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PRESS ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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Romney favors gay rights – how far?

Sacramento, CA / Boston, MA • November 26, 2011 — Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney now favors protection for LGBT workers, both before and after they are hired. “I favor gay rights,” Romney said during a one-hour video interview with the *Nashua Telegraph* newspaper editorial board on Tuesday, marking the first time that a major Republican presidential contender has taken such a position.

At a conservative evangelical forum three days earlier in Des Moines, Iowa, the trailing Republican presidential candidates — Bachmann, Gingrich, Perry, Santorum — renewed their firm opposition to civil rights for LGBT people, but the leading candidates — Cain, Paul, Romney — are trending in the other direction.

“Romney’s new stance raises profound questions for members of the armed forces who are legally married to same-sex spouses,” says Marriage Equality USA Project Leader Ned Flaherty, “because if Romney applies his new fair employment policy to the military, then he would also have to support an end to the pay cuts of up to 40% which are imposed by the Defense of Marriage Act.” DOMA denies all military personnel with same-sex spouses up to 368 active/reserve/veteran benefits, including housing, medical/dental/optical care, commissary discounts, separation pay, relocation, spouse employment aid, survivor benefits, legal services, and burial rights.

Mormon Church officials have strongly opposed LGBT civil rights for decades. It remains to be seen whether Romney’s interpretation of his faith will allow him to advocate for paying all military personnel fairly.

Marriage Equality USA’s “Election 2012” table is a side-by-side comparison of presidential candidates’ plans for America’s 31 million LGBT citizens (www.MarriageEquality.org/Election2012). Since going live on August 15, over 75 articles about the comparison table were published in magazines, Web sites, and newspapers, including *The Wall Street Journal*. This week’s update marks the 11th time since the project began that a candidate has changed a stance. “The data we report is used by voters, journalists, and, of course, the candidates,” says Flaherty.

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Founded in 2000, Marriage Equality USA[®] is a national grassroots organization working to secure legally-recognized civil marriage equality for all, at the federal and state levels, without regard to gender identity or sexual orientation.