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## The Outing

### David Dreier and his straight hypocrisy

by Doug Ireland

**The latest target** of a Capitol Hill outing campaign — designed to expose closeted homosexual Republicans who oppose civil rights for gay people — is San Gabriel Valley Congressman David Dreier.

The powerful 12-term congressman — chairman of the House Rules Committee, chairman of the California Republican House delegation, co-chairman of Californians for Bush, chairman of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's transition team — is in the cross hairs of Mike Rogers and his Blogactive.com Web site, whose outing campaign has already forced one GOP congressman out of politics. Representative Ed Schrock, a reactionary from Virginia, ended his re-election campaign last month after Rogers put on his Web site an audiotape of Schrock trolling for tricks on a gay chat line.

Now, Rogers — a former development director for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force — has given Dreier the "Roy Cohn Award, in recognition of 24 years of working against gay and lesbian rights while living as a gay man yourself." He is pummeling Dreier with almost daily revelations as a response to the GOP's anti-gay crusade for a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages.



**Groping for answers: The congressman, with an ex-boss**  
(Photo by AP/WideWorld)

Rogers' campaign against Dreier got a major boost when it was taken up by Raw Story, the hot new liberal gadfly newsblog. Raw Story — which is edited out of Cambridge, Massachusetts, by 23-year-old John Byrne, who is also gay — last week published an interview with Dreier's Democratic opponent in 1998 and 2000, Dr. Janice Nelson, who said she was aware during her 2000 campaign that Dreier was living with his chief of staff, Brad Smith. "Brad was like an invisible presence," she said. "They really have the routine down slick."

Nelson, a professor of pathology, says she came forward when she read on Raw Story that *Hustler* — the Larry Flynt magazine — was working on an exposé of Dreier's secret gay life. Mark Cromer, the mag's features editor in charge of its outing of Dreier, is a former reporter for a string of Valley newspapers in Dreier's district, including the *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*, the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune* and the *Pasadena Star-News*. Cromer said his mag's exposé on Dreier — part of a package on sexual hypocrisy by Republican spear-carriers in the "culture wars" — will be published in November. And he accuses the papers in Dreier's district, all of which spout a conservative, anti-gay editorial line, of having a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy toward the congressman and his relationship with Smith. These papers are all owned by Media News Group (MNG), whose CEO, Dean Singleton, is a major contributor to Republican campaigns. Opinion pages editor Steve Scauzillo said he could not comment on the Dreier matter without the approval of MNG higher-ups.

Raw Story has provided some fascinating details about Smith. It appears that he is the highest-paid chief of staff to any House committee chair. Smith's \$156,600 salary is just \$400 less than that of White House chief of staff Andy Card and Bush political commissar Karl Rove. By comparison, the chief of staff to the chair of the House Judiciary Committee makes \$126,000, while the chief of staff to the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee makes just \$100,696. New Jersey Democratic Governor Jim McGreevey was recently forced to resign when it was about to become public that he had put his boyfriend on the public payroll at a salary slightly less than the one which Dreier pays Smith.

Neither Dreier, Smith, nor the congressman's press secretary would return several telephone calls and detailed voice mails seeking comment. A staff member on Monday hung up the phone when I called back.

**I have always taken the view** that outing a gay person should be approached with caution, and that in doing so one should strictly adhere to the Barney Frank Rule. As articulated by the openly gay Massachusetts congressman during another anti-gay GOP witch-hunt over a decade ago, when Frank threatened to out a number of gay-baiting Republican fellow congressmen, the rule insists that outing is only acceptable when a person uses their power or notoriety to hurt gay people.

Dreier clearly meets that standard, for his voting record is strewn with anti-gay positions. To cite just a few: He opposed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which would have banned discrimination against gay people in hiring; voted for the gay-bashing Defense of Marriage Act; voted for banning adoption by gay and lesbian couples in the District of Columbia (3,000 miles away from Dreier's district); voted to allow federally funded charities to discriminate against gays in employment, even where local laws prohibit such bias; and voted against the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

Dreier is not just a political homophobe but a heartless AIDS-phobe as well, voting against the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program designed to give shelter to the impoverished sick, and against funding for the federal ADAP program that furnishes the poor with the AIDS meds they need to stay alive.

Dreier can probably survive outing in his district and be re-elected, and it won't hurt him much with Arnold and his cronies either. But Dreier's days as a key member of the ultra-homophobic Hastert-DeLay House GOP leadership may be numbered. The telegenic Dreier has often served as the GOP leadership's spokesman on the TV chat-show circuit. It will be interesting to see whether, the next time Dreier shows up on *Crossfire* or Chris Matthews' show, he's asked about the contradictions between his anti-gay voting record and his hitherto-secret life.

Doug Ireland can be reached through his blog, [DIRELAND](#).