laws that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation offers one of the most active and exciting undertakings for modern civil rights advocates. The losses are frustrating but the victories are exhilarating. The long-term outlook is favorable, because the pattern, which has emerged in recent years, is one of slow but steady progress toward full equal rights. The question is no longer *whether* equal rights will be achieved, but *how*, and *when*.

On any day when losses seem to temporarily outweigh victories, the weary advocate may benefit from the perspectives of history and social science. For a whirlwind tour of the history, sociology and politics of the gay civil rights movement that will put current events in their proper perspective, one might

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turn to the collection of essays titled *The Politics of Gay Rights*,<sup>1</sup> the latest offering in the Chicago Series on Sexuality, History, and Society.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the contributing authors, including the three editors,<sup>3</sup> are political scientists rather than lawyers. Their essays offer a guide not to making legal arguments, but to understanding the many forces that converge to create legal change over time. Noting in their preface that the brutal murders of Matthew Shepard and Billy Jack Gaither raised public awareness of hate crimes while the text was in progress, the editors have dedicated their book "[t]o all those who have been the target of hate crimes."<sup>4</sup> A worthy tribute, this collection impresses the reader with the progress that has been made in recent decades, without understating the enormous challenges that remain.

Two of the essays provide useful overviews. Kenneth Wald's introductory piece, *The Context of Gay Politics*,<sup>5</sup> outlines the challenges currently faced by proponents of gay rights. In addition to being consistently outspent by its better-financed opponents, the gay civil rights movement is hampered not only by popular antipathy and the efforts of conservative religious organizations, whose well-entrenched and hierarchical power structure enables them to mobilize their membership and resources behind efforts to restrict gay rights, but also by the constant threat of retaliatory violence, harassment, and discrimination against those who dare to identify themselves as members of this minority group. An enlightening counterpoint to Wald's introduction, John D'Emilio's

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<sup>1</sup> THE POLITICS OF GAY RIGHTS (Craig A. Rimmerman et al. eds., 2000).

<sup>2</sup> This broad-ranging series explores a wide range of scholarly projects, focusing variously on moral, religious, cultural, scientific, sociological and legal issues involving human sexuality. Others in the series include: KAREN DUBINSKY, IMPROPER ADVANCES: RAPE AND HETEROSEXUAL CONFLICT IN ONTARIO, 1880-1929 (1993); ANGUS McLAREN, A PRESCRIPTION FOR MURDER: THE VICTORIAN SERIAL KILLINGS OF DR. THOMAS NEILL CREAM (1993); JOHN W. BALDWIN, THE LANGUAGE OF SEX: FIVE VOICES FROM NORTHERN FRANCE AROUND 1200 (1994); DAVID J. LANGUM, CROSSING OVER THE LINE: LEGISLATING MORALITY AND THE MANN ACT (1994); SEXUAL NATURE/SEXUAL CULTURE (PAUL R. ABRAMSON & STEVEN D. PINKERTON eds., 1995); BERNADETTE J. BROOTEN, LOVE BETWEEN WOMEN: EARLY CHRISTIAN RESPONSES TO FEMALE HOMOEROTICISM (1996); ANGUS McLAREN, THE TRIALS OF MASCULINITY: POLICING SEXUAL BOUNDARIES, 1870-1930 (1997); MARK D. JORDAN, THE INVENTION OF SODOMY IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY (1997); SITES OF DESIRE/ECONOMIES OF PLEASURE: SEXUALITIES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (LENORE MANDERSON & MARGARET JOLLY eds., 1997); RANDOLPH TRUMBACH, SEX AND THE GENDER REVOLUTION, VOLUME 1: HETEROSEXUALITY AND THE THIRD GENDER IN ENLIGHTENMENT LONDON (1998); JOHN DONALD GUSTAV-WRATHALL, TAKE THE YOUNG STRANGER BY THE HAND: SAME-SEX RELATIONS AND THE YMCA (1998); MARC STEIN, CITY OF SISTERLY AND BROTHERLY LOVES: LESBIAN AND GAY PHILADELPHIA, 1945-1972 (2000); HARRY OOSTERHUIS, STEPCHILDREN OF NATURE: KRAFFT-EBING, PSYCHIATRY, AND THE MAKING OF SEXUAL IDENTITY (2000).

