



## **Author David Lampo brings gay-rights message to conservative Republicans**

By **Richard Sincere**

David Lampo, a longtime activist with the **Virginia chapter** of Log Cabin Republicans (LCR) and publications director at the libertarian Cato Institute, is author of a new book, *A Fundamental Freedom: Why Republicans, Conservatives, and Libertarians Should Support Gay Rights*, scheduled to be released on June 16 by Rowman & Littlefield.

Lampo spoke to the **Charlottesville Libertarian Examiner** about the book at the 2012 Capital Pride festival on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, where he was promoting the book at the LCR information table.

He describes his book, *A Fundamental Freedom*, as “a primer about gay rights for Republicans [and] all right-of-center voters.”

### **GOP’s ‘bad reputation’**

The Republican party, he explained, “has a bad reputation regarding gay rights and I thought it was time that somebody try to explain the concept and the philosophy behind [gay issues] from someone who shares their basic, fundamental political values.”

He felt it was important that “rather than liberals or leftists preaching at them about gay rights from the Left, I thought that somebody on the Right, specifically [someone] with a libertarian perspective, should address the issue with them.”

As might be expected, given the subtitle, the book is “primarily about gay issues, mostly at the federal level,” Lampo noted, as well as “the constitutional issues involved with the Tenth Amendment, **DOMA** [Defense of Marriage Act], a federal marriage amendment, and issues like that.”

The author explained that he was “inspired to write” *A Fundamental Freedom* last year, “at the beginning of the Republican presidential nomination process, because a lot of the comments and policies advocated by most of the candidates were so outrageous -- yet they rarely got any kickback from more mainstream or socially tolerant Republicans.”

### **Endless material**

Lampo said that he “just got tired of the lack of a response to the most radical statements from people like **Michele Bachmann** and **Rick Santorum**.”

Although there was, he said, “a never-ending amount of material coming out of the presidential nominating process,” he finished writing the book last fall before taking it to a publisher.

Lampo pointed out that some of the contestants for the GOP presidential nomination were more supportive on gay-rights issues than others, including former Utah Governor Jon Huntsman, former New Mexico Governor **Gary Johnson**, and Texas Congressman **Ron Paul**.

In those cases, he said, “I usually contrast their positions with what most of the candidates said and did.”

The book’s last chapter, he explained, includes a “score card of all the major Republican candidates,” giving each a grade on a scale of A to F.

“Of course,” he noted, Huntsman and Johnson “and even Ron Paul do pretty well, but most of the others [received] Fs.”

### **DADT and libertarians**

If one were to look for supportive Republicans on gay-rights issues, Lampo recommended going first to the Republicans in Congress who voted to repeal the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell (**DADT**) policy of excluding openly gay members of the armed forces.

There were eight GOP Senators who voted to repeal DADT, including Scott Brown of Massachusetts and Richard Burr of North Carolina. Five Republicans in the House of Representatives voted for repeal: Judy Biggert of Illinois, Anh Cao of Louisiana, Charles Djou of Hawaii, Ron Paul of Texas, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida.

“It was their votes that actually got it repealed,” Lampo asserted.

More generally, gay-supportive Republicans can be found “in the more libertarian wing of the party,” he said. Those are the people “who are going to have to lead on it and, in fact, have led.”

### **LCR and GOProud**

The role of gay political groups like Log Cabin Republicans and **GOProud** can also not be discounted, he said.

“It’s self-evident that they’re the two main groups that have brought these issues to the attention of mainstream Republicans and conservative Republicans,” Lampo explained.

“I think their influence on” the Republican National Committee and on “Republican leaders in the House and Senate have been pretty remarkable given the history of the party on gay rights,” he concluded.

David Lampo will be the featured guest **at a book-launch party** for *A Fundamental Freedom* in Alexandria, Virginia, on Friday evening, June 15.