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SPEAKERS

Bruce Reeves



00:01

Almost everybody who has been present in the caucus has made quite a few enemies in the process. And you open yourself up to a lot of criticism because people all have ideas as to how it should be done. And they love to tell you those ideas. And in fact, I've already been given plenty of ideas from people, a lot of them are good ideas. But I think it's it's a position. It's a position. We're not grateful to our leaders. And this is something that I in fact, wrote about in our newsletter. A few months ago, I was at that point, I had no intention of becoming president. But I made the comment that, you know, there have been many valiant people who gave time and of their money to serve as caucus president. And I think invariably we've, we've tolerated all of them that at some point or another, you know, people like a nice Parker and Norman Guttman and Ray Hill and David Fowler, Dennis Spencer, Larry Lingle, and of course, most recently, Tony Knight, but I think the community owes a debt to these people. And I think it's an important job. For better or for worse, the caucus is the mouthpiece of the gay and lesbian community. That's true. Today, it's a lot more complicated, because there are so many organizations in our community, our communities is very, very diverse. And yet, at least to the people outside of our community, they still come to the caucus, whether the caucus likes it or not, and expect the caucus to express the hopes and the visions of of our community. So there's a great responsibility when you're representing the gay and lesbian community.



Bruce Reeves 01:40

That's true. Well, I know there was even some concern, prior to the last night of elections as to whether there were even going to be any presidential candidates at all. And there are I mean, I know there was an article in the voice talking about the fact that no one had announced after two meetings,



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no one had announced but one gentleman had expressed the desire to run and, and in fact, I did have an opponent. So I was it was a contested election. And but yes, there was an article in

the voice talking about how no one wanted the job. But I don't think that was actually that momentous a story. Because this has happened many times in the past, a lot of times, it's the night of the election, where I mean, all of a sudden, out of the woodwork, you end up having several candidates. Okay, Ray Hill, in fact, I think is notorious for announcing.

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Bruce Reeves 02:31

Well, Ray, I think race always been one of those people to the kind of steps and if no one else is willing to shoulder the burden. I think that's true, which is probably why didn't come last night, because sometimes I've been accused of that, too. And President of the caucus is not a job I want on my resume anytime in the near future.

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I don't know if I you know, I didn't get it from my resume. I kind of career I have I don't know if people really look at being president that caucuses are beneficial, but I'm doing it because I think it's an important job. And, and I love the caucus, even though I think, at times the caucus is a somewhat disjointed organization. And sometimes it raises stupidity to an art form. But I think by and large, I think the caucus is is is an organization has served our community well. And I'm glad we have it, we need it.

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Bruce Reeves 03:33

That's true. We really do. It's, it's always helpful. I know to me to be able to, to look at all the candidates myself, but then you know, when it comes down to those last minute things, the things that are said at the caucus endorsement meetings are always take into consideration. And if I really don't have any other idea how to vote, then the caucus card always comes in very handy. And I guess I've always been one of those people that I always consider the card, but I may not always vote it down the line. And I think there are a lot of people like that in the community, but it's the it's helpful. It's extremely helpful to have all the information that the caucus provides on all the candidates that they're endorsing. So who else are your other officers?

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Well, we we have a new vice president, a fella named Ronnie tarazi, or Trotsky, I'm not sure I can pronounce his name. It's Tiara o zi, and he's he's actually a newcomer to the caucus and very enthusiastic and I'm excited to have them serving as my vice president. Liz Schuler is continuing in her role as Secretary and Scott Tillinghast as our new treasurer. We have two new board members at this point. One of them is Duncan Allen, who has been our our editor of the of our newsletter, which is in the last year it's been an excellent newsletter, which is one good reason for joining the caucus. You get our newsletter which is filled with information, but he also puts together our election newsletter which we send out to you Roughly 11,000 gay friendly and gay lesbian constituents and I believe that the newsletter is probably one of the most powerful things we do as far as affecting elections. Norm Thompson is another addition to the board. And Norm has also been working on probably every committee recently. But there, I

must say I am blessed by having such an excellent board. In the past, sometimes boards at the caucus had been contentious, and if run at loggerheads with the President, I must say, and maybe I'm just going through a honeymoon at this point. But I have a board where people are willing to work. And they share wonderful ideas. And so I'm very enthusiastic about this year.

 Bruce Reeves 05:50

Great. So what do you want to see the caucus to this year there maybe is different from the past or even not different from the past?