<sup>3</sup> Editors Craig A. Rimmerman and Kenneth D. Wald are political science professors at, respectively, Hobart and William Smith Colleges and the University of Florida; Clyde Wilcox is a professor of government at Georgetown University.

<sup>4</sup> Rimmerman et al. eds.

<sup>5</sup> See *id.* at 1.

*Cycles of Change, Questions of Strategy*<sup>6</sup> examines the movement's history, from its early glimmerings in the aftermath of the social upheaval triggered by World War II, through alternating cycles of "leaping" (the galvanizing years of the AIDS crisis) and "creeping" (the closeted Reagan years), to today, when the movement is beleaguered by another round of conservative attacks and weakened by internal disagreements about priorities. Nonetheless, the gay rights movement seems poised for another period of "leaping" change, which, D'Emilio predicts will be achieved through building coalitions with potential civil rights supporters outside of the gay community.

The remaining essays are arranged in four groupings. Those in Part I examine the political evolution and current status of the gay rights movement, including its strategies for effecting change and the internal conflicts that sometimes interfere with those strategies. Part II focuses on the opponents of gay rights -- who they are, why they feel the way they do, and what strategies they have employed to achieve their goals. Part III highlights specific issues that have generated national controversy in recent years -- the blatant demagoguery and probable toothlessness of the Defense of Marriage Act, the so-far-unsuccessful federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act, the devastation of AIDS and the lessons it taught on the politics of public health, and the continuing saga of gay persecution by the United States military, with its disproportionate impact on women of color. Finally, the essays in Part IV examine the different political arenas in which equal rights are being pursued -- state and local politics, Congress, the Supreme Court, and the "court" of public opinion.

Although the topical scope of the collection is broad, each essay explores its subject with depth and extensive scholarly documentation. The endnotes and bibliographies that accompany each essay provide an invaluable resource for further investigation. Collectively, the essays and their supporting references offer an excellent introduction to the current state of affairs in the movement for gay civil rights, complete with critical insights into what has gone right and wrong in the past, and recommendations for more effective future strategies. To offer just a few examples:

Craig Rimmerman's *Beyond Political Mainstreaming*<sup>7</sup> examines the different strategies that the gay rights movement has employed to effectuate political, social and legal change. Reliance on traditional interest group politics alone, he argues, has proven to be too limiting because elected officeholders cannot stray far from the sensibilities of their constituents if they hope to win future elections. Even a legislator convinced that justice demands full equality may hesitate to voice a position that is strongly opposed by a substantial number of his or her constituents. Further aggravating this leadership vacuum is the fact that, in attempting to join the political mainstream, the gay rights movement has operated at a severe disadvantage compared with many competing in-

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<sup>6</sup> See *id.* at 31.

<sup>7</sup> See *id.* at 54.

terest groups that are better funded and have not been burdened with the discrimination and public animus that limits gay advocates' access to important resources. Rimmerman apparently agrees with Urvashi Vaid's observation that the pursuit of mainstream politics has led the gay rights movement to a state of "virtual equality," in which "gay and lesbian people are at once insiders, involved openly in government and public affairs to a degree never before achieved, and outsiders, shunned by our elected officials unless they need our money or votes in close elections."<sup>8</sup> As an example, Rimmerman points to the Log Cabin Republicans, who were at first snubbed outright by Republican presidential candidates Bob Dole and George W. Bush, and later only grudgingly acknowledged by them, and who continued to endorse their party's candidates in the 2000 campaign even though the official Republican platform was conspicuously anti-gay. One might also point to President Clinton and a long list of Democratic Senators and Members of Congress who actively courted the support of gay voters and then betrayed them on such matters as the Defense of Marriage Act<sup>9</sup> and the military's tragic and farcical "don't ask, don't tell" policy.<sup>10</sup>

What are the alternatives to mainstream politics? As the gay rights movement has increasingly discovered, politicians respond to changes in public opinion, and education is the key to effecting such change at the grassroots level. In their essay *Gay Rights in the Public Sphere*,<sup>11</sup> Clyde Wilcox and Robin Wolpert evaluate the distribution of positive versus negative attitudes

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<sup>8</sup> See *id.* at 57 (quoting URVASHI VAID, *VIRTUAL EQUALITY: THE MAINSTREAMING OF GAY AND LESBIAN LIBERATION* 4 (1995)).

