

**INSIDE THE
BELTWAY**

By John McCaslin

Risen tent

Just over a year ago, then-Texas governor and Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush — calling himself a “compassionate conservative” who supported a “big tent” Republican Party — sat down in Austin to hear the concerns of homosexual Republicans, including former Rep. Steve Gunderson of Wisconsin.

Afterwards, Mr. Gunderson said the meeting “was clearly eye-opening” for Mr. Bush, adding that never again “will a major-party candidate be able to run for president without addressing gay and lesbian issues.”

Yesterday, at the Department of Transportation, Mr. Gunderson was guest speaker for an “Embrace Diversity” ceremony celebrating National Gay and Lesbian Pride Month.

Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta encouraged “everyone at the department to participate in the planned events to celebrate the contributions that gays and lesbians have made — and continue to make — to the department and the nation.”

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Gay pays

Uncle Sam is offering top dollar — almost six figures — for a “Gay and Lesbian Program Specialist.”

The Department of Agriculture yesterday initiated a monthlong search for somebody to manage its Gay and Lesbian Employment Program.

Depending on experience, the permanent position will pay anywhere from \$74,697 to \$97,108 annually, with “promotion potential.”

As for qualification requirements, the position “requires a minimum of one full year of specialized experience in performing a range of duties similar to those outlined above.”

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