Can You Say You Support Gay Rights if You Oppose Gay Marriage?

Apparently if your name is Mitt Romney you can. As the GOP primaries near their close, we can see that the nomination is clearly within the former Massachusetts governor’s reach. So, what does this mean for the LGBT community? After all, most of us are more than well aware that the current President is a much better choice as far as our interests go than any of the current Republican candidates, as is usual with regard to the two parties when the progression of our rights is concerned. A Democratic win is always a win for LGBT rights. However, it is important to remember that there is a chance, no matter how seemingly small, that the GOP nominee could best President Obama in the general election. Mitt Romney is clearly the safest choice when looking at things from that angle, but what would a Romney Presidency *really* mean?

Well, there is no way to tell, honestly. When he was governor of the progressive state of Massachusetts, Romney was a truly moderate Republican. He supported gay rights, including gay marriage. However, in order to win over the GOP base and get the nomination, he has had to court the most extreme of the far right, and is doing a decent job of that so far. This is terrible news for LGBT people, of course. As the likes of the Tea Party and other fringe right voters work to move the country closer and closer to the theocracy it was never meant to be, LGBT rights are under attack in a big way from all of the GOP candidates, Romney included. What is most frightening is the fact that we have no way of knowing just what Romney’s positions would be on *any* issue were he to take office, because it seems that the only thing we can be sure of is that he knows how to pander to the base he needs to get the necessary votes to secure the nomination. He could be deceiving the fringe base in order to get to where he needs to be, and go back to being the Mitt Romney everyone remembers from his days as governor of Massachusetts, or he could stay where he is, or, worse, move even further right with the rest of the Republican Party.

In short, we will never know where Romney *truly* stands on LGBT equality unless we see him in action if he were to take the office of the Presidency, which is something most LGBT people fighting for equality do not wish to see. Due to the fact that to deny marriage rights is to deny more than 1300 vital rights and protections to same sex couples that opposite sex couples enjoy, not having marriage rights means not having equal rights. There is no way around that fact. In short, no, Mitt Romney, if you do not support marriage rights, you are not in favor of gay rights.