<sup>9</sup> Defense of Marriage Act, Pub. L. No. 104-199, 110 Stat. 2419 (1996) (codified at 28 U.S.C. § 1738C and 1 U.S.C. § 7).

<sup>10</sup> Although the "don't ask, don't tell" policy was presented to the public as a relaxation of the previous ban on gays in the military, the Department of Defense's (DoD) own statistics show that while the number of persons discharged from the military on the basis of their sexual orientation initially decreased after the new policy took effect in 1994, that number dramatically *increased* in subsequent years. Harassment of military personnel perceived as gay has reportedly increased even more. See WILLIAM N. ESKRIDGE, JR., *GAYLAW: CHALLENGING THE APARTHEID OF THE CLOSET* 381-82 (1999) (collecting DoD statistics); Stacey L. Sobel, Kathi S. Wescott, Michelle M. Benecke & C. Dixon Osburn, *Conduct Unbecoming: The Sixth Annual Report on "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue, Don't Harass,"* app. (Servicemembers Legal Defense Network 2000) (collecting DoD statistics and other data). Commenting on the high number of discharges, the DoD's own report in 1998 noted that "the consistent upward trend from 1994 to 1997 raises questions about how our policy is working in practice," and acknowledges that the discharges have had a disproportionate effect on women. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), *Report to the Secretary of Defense: Review of the Effectiveness of the Application and Enforcement of the Department's Policy on Homosexual Conduct in the Military* (April 1998).

<sup>11</sup> See Rimmerman et al. eds. at 409.

toward the gay and lesbian community throughout the general population. Their conclusions offer a crucial roadmap for efforts to combat the ignorance, myths and stereotyping that present the greatest roadblock to equal rights.

Wilcox and Wolpert compile data from numerous surveys of public attitudes on gays and lesbians, and use regression analysis to correlate that data with such factors as age, gender, educational level, and religious affinity. Their results demonstrate that positive attitudes toward gays and lesbians correlate strongly with higher levels of education. Positive attitudes are also more common among women, young people, and persons who do not identify themselves as highly religious. And, not surprisingly, people who have more frequent contact with members of the gay and lesbian community are more likely to express positive feelings toward this group.

The prevalence of positive attitudes among women and young people certainly bodes well for the future of gay rights, as both of these constituencies move into positions of greater political power. And while civil rights advocates cannot, by themselves, increase the overall educational level of the electorate, there is a great deal they can do to overcome the public's lack of information regarding the gay and lesbian community and the legal and economic hardships visited on that community by the persistence of discriminatory laws at the state and federal level. With gays and lesbians throughout the country becoming more open about their sexual orientation, a much larger segment of the public will come to know them as family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors, and will in due course recognize the false stereotypes for what they are. As Justice Stevens has noted: "Unfavorable opinions about homosexuals 'have ancient roots.' Like equally atavistic opinions about certain racial groups, those roots have been nourished by sectarian doctrine. Over the years, however, interaction with real people, rather than mere adherence to traditional ways of thinking about members of unfamiliar classes, have modified those opinions."<sup>12</sup>

The catch-22, however, is that the persistence of *de facto* and *de jure* discrimination continues to discourage many people from identifying themselves as members of this particular minority group. To a greater extent than most minorities, many gays and lesbians can hide their minority status from public view, either by denying their sexuality altogether, or by curtailing even the most commonplace public expressions of that sexuality, such as holding hands or even mentioning the existence of a same-gender romantic partner. Such reticence is encouraged and reinforced by the explicit and implicit threats of discrimination, harassment, and physical violence, which might penalize them for deviating from this practice.

