



New speaker of the House Mike Johnson once wrote in support of the criminalization of gay sex

By Andrew Kaczynski and Allison Gordon, CNN
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Rep. Mike Johnson speaks to reporters on Capitol Hill on October 24, in Washington, DC.

(CNN) — Speaker of the House Mike Johnson has a history of harsh anti-gay language from his time as an attorney for a socially conservative legal group in the mid-2000s.

In editorials that ran in his local Shreveport, Louisiana, paper, The Times, Johnson called homosexuality a “inherently unnatural” and “dangerous lifestyle” that would lead to legalized pedophilia and possibly even destroy “the entire democratic system.”

And, in another editorial, “Your race, creed, and sex are what you are, while homosexuality and cross-dressing are things you do,” he wrote. “This is a free country, but we don’t give special protections for every person’s bizarre choices.”

At the time, Johnson was an attorney and spokesman for Alliance Defense Fund, known today as Alliance Defending Freedom, where he also authored his opposition to the Supreme Court ruling in Lawrence v. Texas — which overturned state laws that criminalized homosexual activity between consenting adults.

ADF wrote an amicus brief in the case which supported maintaining criminalization.

“States have many legitimate grounds to proscribe same-sex deviate sexual intercourse,” Johnson wrote in a July 2003 op-ed, calling it a public health concern.

“By closing these bedroom doors, they have opened a Pandora’s box,” he added.

On Thursday, Johnson was asked to respond to KFile’s report on the editorials during a lengthy interview with Fox News’ Sean Hannity.

“I don’t even remember some of them,” Johnson told Hannity.

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“I was a litigator that was called upon to defend the state marriage amendments. If you remember back in the early 2000s there was over 35 states somewhere in that number that the people went to the ballot in their respective states and they amended their state constitutions to say marriage is one man, one woman. Well, I was a religious liberty defense lawyer and I was called to go in and defend those cases in the court,” he said.

Johnson, who called himself a Bible-believing Christian, went on to say he genuinely loves all people “regardless of their lifestyle choices” and that he respects the rule of law.

Johnson is now the speaker of the House at a time when a majority of Americans are strongly supportive of gay rights.

In the House Republican Conference’s voting for their speaker nominee, Tom Emmer, who initially beat out Johnson, came under fire from conservatives for voting to codify same-sex marriage in 2022.

Johnson, according to Punchbowl News, reportedly made an issue of Emmer’s vote. Johnson voted against the bill. In 2022, Johnson also introduced a bill that some describe as a national version of what critics have called Florida’s “Don’t Say Gay” bill.

In the mid-2000s, Johnson’s anti-gay rhetoric was harsh. In September 2004, Johnson wrote in support of a Louisiana amendment banning same-sex marriage saying it could lead to people marrying their pets.

“Homosexual relationships are inherently unnatural and, the studies clearly show, are ultimately harmful and costly for everyone,” he wrote. “Society cannot give its stamp of approval to such a dangerous lifestyle. If we change marriage for this tiny, modern minority, we will have to do it for every deviant group. Polygamists, polyamorists, pedophiles, and others will be next in line to claim equal protection. They already are. There will be no legal basis to deny a bisexual the right to marry a partner of each sex, or a person to marry his pet.”

Johnson added that allowing same-sex marriage could be the downfall of the democratic system.

“The state and its citizens have a compelling interest in preserving the integrity of the marital union by making opposite-sex marriage the exclusive form of family relationship endorsed by the government,” he wrote. “Loss of this status will de-emphasize the importance of traditional marriage to society, weaken it, and place our entire democratic system in jeopardy by eroding its foundation.”

In another 2004 column, Johnson again predicted same-sex marriage could doom America.

“If you were shocked by the moral lapses at the Super Bowl you ain’t seen nothin’ yet,” Johnson wrote. “Experts project that homosexual marriage is the dark harbinger of chaos and sexual anarchy that could doom even the strongest republic.”

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