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Well, I think it's important that what the COC is doing is to do it well, I think that sometimes organizations can get into a position where they want to do too much, and they end up doing a bad job at everything. And I think one of my big goals is whatever we do, we need to do a quality job. So my first goal is to make sure that the things that we traditionally do that we do them, we do them in an impeccable manner. For example, the way we screened candidates, I want to make sure that when we screen them that it's a thorough screening that the endorsement process is not flawed, that we do the best job of finding out which candidates are best on gay and lesbian issues. That's the first thing I think we need to do. And because that's, I think our main role for this community, that community counts on us to inform them about the candidates. And you're right. The community doesn't always vote the way we recommend, but I think the community, when you get down at the bottom of the ballot, they pay attention. I think a lot of people are very independent when it comes to racism, for example, like the mayor's race or the race for the president of the United States. And the reason being is that most people who vote are exposed to the media and are informed enough to make up their own decisions. And so of course, they look at the caucus endorsement. Because the COC endorsements certainly shed light on the candidates' views on gay and lesbian issues. But a lot of the gay and lesbian community in Houston has other concerns, too. They come from different walks of life, they're members of different professions, and there are other things that they consider in voting. But when you get down to people like constable or sheriff, or all the judges, and even sometimes City Council positions, although less so in those positions, or state legislators, I think most people don't have the time to sit down and really figure out which candidate they are for. And I think that's where our endorsement is a very powerful one. I think we probably do a lot more to get judges elected. You know, if you've ever voted in Texas, you know, ballots in Texas go on forever and ever and ever. One reason is because we elect judges in the state and that makes the ballot, you know, it's a nightmare to go through. And I think I would imagine that most people who vote in our community use our push card, when it comes to the lower parts of the ballot. I think that even people who don't care for the caucus usually, usually follow our recommendation. So I think we're very powerful at that

 Bruce Reeves 08:38

point. But other than obviously, trying to do what we do quality wise, do you have a vision?



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I think I have several other visions. I think one, I think it's important that the caucus ensure that it represents the entire community, I again, as I said, almost by default, or just because the straight community has has anointed us as such, people come to us for the opinion of the gay community. And so I think it's important that the caucus, open up its bridges to other organizations to make sure that we speak for other organizations, and that we know what the pulse of our community is. The caucus, you know, amounts to a little bit over 200 members and they tend to be more politically involved, sometimes more liberal than our community at large. And I think the caucus needs to, to have an idea as to what do other people in our community think and bring them into the process? I think that's another goal. I think a third goal that I think the caucus needs to has an important role is the image that our community has in government. And I think, I think in the past because caucus was one of the few organizations that sometimes was putting the uneasy position of being both the civil disobedience activist and also the coalition builder, and also the quiet person behind the scenes. And that's a very, very schizophrenic role to play. I think that we are, it's a much easier thing for the caucus to have a different image these days, because we have civil disobedience groups like queer nation, that do the dirty work for us. And so I think this is a time where the caucus needs to enhance an image of respectability of a professional organization, that, that speaks for a lot of the quieter elements in our community. And this is not this is not a rebuke, in fact, this is, you know, I'm expressing my gratitude to organizations like queer nation, because I think they make our job easier. And they, they don't put us in this role where we have to play good cop, bad cop that we used to have to play. I think probably what will make this year unique is that this is not only is this a presidential year, and those are always unique years for any political organization, that this is the year that the Republicans are coming to Houston. And so I think the caucus will certainly play a role there. And I'm not sure what the role is going to be. I hope that when we play this role, we, we do it in coalition with other organizations, and I think different organizations will do different things, I know that queer nation will probably have one approach to the convention. I understand the log cabin, Republicans are forming a group and I think they will certainly have a different, very different approach to dealing with a convention, probably one of trying to have influence from within. And I think the caucus will also probably have a role will have a role also, because there will be gay and lesbian activists from all over the countries to descending upon Houston. And so we will all



B Bruce Reeves 11:49

accept chapters around the country are planning to descend on Houston,



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this will be a really exciting time. And in fact, I hope that members of the community will pitch in and help to because I think we're gonna we're gonna play host to the country, not only not only to, of course, the Republicans, but I think we're going to play host to a large group of political organizations. And, and I think this is, you know, this is a time for us to to discuss how are what are we going to do? And what kind of image are we going to portray? This is our time or opportunity to, to speak to America. And if you if you watch politics at all, Republican conventions tend to be really dull. They're not like Democratic conventions, because the Democrats don't get along, they fight and they argue and so I think the media is usually very interested in looking inside the convention, because it's very exciting. Whereas the Republican

conventions, as you probably know, tend to be very choreographed, you know, they got lots of flags, and you know, they get what's his name? You know, Mr. Mr. Lee Greenwood singing, I'm proud to be an American. And you know, you've seen the whole thing, this big American flag descends and all the balloons go up. But it's really it doesn't make good television. And so I think that the media is much more prone to, to go outside of the convention and ask, you know, what, what do ordinary Americans feel and so this is our opportunity to speak as one group of ordinary Americans because I think we are ordinary Americans. And so that's, I think one of our projects for this year. Republican convention should be a lot of fun. It should be a lot of thought.

