

WMLight

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STANDING UP FOR OUR AMERICA

President Clinton's conduct in the Monica Lewinsky affair is difficult to defend. Facing a hostile Congress waiting for him to make the slightest misstep and confronted by numerous rumors of sexual misconduct, all while under investigation by a partisan Republican Special Prosecutor, he jeopardized his legacy and all that he has worked for by engaging in extramarital sex with an intern in the White House. His supporters are understandably angry over his conduct.

Nevertheless, the nature of the current crisis in Washington transcends anger. It is part of a larger battle over the very nature of American society and the way that society is governed. If Bill Clinton loses his fight, America's Gays and Lesbians will lose too.

There has been some basis for disappointment in Clinton's performance on issues of concern to our community. Yet, there is no doubt that he has been the best friend we have ever had in the White House.

President Clinton has stood between us and the forces of Majority Leader Trent Lott, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and the rest of their ilk. All of them are intent on turning back the clock on the post-Stonewall gains of our community. Despite their best efforts, our President has seen to it that the Federal government is open to us on a level that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago.

What is tragically disappointing to us is the violation of the President's pledge, made on *60 Minutes* in January of 1992, that if elected, he would not embarrass the country with sexual misconduct. The pledge was unambiguous, and while the show had an incredibly wide audience, it was most effectively directed to Democratic Party activists whose support was absolutely critical to his efforts to secure the nomination for the Presidency of the United States of America.

Bill Clinton's ability to play the hardball politics necessary to get elected in an environment of incredibly dirty politics was evident then and even more evident now. His call for an electable center-left coalition that would bring a breath of fresh air to 12 years of stale Republican politics was, in the end popular, especially with increasingly Republican suburban voters.

Gays and Lesbians responded to that call. We came through with countless volunteer hours, millions of dollars and most importantly with millions of appeals at the company water cooler, within our families and within our wide circles of friends. The President



The Embattled President

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