As for the connection between religious affinity and hostility toward the gay and lesbian community, Wilcox and Wolpert's study demonstrates that the gay rights movement must continue to combine its educational efforts with a

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<sup>12</sup> *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale*, 120 S. Ct. 2446, 2477-78 (2000) (citations omitted) (Stevens, J., dissenting).

strategy of civil rights litigation in order to establish the constitutional infirmity of laws which deprive citizens of equal rights either on religious grounds or on the grounds of animus toward a particular minority group. Fortunately, the outlook for such litigation is more encouraging today than it was a mere decade ago. In *Romer v. Evans*, the United States Supreme Court struck down an amendment to Colorado's constitution which would have invalidated all state and local laws prohibiting discrimination against gays and lesbians.<sup>13</sup> Six of the nine justices held that no rational basis existed for imposing this special disability on a minority group:

[L]aws of the kind now before us raise the inevitable inference that the disadvantage imposed is born of animosity toward the class of persons affected. "If the constitutional conception of 'equal protection of the laws' means anything, it must at the very least mean that a bare . . . desire to harm a politically unpopular group cannot constitute a *legitimate* governmental interest." Even laws enacted for broad and ambitious purposes often can be explained by reference to legitimate public policies which justify the incidental disadvantages they impose on certain persons. Amendment 2, however, in making a general announcement that gays and lesbians shall not have any particular protections from the law, inflicts on them immediate, continuing, and real injuries that outrun and belie any legitimate justifications that may be claimed for it. . . .

. . . We cannot say that Amendment 2 is directed to any identifiable legitimate purpose or discrete objective. It is a status-based enactment divorced from any factual context from which we could discern a relationship to legitimate state interests; it is a classification of persons undertaken for its own sake, something the Equal Protection Clause does not permit. "Class legislation . . . [is] obnoxious to the prohibitions of the Fourteenth Amendment . . . ."

We must conclude that Amendment 2 classifies homosexuals not to further a proper legislative end but to make them unequal to everyone else. This Colorado cannot do. A State cannot so deem a class of persons a stranger to its laws.<sup>14</sup>

*Romer* is certainly encouraging. However, as illustrated by the zeal of Justice Scalia's dissent in *Romer*<sup>15</sup> and former Chief Justice Burger's concurrence a decade earlier in *Bowers v. Hardwick*,<sup>16</sup> opponents of discrimination still face an uphill battle against what Wilcox and Wolpert describe as "a core of visceral opposition to gay rights that is likely to be slow to change."<sup>17</sup>

Several of the essays in this book address divisions and differences of opinion within the gay rights movement. Keith Boykin, former Executive Di-

<sup>13</sup> See *Romer v. Evans*, 517 U.S. 620 (1996).

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at 634-35 (citations omitted).

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at 653 (Scalia, J., dissenting) (describing legalized discrimination against gays and lesbians as "an appropriate means" to "prevent piecemeal deterioration of the sexual morality favored by a majority of Coloradans").

<sup>16</sup> *Bowers v. Hardwick*, 478 U.S. 186, 196 (1986) (Burger, C.J., concurring) (defending anti-sodomy laws on ground that "condemnation of those practices is firmly rooted in Judeo-Christian moral and ethical standards").

<sup>17</sup> Rimmerman et al. eds. at 415.

rector of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum, contributes *Where Rhetoric Meets Reality*,<sup>18</sup> a thoughtful essay on the marginalization of African-Americans in what has, in recent years, come to be a largely white-dominated gay rights movement. Although Boykin criticizes this turn of events, he also offers specific and practical suggestions for creating a more inclusive environment. Other divisions in the movement are explored in *Lesbian and Gay Policy Priorities*,<sup>19</sup> by Jean Reith Schroedel and Pamela Fiber, who observe, that while gay men and lesbians generally agree on the need for equal rights, the community often splits along gender lines when it comes to specific priorities. Women, for example, tend to place higher priority on such issues as employment discrimination, marriage rights, and the parental rights of same-gender couples; women also devote more of their energy to issues that affect not only lesbians but women generally, such as abortion rights and women's health issues. Ironically, the authors note, the divisions between gay men and lesbians have decreased markedly during those periods in which the gay rights movement has experienced the greatest stress. This banding-together was observable during the AIDS crisis, which saw many lesbians taking on caregiver roles even though "their" segment of the gay and lesbian community was the least affected (directly) by this disease (and was, indeed, far less affected than the heterosexual community). More recently, the conservative religious backlash against equal rights has once again unified the gay and lesbian community in spite of their different priorities.