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Bruce Reeves 13:26

Let's take a short break. We'll be back in just a few minutes. Ask em Phillips's newest CD, be political, not polite, which is available many of her various businesses in town including in Queens, and I think Lucci has, Gordon's usually carries it as well. We are talking with Chris bacon, the new president of the Houston gay and lesbian Political Caucus. And we sort of hit on the endorsement process a little bit earlier. But let's come back to it because I know gRPC has just done the endorsements for the Super Tuesday primary, which is coming up March 10. Real soon, and hopefully everyone got registered to vote. If they didn't need to go get registered, so they can

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well, they won't be able to get registered to vote for this time. But they certainly could need to make sure they're registered to vote for November's election, or

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Bruce Reeves 14:34

for any runoff that may happen. So which I believe we've got at least one race that's most likely to

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have a runoff. You probably had a few run offs. Yeah. Are you let me tell you a bit about these. Let's talk about the process. A lot of people think well, you know, the caucus just gets together and has one crazy meeting and we all express our opinions and pretty crazy meeting and we do have that one crazy meeting but But what people don't realize is the caucus has several stages leading up to that meeting. We spend first of all, throughout the year, the caucus is always gathering information on different candidates, the incumbents, we keep a close ties with the LG ARL, which is the Lesbian Gay rights lobby in Austin. In fact, Texas is one of the few states that has a lesbian and gay rights, lobbyists. And she keeps us abreast of how the state legislators and senators are voting. And so we have records on them. We keep close tabs on the local politicians. And we also rely on national organizations to give us information about congressional candidates. So that's one thing, we're always doing that and we're always keeping files and information on these people. And of course, we have a membership that that generally is very interested in those things. The second thing we do is we screen candidates

and candidates usually come before a committee of usually five to 10 people. And they spend about half an hour with us. And during comments, we usually spend the time a lot of times we asked them why why did they do certain things, and we give them an opportunity to discuss their their positions. And sometimes what we think are their mistakes, is certainly it's a little bit more difficult when you're screening candidates that are running for the first time. But often we try to ask questions that will reveal something about how they think about problems and how they feel about the gay community. And I think in the last year or so we've really fine tune that process used to be a lot of the questions that were asked were questions that require obvious answers. For example, you know, a question would be asked, Would you hire a gay or lesbian on your staff? And of course, any fool who's screened with the Houston Kalos Cox is gonna say, Well, of course I would. So what we've tried to do is we've tried to create questions that often are difficult questions, you know, for example, what is a candidate's position on mandatory testing of health care workers? If they give the what we consider the desired answer, we always ask them to justify it. And how would they defend that? Because certainly, we want to make sure not only do people hold your positions, but also that they understand how to defend the positions we want and bright candidates. And certainly there isn't a right answer. I mean, sometimes candidates might not come up with the, the answer that we would prefer, but they show that they've given thought to it, they show that they're they're open to dialogue. And so we look for a lot of intangibles in the screening process. And I think that the screening processes is very, very effective. We also after we screened the candidates we meet again, the whole screening committee meets again and discusses both what went on in the interview. And sometimes we even have, we have done some research after the interview, because sometimes a candidate will say, Well, you know, I'm a real close buddy of Glen Maxey and the legislative door. Sure. And so what we do is we'll we'll call Glenn up and we'll say, you know, is it true that state legislator, you know, Smith is a good buddy of yours? And Glen Maxey might tell us? Well, yeah, he is. And he's always been very receptive. Or sometimes he'll say, you know, he wouldn't even sit down and have a cup of coffee with me. So sometimes we use that, to clarify to make sure because candidates for some reason some candidates lie. And so we actually go through that process where we make sure that we, you know, we heard right, or sometimes will be someone who will say, you know, he said this, and I know this is not true. So that's the second step. Then we go to the caucus meeting, and there we make our recommendations, we usually share the information. The caucus, generally accept the recommendations of the committee, but there are times where it's really close. And sometimes the caucus goes does something differently. Sometimes we present to the caucus as a recommendation for both candidates, or for neither. We had one situation this time where the screening committee decided to just throw it to the caucus, and that was the the race for the state senate seat number 15, which is being contested between Senator John Whitmire and Representative Romane Martinez, and the screening committee was divided on it. We really, there were advantages to both candidates, and there were disadvantages to both candidates. And so we threw it open to the caucus and the caucus decided after quite a bit of debate to to to endorse Ron Martinez. But I guess what I'm trying to tell the community is although it's not a perfect process, and and I think people have good reasons sometimes to differ with our endorsements. They are made with care and thought and they also represent the efforts of have many, many people. And I think we're doing that even more so today than we've ever done in the past. I

