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Evolution's End? President Obama Calls for Same-Sex Marriage



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Is President Obama's "evolution" on same sex marriage finally complete? His call for the legalization of same-sex marriage yesterday is an historic and tragic milestone. An incumbent President of the United States has now called for a transformation of civilization's central institution. And yet, no observer of this President could be surprised. The arrival of this announcement was only a matter of time.



The White House confirmed this within hours of the President's announcement. As *The New York Times* reported on May 10, "Advisers say now that Mr. Obama had intended since early this year to define his position sometime before Democrats nominate him for re-election in September."

Previous news reports indicated that the 2012 platform for the Democratic Party would likely include a call for same-sex marriage. The pressure was on the White House, with the President caught in an awkward and embarrassing situation in which major figures on both sides of the controversy believed that his public position did not reflect his true convictions.

In December of 2010, the President told Jake Tapper of ABC News, "My feelings about

this are constantly evolving.” Last October, he told George Stephanopoulos, “I’m still working on it.” As Dan Amira of *New York* magazine summarized that comment, “President Obama won’t say if he’ll stop pretending to oppose gay marriage before the election.”

In August of 2008, running for the White House, President Obama had said: “I believe that marriage is the union between a man and a woman. Now, for me as a Christian — for me — for me as a Christian, it is also a sacred union. God’s in the mix.”

In February of 1996, running for state office in Illinois, Obama signed a letter to a homosexual newspaper in Chicago that included the statement, “I favor legalizing same-sex marriages, and would fight efforts to prohibit such marriages.” So, his statement today puts him back where he was on the record as recently as 1996 — calling for the legalization of same-sex marriage.

The President’s position since 2008 has been untenable. Having endorsed same-sex marriage when running for office in 1996, he evidently changed his position as he ran for the U. S. Senate in 2004 and for President in 2008. Since then, his language and his actions have been contradictory. He has said that he opposes same-sex marriage, but he ordered his Attorney General not to defend the Defense of Marriage Act. Officials in his administration openly advocated same-sex marriage, even as the President dropped hint after hint that he did as well. The President found himself facing the fact that he would have to declare himself one way or the other on the question as the 2012 election unfolded — so now we know.

Why now? *The Washington Post* reports that he was under intense pressure from many Democrats, including his major campaign fundraisers. According to the paper’s report, one in six of the President’s major “bundlers,” or fundraisers, is a self-identified homosexual.

The immediate pressure came after Vice President Joe Biden said last Sunday that he was “completely comfortable” with same-sex marriage. The Vice President’s statement on the issue delivered full support for same-sex marriage. On Monday, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan followed Biden’s lead.

The President was under intense pressure within his party, but the issue quickly turned into an issue of presidential character. No one made this point more directly than Ruth Marcus of *The Washington Post*, in a column that ran yesterday morning. “Same-sex marriage is turning into a test of character and leadership for President Obama,” she wrote. “Does he favor it, or doesn’t he? In the wake of Vice President Biden’s remarks supportive of marriage equality, the continued presidential equivocation makes Obama look weak and evasive”

She wasn't finished. "The longer Obama waits, the worse he looks. The President's first stall tactic, that he is 'evolving' on the issue, doesn't cut it anymore. Even Darwin would have lost patience by now. His second approach, the not-gonna-make-news-for-you-today cop-out, has also worn thin. If you wonder whether the President actually opposes same-sex marriage, doesn't evolution imply change? And if you think perhaps he's still conflicted — well, that's hardly an advertisement to be leader of the free world. At this point, Obama's reticence is looking cowardly."

The President could probably survive that kind of criticism from conservatives, but not from liberals. Clearly, he had to clarify his position.

The President chose to make his statement in an interview with ABC. His statement was really not a serious argument for the legalization of same-sex marriage, however. He spoke of the issue as if it is a matter of personal taste. He told ABC's Robin Roberts that "at a certain point I've just concluded that for me personally it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same-sex couples should be able to get married."

He made his statement the day after voters in North Carolina voted overwhelmingly in support of defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman — the 30th state to have taken such action.

Honesty is the best policy, and the President has now made his position clear. He is again for what he was until today against, but that was only after he was for it before. The American people will have to unravel that as an issue of character. He is hardly the first politician to find himself holding to an "evolving" position on an issue of fundamental importance. Most politicians, however, do their best to avoid the kind of situation in which the President found himself on this issue.

In any event, the fact remains that the President of the United States has now put himself publicly on the line for the radical redefinition of marriage, subverting society's most central institution.

This is a sad day for America, but the President's statement was not a surprise. Given the political context he faced, the only question was when the President would make his public statement of endorsement for the legalization of same-sex marriage. We now know the answer to that question.

This is a sad day for marriage, but now we know the truth.

I am always glad to hear from readers. Write me at mail@albertmohler.com. Follow regular updates on Twitter at www.twitter.com/AlbertMohler

Photo Credit: “President Obama is Interviewed by Robin Roberts of ABC News,” Wednesday, May 9, 2012. Courtesy of the White House Press Office.

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