



## Gerald Ford Remembered as Supporter of Same-Sex Couples

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In a December 30th syndicated column, writer Clarence Page remembered former President Gerald Ford as a man who “did not shrink away from controversy. When he felt the time was right for him to speak out, he said things that were worth hearing, even if it displeased his more conservative partisans on such hot-button issues as abortion and civil rights, including gay rights.”

**The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force** further explained Ford’s position when they issued a press release on December 27th. In that release, **Matt Foreman**, Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, praised the president as a fierce supporter of same-sex couples’ rights. “When, in 2001, he said, ‘I think they [same-sex couples] should be treated equally. Period,’ he became the highest-ranking Republican ever to publicly support equal treatment for our families,” said Foreman in the release. Ford made this statement during an interview with Deb Price, a well-known queer columnist for the *Detroit News*.

As EDGE Boston noted about that same article, “He [said] that same-sex couples should receive the same economic benefits as married couples, such as Social Security and tax deductions. ‘I don’t see why they shouldn’t. I think that’s a proper goal,’ Ford said at the time.”

Foreman also explained how Ford distinguished himself from other conservative Republicans. “Because he espoused true conservative values,” said Foreman, “he consistently advocated for the rights of individuals and condemned those who sought to impose conformity of thought and behavior.”

In the Force’s press release, Ford was also remembered by Foreman as a supporter of other important causes. Ford’s “beliefs,” said Foreman, “led him to support women’s rights and to publicly support federal legislation to prohibit anti-gay discrimination in employment.”

In addition, the Log Cabin Republicans, a gay political group, remembered in their statement regarding Ford’s passing, that he joined a gay-straight alliance within the Republican Party. “Ford’s decision to join [a] board [within the alliance] marked the first time a past or current U.S. president had joined an organization advocating for gay equality,” EDGE Boston noted.

Ford died Monday, December 26th at age 93.