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Bruce Reeves 20:04

know it's having sat on the on the candidate side of that process. I know it's a real excruciating experience. Of all the written questionnaires I had to answer I would say that the car clubs and

GL PCs were probably the two hardest. And we've

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actually we don't have much of a written questionnaire anymore. And the reason we stopped doing that was we found that some of the candidates, particularly the ones who are higher up on the ballot, wouldn't even answer them. They'd have their their, their peons, their peons answered them. And so we kind of like to catch candidates fresh and see, you know, how do you react if you've never been able to prepare for this question? And I think that's what's interesting. Some candidates are, I've got to share, just to give you an example, we were and I will not get his candidates name. We didn't endorse them. But we were we were screened a candidate for the Court of Criminal Appeals, which is in Texas, there's really two Supreme Courts, there's one for criminal matters, and one for civil matters. So this is the highest court in the state regarding criminal affairs, and we were screened this fella and this fellow was visibly uncomfortable. This is a telephone conference, and we had about five people from the caucus. Listening to this man on speakerphone, you could tell he was very uncomfortable about gay and lesbian issues. And, you know, at one point, I said, you know, judge so and so do you know any gay or lesbian people? Because it was so clear that he just didn't have any inkling. And he stopped for a moment. And he said, he said, Yeah, I think I do, he said, but I've never seen them engaging in improper conduct. That, in itself, gave loaded information to us. I mean, we knew that this man, I mean, obviously, and he I don't think he realized what he had said. And I don't think even afterwards, he realized what he had said, he basically had a presumption that what we do engage in is always improper conduct. It was probably the most blatant example. I mean, generally, you don't, you don't get something handed to you, that is so obvious. But I think a lot of candidates do let slip through their sexism or homophobia and racism, and sometimes very unintentionally, and sometimes, inadvertently, without knowing it. And I think that's one of the things the screening process helps reveal. What we're looking for are not necessarily candidates who are 100%, or issues, but we want to have candidates that we know will be open to us that we can approach that won't be uncomfortable when you know, two or three, you know, gays or lesbians show up in our office and say, Can we talk about this? And a lot of candidates, you get the feeling they are they're very comfortable with us? A lot of them you don't?

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Bruce Reeves 22:56

Okay. We're going to talk about the list a little lighter. I'll read that sometime later in the morning. But I know there were a couple of races, you specifically wanted to talk to talk about as far as what the caucus actually did and endorsing. And then you wanted to talk a little bit about some of the races where the caucus chose not to make any endorsements at all.

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But let's start with probably the most important race, and that was the race for president. The caucus chose not to endorse anyone in the either the Republican or the Democratic primaries. And probably because at this point, there are only there's two reasons One, we recognize we don't have influence at the top of the ballot, as we do at the bottom of the ballot with our community, I think we have a very diverse community. And I think we we felt it was probably

not advisable to go with a particular candidate unless there was someone who was clearly outstanding and clearly distinguished themselves on our issues, and also seemed to be a candidate was very likely to win. I mean, electability is important. At the time, we made this decision. None of the candidates really distinguish themselves, those with the best records, were probably the candidates who are least likely to win. And we might actually sort of run down sort of just to give I think, the electorate information since some of you are hopefully all of you who are who are listening tonight, we'll go out and vote. I'd like you to have the information as to what these candidates think. First of all, you know, there's there's three candidates main candidates, I think, in the Republican race and, and I, if I were to write them, one is what is George Bush one is Pat Buchanan, and one is David Duke. I would say that the last two probably get an F on gay and lesbian issues. I probably give George Bush a d minus. He gets a d minus because George Bush She did sign the Hate Crime Statistics Act. He did sign the Americans with Disabilities Act. But you shouldn't realize that he signed these acts because they were overwhelmingly supported by the Congress, he knew that a veto would be overridden. I wouldn't give George Bush a whole lot of credit. Although I would imagine that someone like Pat Buchanan, David Duke would probably oppose those bills even so. I don't need to say much more about George Bush. It's kind of it's kind of I was reading the advocate. And they were referring to a statement that Michael Dukakis made, not Michael Dukakis, Barney Frank made about why he thought the gay and lesbian community in 1988 needed to go with Michael Dukakis. And he said he was sort of like when you're standing at the bar, and they've just called for last call, you know, you go with Michael Dukakis, because he's the only person available. Well, it's kind of a bad metaphor, because in a sense, you can always go home alone, when it comes to sex. But in the, in the matter of president is this writer was pointed out in the advocate, you really have to make a choice and can ultimately the gay and lesbian community finds themselves, they'll have to go with the Democratic candidate, whoever that might be, in the end, because the Republican Party, at least at the presidential level, has been really adverse to our issues. However, we'd kind of like to know who are the best candidates. And they're at this point, there's, we're down to five, five candidates that are at least in the running, of course, there's talk about some others that might emerge later. The two front runners for in Houston seem to be Clinton, who who's got a lot of support in Texas. And until recently, he was considered the most electable candidate. And of course, he's had some problems lately. Very quickly, Clinton on gay and lesbian issues is pretty mediocre, as he has been very reluctant to take a stand on gay and lesbian issues as governor of Arkansas, gay and lesbian groups have had a great, great trouble getting him to speak up ever on our issues. You know, he I don't think he would veto, for example, a gay and lesbian civil rights bill, but he has he has made practically no comments in our favor as far as supporting the gay and lesbian civil rights bill or as far as gays and lesbians in the military,