Who opposes gay rights, and why? John C. Green, an expert on religion and politics, explores this question in *Antigay: Varieties of Opposition to Gay Rights*.<sup>20</sup> At the root of most anti-gay sentiment, he posits, is the religious constituency that has come to be collectively known as the Christian Right. Their influence permeates not only those institutions that are explicitly religious in their purpose, such as fundamentalist Protestant denominations, but also many seemingly secular institutions that either embrace the social and cultural traditions of those religious institutions or view with suspicion any influences which might alter the traditional social order. As examples, Green points to the police and the military (noting, however, that even within these generally conservative institutions there may be diverse points of view). One might add to this list the once-venerable Boy Scouts of America (BSA), whose official anti-gay stance is now a matter of public record<sup>21</sup> and has already cost them dearly in financial support and good will. Why the BSA chose to embrace discrimination remains something of a mystery; their policy has been resoundingly rejected by other mainstream youth organizations, including the Girl Scouts of America, the 4-H Clubs, the Boys and Girls' Clubs of America, the YMCA, the YWCA, the Campfire Boys and Girls, and the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of Canada. Per-

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<sup>18</sup> See *id.* at 79.

<sup>19</sup> See *id.* at 97.

<sup>20</sup> See *id.* at 121.

<sup>21</sup> See *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale*, 120 S. Ct. 2446 (2000).

haps the answer lies in the BSA's predominantly male leadership; as demonstrated in Wilcox and Wolpert's regression analysis, anti-gay sentiment is far more prevalent among men than women.

What strategies are favored by the opposition to gay rights? One weapon employed by gay rights opponents at the state level is direct democracy, as illustrated by the recent wave of anti-gay ballot initiatives. In *Direct Democracy and Gay Rights Initiatives after Romer*,<sup>22</sup> Todd Donovan, Jim Wenzel, and Shaun Bowler examine the many such initiatives that have appeared on state ballots in the last few years. While the authors note that most such initiatives have failed, their essay predates the success of the Knight Initiative in California, which, combined with the recent success of other anti-gay initiatives in Hawaii and Alaska, may encourage initiative proponents in other states. The authors also note, however, that even where such initiatives succeed, they are often struck down by the courts, the Colorado initiative invalidated in *Romer* offering perhaps the most dramatic example. They point to some striking parallels between anti-gay ballot measures and similar measures that have sought to diminish the rights of other (usually ethnic) minority groups as soon as those minority groups have begun to have a voice in the legislative process; examples include ballot initiatives that were designed to reinstate segregation in public schools, housing, and public accommodations during the 1960s, and, more recently, initiatives designating English as the "official language" of a state. The danger of such initiatives is that they enable a majority to vilify a minority based on emotion, propaganda, and ignorance; unlike elected legislators, individual voters need not account to the public for their choices, and thus need not articulate any justification for their support of these measures. In a particularly intriguing observation, the authors point out that the leading proponents of these anti-gay initiatives have usually run for elected office soon after their initiatives appeared on the ballot. Thus, it appears, many of these anti-gay initiatives may be motivated not by concern for the public's welfare, but by the proponent's own political ambitions. Much as Senator Joe McCarthy and attorney Roy Cohn used the communist/homosexual spectre during the 1950s to feather their own political nests at the expense of countless lives and reputations, the purveyors of today's anti-gay ballot measures have attempted to parlay the emotions stirred up by these issues into their own political fortunes. The success or failure of the initiative, or its legal validity, is therefore irrelevant; because its true purpose is to attract political capital, its *legal* consequence is merely a side effect. This may explain why many of these initiatives are drafted so poorly that they are likely to prove unenforceable.<sup>23</sup> By the time the

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<sup>22</sup> See Rimmerman et al. eds. at 161.

