

TOP STORY IIII

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'My truth is that I am a gay American'

Following is the full text of the resignation speech given by New Jersey Gov. James E. McGreevey, transcribed by Stateline.org.

Good afternoon. Throughout my life, I have grappled with my own identity, who I am. As a young child, I often felt ambivalent about myself, in fact, confused.

By virtue of my traditions, and my community, I worked hard to ensure that I was accepted as part of the traditional family of America. I married my first wife, Carrie, out of respect and love. And together, we have a wonderful, extraordinary daughter. Carrie then chose to return to British Columbia.

I then had the blessing of marrying Dina, whose love and joy for life has been an incredible source of strength for me. And together, we have the most beautiful daughter.

Yet, from my early days in school until the present day, I acknowledged some feelings, a certain sense separated me from others. But because of my resolve and also thinking that I was doing the right thing, I forced what I thought was an acceptable reality onto myself, a reality which is layered and layered with all the, quote, good things and all the, quote, right things of typical adolescent and adult behavior.

Yet, at my most reflective, maybe even spiritual level, there were points in my life when I began to question what an acceptable reality really meant for me. Were there realities from which I was running? Which master was I trying to serve?

I do not believe that God tortures any person simply for its own sake. I believe that God enables all things for the greater good.

And this, the 47th year of my life, is arguably too late to have this discussion, but it is here, and it is now.

At a point in every person's life, one has to look deeply into the mirror of one's soul and decide one's unique truth in the world, not as we may want to see it or hope to see it, but as it is.

And so my truth is that I am a gay American, and I am blessed to live in the greatest nation, with a tradition of civil liberties, the greatest tradition of civil liberties in the world, in a country which provides so much to its people.

Yet, because of the pain and suffering and anguish that I have caused to my beloved family, my parents, my wife, my friends, I would almost rather have this moment pass, for this is an intensely personal decision and not one typically for the public domain

And yet, it cannot and should not pass.

I am also here today because, shamefully, I engaged in an adult consensual affair with another man, which violates my bonds of matrimony. It was wrong. It was foolish. It was inexcusable. And for this I ask the forgiveness and the grace of my wife. She has been extraordinary

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throughout this ordeal, and I am blessed by virtue of her love and strength.

I realize the fact of this affair and my own sexuality if kept secret leaves me, and most importantly the governor's office, vulnerable to rumors, false allegations and threats of disclosure. So I am removing these threats by telling you directly about my sexuality.

Let me be clear, I accept total and full responsibility for my actions. However, I'm required to do now, to do what is right to correct the consequences of my actions and to be truthful to my loved ones, to my friends and my family and also to myself.

It makes little difference that as governor I am gay. In fact, having the ability to truthfully set forth my identity might have enabled me to be more forthright in fulfilling and discharging my constitutional obligations.

Given the circumstances surrounding the affair and its likely impact upon my family and my ability to govern, I have decided the right course of action is to resign. To facilitate a responsible transition, my resignation will be effective on November 15th of this year.

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