

POLITICO's daily debate with policymakers

The Arena

May. 09, 2012

Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: [David Mark](#)

Will evolution on gay marriage help or hurt Obama?

[David Boaz](#) *Executive VP, Cato Institute* :

Congratulations to the president for getting on the right side of this generation's civil rights struggle. He can be an important leader for equality under the law.

But of course, this announcement does raise questions. Was he telling the truth to voters in 2008 when he said, "I believe that marriage is between a man and woman and I am not in favor of gay marriage" and when he told voters in 2004 that "My religious faith dictates marriage is between a man and a woman, gay marriage is not a civil right"?

Or when he told voters in 1996, "I favor legalizing same-sex marriages, and would fight efforts to prohibit such marriages"? Has he been wrestling with a conflict between his religious faith and his belief in the Constitution, or just with conflicting political pressures?

Nevertheless, he's in the right place now. And he says he's been "evolving," so we know he sees his new position as the evolved one. Good for him.