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Bruce Reeves 27:30

likely something he's likely to try to instigate. Yeah,

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I kind of get the feeling. The problem with these candidates is I think the political advisors have told them that, because the key word in this election is go for the middle class, you know, everybody is middle class. And so, you know, you're going to address the concerns of the middle class and avoid any special interest at all cost, avoid labor, and certainly avoid the gay

and lesbian vote. And so I think because of their political advisors, they won't say the G and L Word. And Clinton, I think, has definitely gotten this advice. He's trying to portray himself as a conservative Democrat. And and he's just he runs from us. Tom Harkin, who's also supported by a lot of liberals in this community, a lot of gays and lesbians like Harkin, because Harkin is the most liberal of all the candidates, at least as far as perception. Harkin is distressing because Harkin is liberal on everything, except on gay and lesbian issues. He is Harkin his people don't realize this, but almost every year, again, lesbian civil rights bill has been proposed in Congress, and every year it's knocked down. Harkin has always been on the no side. Harkin also, although he's been in favor of, of many bills, for AIDS funding, he's certainly always been very sympathetic on issues of health care and health delivery. He frequently has supported amendments to bills for aid spending to make sure that none of the aid spending is used for educational programs that would, would condone the homosexual lifestyle. In other words, same sex literature which might have two men and at Harkin is squeamish about that. And similarly, in this campaign, he has been questioned many times about his issues on gay and lesbian rights. And it's the one issue he runs from and I think that's very distressing to those of us who are liberal like myself, to see him selectively liberal, he's liberal and everything but this is somehow I think, is his farmboy Midwest sensibility gets in the way here, and he feels you know, there's something uncomfortable with that. Similarly, this is trying to be grim. I mean, I'm not I mean, I think each of these candidates I mean, I think, isn't improving improvement over over Bush Buchanan Duke, but I am I'm telling you, these are c minus candidates, if I was going to give them a rating. Similarly, Bob care Right, you know, as another one Bob Kerrey made made the headlines early in the campaign because he was, he was telling a an anti lesbian women's woman joke to Clinton and he didn't realize the microphones were on and it ended up on either C span or something like that. And, and it took him a long time to apologize for that remark. He finally gave sort of a half hearted apology. Carrie is well has shown a reluctance to to address gay and lesbian issues. Now, I believe all three of these men probably, you know, if they got elected, we'd probably be sympathetic to our cause. But I think I always get nervous when people are so political, that they that they're not going to embrace us, even though there might be a risk beforehand. So this leaves us with two. And that is Jerry Brown and Paul Tsongas. And these are the only two candidates that have openly courted the gay and lesbian vote in their campaign. In the case of Jerry Brown, a lot of people think that Jerry Brown is is not is not electrical, you know, they refer to him as governor moonbeam. And that's very and of course, that certainly is a concern of our community. I mean, we, we want, we want a good candidate. But we also want to beat George Bush, and I think we probably many, many of us would rather beat George Bush. And we'd sort of be willing to take any of them and the one who could do it. But even as Governor Jerry Brown had a history of being outstanding on gay and lesbian issues, I mean, he really does have a record. He, he doesn't he's not embarrassed about supporting our community. As Governor, he got the California sodomy law repealed, he supported non discrimination statutes. And even today, he continues that way. Finally, we have Paul Tsongas. Paul Tsongas, when he was in the Senate introduced the first gay and lesbian civil rights bill, he was the first person this is back in 1979, ever to propose that civil rights be guaranteed to gays and lesbians. And he has a history of this. And also to his credit, he still continues to remind people of the support of gay and lesbian issues, which is certainly cheering to us. He lists us in his campaign literature. You know, it's not you don't get the impression with Paul Tsongas that Paul Tsongas is yes, I'm for you. Wink, wink, but let's not make too much noise. Maybe when I'm elected, I'll be able to help you out. So Paul Tsongas, from what I've seen of gay lesbian groups around the country, seems to be one of our better candidates. Now. Again, the concern with Paul Tsongas is electable. A month ago. People said he was absolutely not electable. He looks like he might carry New Hampshire on Tuesday. But even that, we wonder how good that will be or how effective that will be. I mean, he is basically the next door neighbor, he has spent more time in New Hampshire than

