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Upcoming “Advocate” Article Takes Skeptical Look at Clinton’s GLBT-Friendly Creds

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by Kilian Melloy
EDGE Boston Contributor

Next week’s issue of *The Advocate* takes a good hard second look at Hillary Clinton, wondering whether she’s really the friend in high places the GLBT community has long taken her to be.

According to a story posted yesterday by the *Daily Intelligencer*, Sean Kennedy, editor for *The Advocate*, writes, “Like a blushing schoolgirl, we take the varsity jock’s flirtations at face value, deluding ourselves into believing he’s going to ask us to the prom.

“When in reality,” continues Kelly, “he’s just using us to get to our sexy friend who will actually put out.”

The new skepticism comes from Sen. Clinton having definitively addressed the issue of whether she supports marriage equality. Despite Clinton’s longstanding statement that she supports some rights for same-sex partnerships, she has always said that she is not a believer in marriage equality.

Even so, some GLBT pundits have looked for nuances and shades of meaning to point to an underlying support for marriage equality, which supposedly would be buried under rhetoric for the sake of political palatability.

But Clinton dashed such hopes when she told Kennedy in an interview that if she were quietly a marriage equality supporter, “I would tell you.”

Clinton added, “This is an issue that I’ve had very few years of my life to think about when you really look at it, when you compare it to a whole life span.”

Continued the Senator, “I am where I am right now, and it is a position that I come to authentically.”

Last August, *Newsweek* dove into the question of why it is that gays support Clinton when her support in return is comparatively wan. Early on, the *Newsweek* article pointed out, Clinton enjoyed two fund-raisers sponsored by GLBT donors; an analysis by gay reporter Kisa Keen was cited in the *Newsweek* story, showing that Clinton had GLBT donors to thank for 48% of her war chest. (Obama’s funds came in at 39% from GLBT sources, and John Edwards’ at 13%.)

The *Newsweek* story also pointed out that the Democratic hopefuls agree on topics such as the repeal of the military ban on openly gay troops (they all say it should be repealed) and on ENDA, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (which would prohibit hiring, firing, and promotions based on a worker’s sexuality).

But the question of marriage equality still spooks Democratic leaders--and gives Republicans a

divisive, hot-button issue to build their campaigns around.

The issue proved highly contentious and energizing to the right wing in the 2004 election; the recent defeat of an anti-gay marriage equality constitutional amendment in Massachusetts, the only state in the union thus far to extend full marriage equality to its citizens, may have come about in part to avoid a repeat of how Massachusetts became a lightning rod in 2004 following the state's Supreme Judicial Court's ruling that denying same-sex partners access to equal marriage rights was unconstitutional.

Even with that historical precedent in place as a caution, however, the Newsweek story suggests that the gay love affair with Clinton may be wearing thin, partly because of her unwillingness to blaze the trail on marriage equality nationally. The Newsweek story points out that, "mindful of their community's financial clout, some activists are telling Clinton and the other candidates that they're tired of happy talk about equality and they want to see results."

The Newsweek article quoted Matt Foreman, executive director of The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, as citing an "emotional disconnect" between some GLBT-friendly parts of the Democrats' platforms and other GLBT issues, which seem as though they should logically be embraced by candidates as extensions of their support for certain issues, but which are neglected or rejected by Democratic leaders.

Said Foreman in the Newsweek article, "Hillary Clinton is totally comfortable around gay people."

Foreman continued, "All of the candidates are. Yet when they talk about us, they freeze."

In the Advocate interview, Kennedy asked Clinton whether she herself is a lesbian. The question stemmed from rumors asserting that she is, but Clinton had no problem quashing those speculations.

Said Senator Clinton, "People say a lot of things about me, so I really don't pay any attention to it."

Added Clinton, who is a hopeful for her party's nomination for next year's presidential election, "It's not true, but it is something that I have no control over. People will say what they want to say."