<sup>23</sup> Nevada's recent anti-gay ballot initiative is a good example. The proposed amendment to the state constitution reads, in its entirety: "Only a marriage between a male and female person shall be recognized or given effect in this state." However, neither the initiative itself nor current Nevada law defines "marriage." More amusing still, the initiative appears to outlaw divorce.



fraud is revealed, the proponent hopes to have moved on to bigger and better things..

Which is why, although mainstream politics and grassroots efforts to change public opinion may in the long run be instrumental in achieving full equality, in the short term there is often no substitute for judicial intervention.<sup>24</sup> If the Supreme Court had not struck down anti-miscegenation laws in *Loving v. Virginia*,<sup>25</sup> how long would it have taken for public opinion to force their repeal?<sup>26</sup> Yet public opinion, mainstream politics, and judicial redress are not unrelated. Witness the Supreme Court's remarkable turnabout in the ten years between *Bowers v. Hardwick* (upholding Georgia's ban on sodomy by a 5-4 vote) and *Romer v. Evans* (striking down, by a 6-3 vote, Colorado's constitutional ban on laws prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination). Only three justices -- Rehnquist, O'Connor, and Stevens -- participated in both decisions. One of these-- O'Connor -- voted against the interests of the gay movement in *Bowers*, but voted in favor of those interests ten years later in *Romer*. The other six *Bowers* justices had been replaced by the time *Romer* was decided. Although the cases raised different legal issues, and therefore cannot be viewed simply as barometers of the changing climate for gay civil rights, it is interesting to note that the new justices who voted in favor of gay interests in *Romer* -- Ginsburg, Souter, Kennedy, and Breyer -- are generally considered to be political moderates rather than traditional liberals.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the traditional partisan politics of judicial nomination and confirmation virtually ensured that no one whose politics veered too far to the left would have been appointed to the Court during this period. Yet these moderates joined the traditionally conservative O'Connor to issue the most pro-gay decision ever to emerge from the Supreme Court.

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<sup>24</sup> For a detailed and analytical history of gay civil rights litigation, see PATRICIA A. CAIN, *RAINBOW RIGHTS: THE ROLE OF LAWYERS AND COURTS IN THE LESBIAN AND GAY CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT* (2000).

<sup>25</sup> *Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1 (1967).

<sup>26</sup> A ban on interracial marriage, unenforceable since 1967, remained in Alabama's constitution until the November 2000 election, and the ballot initiative repealing this deadwood was not unopposed. Polls showed that 34% of Alabama's voters still disapproved of interracial marriage, and that while the repeal was likely to succeed, only 64% of the electorate was expected to vote for it. The actual vote was even closer, with a full 40% of Alabama's electorate voting to uphold the interracial ban. (Although it comes as no surprise that the racial attitudes of some voters might lead them to vote against the ban, even if that vote was largely symbolic, it is more difficult to explain the 17% of voters who still described themselves as "undecided" as late as September). See Mike Gadd, *Views on Mixed marriage are Stuck in the Past*, THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, Sunday Chronicle section at 6 (Jan. 7, 2001); Judy Sheppard, *Alabama Voters May Bury Interracial Marriage Ban*, THE ATLANTA JOURNAL AND CONSTITUTION, Sept. 26, 2000 at 11A; Dale McFeatters, *Focusing on the Undecided Voters*, SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE, Oct. 4, 2000, available in LEXIS, News Group File, Most Recent Two Years. A similar provision in South Carolina's constitution was not repealed until 1998, with only 60% voting in its favor. See Louis Jacobson, *Cast Away*, THE NATIONAL JOURNAL, July 1, 2000, at 2150.

<sup>27</sup> Justice Ginsburg was considered to be the crucial "swing vote" on the polarized D.C. Circuit before her appointment to the Supreme Court.

Thanks to *Romer*, and to the new generation of jurists who crafted that decision, it appears that recognizing the rights of sexual minorities has become downright respectable.

Is Gandhi smiling somewhere?