anybody else. He hasn't really done much planning, organizing in the south where the next big battle is going to be fought. He's a Greek from Massachusetts, and that sort of brings back the image of someone else. But he really is no, I don't think he's any Michael Dukakis. I'm leading at this point. Personally, this is not I'm not speaking as President, that caucus and I'm just speaking as an individual. I'm pleased with him. But again, I want him to win. And if one of the other seems more electable, I would probably be inclined to go with the most electable one. But I think that Tsongas and brown certainly are the most principled on our issues.

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Bruce Reeves 33:53

And, of course, news yesterday morning, showed us that one of our one of the senators, I believe, from Kansas made the statement that he had been told by Senator Benson from Texas that he would be open to the to a draft to the Democratic Party. What he Where does Benson stand? I

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would, I would venture to say that Benson probably on gay and lesbian issues Benson is is someone that I probably throw in the in the Clinton camp and I, you know, Lloyd Benson is not someone who's who's going to embrace gay and lesbian issues. Lloyd Benson is a is a fairly conservative Democrat. But on the other hand, Lloyd Benson is he could certainly be a formidable opponent. He certainly has a lot of respect. He seems to have emerged from the 1988 campaign untarnished all while the presidential candidate races is uh, has been in probably probably entered his political career, at least for a good decade. You know, Lloyd Benson is is very respected. You know, I think he's I think I think the Republicans would be worried. The other of course the other who knows if he'll run is is Mario Cuomo and you know, he's he's the hamlet on the Hudson character. Mario Cuomo stand on gay and lesbian issues I think is fairly principled although you know he he sometimes has had its problems, you know recently one of the New York universities and I'm not sure which one it was one in Buffalo or something because said, rescinded its policy and said that he would no longer ROTC on campus because of the discrimination that the military practices in recruiting gays and lesbians. Mario Cuomo overturned that decision saying that it was that the Chancellor and I'm probably getting some my facts wrong here. But I think in short, Myra, Mario Cuomo said, well, we can't do that. And it might have been a legal technicality. And he was just doing his job as, as chief executives, ensuring that the legal technicality was pursued, but he doesn't score 100 on gay and lesbian issues, but he certainly I think, is a principled man. And I think he certainly believes that in the rights of gays and lesbians. I think that although he's very political, I think that Mario Cuomo has distinguished himself as not necessarily being the person who says the popular thing. He's he's kind of a he's he's, he's an enigma to everybody, including the press. So but that's the presidential race. And this is not there's no enforcement here. I'm just giving you the information out. I urge. I urge anybody who votes to to ask questions and and call people up and serve. We need to discuss this. And I think that we're going to, I think our newsletter will have an article discussing the presidential race giving the facts out, but it's really not an endorsement, but lets you want to move to other parts of the ballot.

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Bruce Reeves 37:12

Okay. Well, I guess just one, one other remark on that point. Of course, the elections coming up

on Tuesday, March the 10th. Right. And a reminder to everyone that immediately following the close of the polls will be the local caucuses of every precinct, which are equally as important as getting out and voting during the day and you have to vote during the day to

37:31

to vote during the day. And if you've never been to a caucus, it's really worth going. And we at the Houston gay and lesbian Political Caucus mean the The Wednesday prior to that we will talk about the rules at caucuses, you don't need to usually the rules become are explained at the caucus. But if you want some ideas as to what goes on in the caucus, so we meet at the Montrose Palace on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. So the first Wednesday, in March, one of the things we will do is we'll discuss what a caucus is, what happens. What are the rules of the caucus, this is the caucus is one is a place where delegates are chosen for each of the conventions, but it's also a place where if you have strong feelings about a particular presidential candidate, this is a place where you can express them.

B Bruce Reeves 38:26

Okay. So on the more local more love interest, I guess races to most of the people in the caucus and most of our listeners tonight.

