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Panel on Gay Conservatives Includes No Gay American Conservatives

Posted by **B. Daniel Blatt** at 2:40 am - February 17, 2010.
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The Cato Institute has long been my favorite Washington D.C.-based think tank. I don't always agree with them on foreign policy, but do appreciate their commitment to freedom and their promotion of policies which seek to reduce the influence of the government in our lives. When possible, I support their efforts, having given more to them than to any other policy organization in our nation's capital. And I appreciate the respect they show their donors.

Thus, I was disappointed to read that an event they are sponsoring, Is There a Place for Gay People in Conservatism and Conservative Politics?, does not include a single gay American conservative. Given that the lead panelist, Nick Herbert, who, we know from his very title, (MP [Member of Parliament], Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Conservative Party, United Kingdom) has experience working with a right-of-center party across the pond, you've got to wonder why they didn't include someone who has had similar experience over here.

Instead, they've got someone who has spent the last six years (well, it will be six years a week from today) badmouthing the GOP. Yes, that would be Andrew Sullivan. Given that they're holding this policy forum on the eve of CPAC that GOProud (which bills itself as representing "gay conservatives and their allies") is sponsoring and where my co-blogger is speaking, they could easily find someone working within the conservative movement, someone who would have a less jaundiced view of American conservatives in general and the GOP in particular.

Now, this one panel won't dampen my overall enthusiasm for Cato and their work, but it does call into question their judgment. It's as if they were caught in a time warp and were looking at an early 1990s roster of out gay conservatives. That list has grown considerably since then. And despite his claims, Andrew Sullivan's name is no longer on it.

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1. there's no denying the list of conservatives of lgbt persuasion has increased since the 1990's (thank you jesus!) but i don't know that anyone who bad-mouths the gop automatically sees his/her conservative credentials disqualified; and i'm curious to know why anyone would argue that.

   if that were true, would it also apply to people on the left such as john avarosis who have badmouthed both the democratic party and democratic party lap dogs (e.g. the hrc)?

   Comment by daftpunkydavid — February 17, 2010 @ 5:07 am - February 17, 2010

2. I hope you will forward your post to CATO. They need to know how gay conservatives feel about their "gay conservative" event. You're right on the money. Sullivan has no business being on that panel. I'm sure he's still gay, but he can hardly still be called anything close to conservative. Having him represent gay conservatives is a major faux pax on CATO's part.

   Comment by American Elephant — February 17, 2010 @ 7:17 am - February 17, 2010

3. One has to behave like a conservative to actually have conservative credentials. Andrew Sullivan does nothing of the sort, and hasn't for some time.

   Ask the typical gay conservative who reads this blog whether or not they believe Andrew Sullivan represents even a small fraction of their views on any given subject; I think you might have a hard time finding many that would answer in the affirmative.

   Personally, CATO's choice disgusts me. The very notion of it is offensive.

   Comment by Robert — February 17, 2010 @ 9:16 am - February 17, 2010

4. Andrew Sullivan is about as conservative as Joe Solomnese.

   No, really. Compare what they say and the stands they take since the day Bush broke Andrew's heart on gay marriage. $5 says Joe Solomnese is on Andrew's right.

   Comment by DoDoGuRu — February 17, 2010 @ 9:45 am - February 17, 2010