

Former President Makes Surprise Appearance At Gay Event

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by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff

(Miami, Florida) Former President Bill Clinton made a surprise appearance at a benefit on the weekend for the **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**.

Clinton was in South Florida to campaign for Democratic candidates. An aide called the NGLTF about an hour before to say that Clinton would like to attend.

The former president mingled with the 650 people who attended the dinner and stayed to see old friend NAACP Chair Julian Bond receive an NGLTF leadership award. Bond has been a longtime supporter of LGBT issues.

Last week Bond told a forum at the University of Virginia where he is a professor that the state's proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage is nothing less than discrimination and no different from racism.

"I have the privilege of traveling all across this country and talking with LGBT people and virtually everywhere I go there is wrenching injustice: high rates of suicide, homelessness and violence and bullying among our young," NGLTF Executive Director Matt Foreman told the crowd.

"Rampant discrimination in employment keeping closet doors slammed shut and the homophobia that is fueling the immoral rates of HIV infection among African-American gay and bisexual men. And the daily heartbreaking injustices our families face almost everywhere because they are denied legal recognition and protection.

"All of this makes me heartsick and angry at the root causes of these scourges. Angry that an entire industry has been built around demonizing, defaming and dehumanizing gay people. Angry that we now live in a nation where lying about a blow job is an impeachable offense, but lying that leads to the literal blowing up of thousands of human bodies is not. Angry that homophobia is once again polluting the political discourse in this election — at this very moment in time — in both subtle and crass ways."

And Foreman had some pointed words for former Florida Congressman Mark Foley.

"Mark, whenever you re-emerge from wherever you are, please don't come crawling to us looking for acceptance — there's no toaster waiting for you here, that I promise."

The dinner raised more than \$270,000, two-thirds of which will be donated by the Task Force to organizations serving the Miami-Dade LGBT community.