38:36

Well, first of all, we have a fairly long endorsement card. And so one of the things and rather than me read it right now, I encourage you before you go vote, try get a hold of one of our push cards. Sometimes we had them out at some of the precincts, particularly the Montrose precincts, you can get one, we're gonna put them in the bars, cut them out of twit. Be sure you have the card because I'm sure that at least for some of the races, you're going to find it very valuable. I'd like just to maybe focus on just a couple of issues or a couple of races. One in the in the race for Congress. We we've we've endorsed two people. One we've endorsed Richard Conrad, who is running for the seat held by Tom DeLay, who's who's definitely an enemy of this community. Richard Conrad is an excellent candidate. And I hope that if you live in that area, and not everybody in our community does live in Richard Conrad Syria, you vote for him in this area. This congressional area of course, Craig, Washington is the candidate for a lot of people but also some people in our community also live in in the area where Ben Ray is is running and Ben Ray is is a candidate that we have also endorsed. There was some discussion on that one, but I think the caucus felt had been raised was the best candidate on our issues. have been racist has promised to support a gay and lesbian civil rights bill if he does get elected to Congress. He Is he is he is also supported a repeal of the military's policy of discrimination against gays and lesbians. Obviously, we've we've endorsed all sorts of judges and constables and the candidate for sheriff and let me say, we've got some good candidates, we endorsed a person named Paul de for sheriff and we were very impressed with him. That's an important position. We want people in law enforcement that are sensitive to gay and lesbian issues, because they have not always been that way. We certainly have also endorsed constable check abbacy, who has been a great friend of our community who's worked hand in hand with both of the caucus and queer nation. Sometimes when the city has failed, the county is has come through at least the law enforcement side of the county. Probably the one race I will focus on

right now. And that is the race for justice of the peace. Precinct one, where we endorsed our longtime activist Ray Hill. And I think that's that's probably it's worth talking about Ray Hill, because Ray Hill is probably the best known gay activist in this town. And probably one of the most controversial, not right. Right, raised very controversial. And, you know, when when when I was screening rain, let me say just because Ray is a former president of the caucus, and, and a member of our community, there is not a presumption that the caucus endorses members of our community. In fact, they're both this election in the last election, there have been members of our community that we have not endorsed, for various reasons. We want to make sure first of all, that the candidate is running a serious race that they're electable. But also that, you know, they're not going to embarrass our community. And certainly one thing we there was one race where we had two candidates both sort of suspect who were afraid that the other one was going to out the the opponent, we don't endorse anyone in that race. This is this was kind of an embarrassing race but Ray Hill. I told Ray, when we screened him, I said, you know, some people in our community love you. Some people hate you. And some white myself sort of have a love hate relationship with Ray and Ray. Ray acknowledge them. And and I did not go into the endorsement process. With necessarily my main mind made up on Ray I there was no presumption that I was going to support endorsement of Ray Hill and I can speak for others in our on our panel. The panel unanimously are actually except for one. I take that back. One person said no. But the other 18 or 19 people that were in the screening process, went with Ray Hill, he was very impressive. He has definitely, he's definitely created, and he has a credible campaign. He is one thing I think that needs to be pointed out. He's he's received the endorsement of the women's Bar Association, which is a group of women's attorneys who chose him over two of their members who are running against him, which I think speaks very highly for Ray Ray. Ray is, is a is a brilliant person. I think he although he is not a lawyer, Ray probably knows law as well as most people who are. He certainly understands constitutional and in criminal legal issues, and certainly issues involving the justice system and the penitentiary system. Right. I think the concerns we had about Ray and I I don't always share what goes on in the endorsement process. But I think the community has a right to know one of the concerns we had with Ray was, you know, you're not a lawyer, you know, how do you expect to? How do you expect to be a justice of the peace? And I think Ray, there was two candidates. The other one was Dill gershenz He was not a lawyer and the difference in how they addressed the question shows the difference in the caliber of candidates Dilger Schinsky? His answer was, well, you must be a lawyer. That's why you're asking that he mean, he just poo pooed the whole idea that he wasn't a lawyer, and that would make no difference. Ray, on the other hand, I think was very sensitive to the issue. He said, You know, I plan to learn on this job. They have training for justices of the peace. And when you're a judge, if you don't know the answer, you always look to the lawyers who are in front of view and say, write an opinion both of you and I'll sit and read your briefs. And I think that I think re address that concern. The other concern I think that people On the board had about Ray was the fact that, as Ray puts it, some people have said there is no place as dangerous as between Ray and a television camera. And Ray does tend to love the media. And he does handle the media very well. But Ray definitely seemed sensitive, the fact that if he were a judge, this would change his role in our community, and that he would no longer be able to address the press in the way that he has done. So in the past, and I think he was very aware of that. I saw a very mature Ray Hill. And, you know, on a personal level, I think that Ray is, is, is a very credible candidate, and I think he has a good chance of winning this. I think there's two advantages to the ray Hill race. Well, I think he's, he's a, he's a damn good candidate. I think the second thing about Ray, I think this is a race where we can actually show you there's certain races where we can show our block voting. And I think this is one of those races where we can do that a lot of people probably don't have much use for the justice of the peace position. I mean, it's, in a way JPS don't have the effect on our community at large as say, a state legislator who makes the laws JPS

generally handle smaller disputes, they handle criminal misdemeanor suits, they handle evictions, they, they handle bad checks. So you know, a lot of us if you know if we if we don't write bad checks, and if we don't have tenants, we'll probably never have to deal with the Jaypee court. But I think that by getting a candidate in, I think there's a lot of symbolism that will help our community if we can, if we can get a good candidate, I think Ray would be a good candidate. But it can also send a message to people who seek our endorsement, that we really are a powerful block, vote. And I encourage people, even those people who who've had their reservations about Ray hill in the past, you might get Ray a call if you have reservations about him and him talk to him, because I think Ray will, I think Ray will do a really good job of convincing you that he's this time he's doing this. This is a serious campaign and that I think he will make our community proud of it. And so I wish that in some ways, this is one time, I wish the entire community could have sat in on the screening because I found that that Ray was very impressive. And, and I know that people have reservations about him, I if you do, give him a call and talk to him, because I think he's he's one of the best candidates we've had in a long time. Okay, and

B

Bruce Reeves 47:44

Ray will be our guest, two weeks from tonight. He'll be around 233 o'clock in the morning on February 29. So we're looking forward to that interview. If you've got any specific questions you'd like that you'd like us to ask right on the air. Go ahead and give us a call. And I

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48:00

think, all right, right. And I've had the dialogue. And let me say I I'm excited about race candidacy. And I'm both as president of the caucus, but I'm also excited about it. As, as an individual, I think that this is this is a good candidate. Great.

B

Bruce Reeves 48:17

And if any of our listeners out there would like to, to ask him a specific question or have us asking a specific question. Go ahead and give us a call and we'll jot that question down and be sure we ask those questions because right does handle the media very well. And

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48:32

Ray Ray is wonderful to the media. Ray. Ray is. Yeah, I guess I said I times I love Ray Hill and when I see Ray Hill out there in front of our community, he has done more for our community than probably anyone else. You know, but at times, you know, I've had my dealings with Ray you know, Ray sometimes as as an official of the caucus sometimes we've been trying to orchestrate something and the next thing you know, we're trying to work quietly and you see Ray on television addressing the issue he's he's a media hog and he knows it and and I have no problem saying this on the radio because I say it to race face. And you know Ray Ray and I have had our disputes he doesn't hold grudges to his credit I've criticized Ray many times before and and Ray and I are good friends and because in the end I may I may be more establishment than Ray and I you know I work for a prestigious law firm and I believe in you

know, let's be careful how we approach people and and raise I think a much more in your face kind of activist. But I think we realize that our goals are ultimately the same. Yeah, and and I have great respect for the man. Okay, any

 B Bruce Reeves 49:44

last comments?



49:46

I want to thank you for having me here and I you know, I encourage everybody in our community, go out and vote and if you didn't get registered this time, you need to do it in the future

 B Bruce Reeves 49:55

to sit out because there may be run out you need to vote in this. This



49:59

is a Um, this is one of the ways we make our voice heard and you know, candidates, they respond to us, the more they can see our power, the more likely we can walk into their offices once they're elected and say, you know, we need your help. A lot of candidates believe that our community is a force to be reckoned with. And because of that, I think it's really important that we get out and vote.

 B Bruce Reeves 50:26

Okay. Our guest this morning has been Chris bacon, the newly elected president of G RPC. And Chris, we'd like to thank you for coming on the air and talking to us this morning. And you're listening to KPFT the after our show a continuing tradition here at KPFT on 90.1 FM Houston and the G RPC voting card. More rundown at real quick for Congress. Richard Conrad and Ben Ray is Senate's seat 15 State Representative Roman Martinez, JP and precinct one ray Hill County Commissioner L. Franco Lee for sheriff Paul de constable precinct one Jakob Mercia, Constable precinct two Michael Harris constable precinct seven AB chambers, J. P, precinct six Richard Vera, the State Board of Education position for ALMA Allen, State Representative 132 Scotch Scott Hartsburg State Representative 137 Deborah Dannenberg State Rep. 145 Diana Davila, State Rep. 147 Garnett, Coleman State Senate C 13. Rodney Ellis for Supreme Court Paul banner, the Court of Criminal Appeals place one Charlie Baird, Court of Criminal Appeals place to Morris Overstreet the 14th Court of Appeals, buddy handy the 15th District Court Carolyn Garcia. The 160/4 District Court Katie Kennedy, the 170/8 District Court papi Northcott, the 198th District Court Eileen O'Neill 200 An Eighth District Court John Kyle's and for County Democratic Party chair Ken Benson.

