

Gore, Bradley tout policy of racial change

DEMOCRATS from page 1

would be attached to the health care they get," he said.

Gore said that reminded him of "a guy whose feet are on a block of ice, and his head is in the oven, and on a weighted average, he'd be comfortable."

The evening's sharpest exchange came on the issue of racial profiling, when police use race and other characteristics as a basis to stop and question people.

When Gore said that as president he would order an end to racial profiling, Bradley challenged the presi-

dent.

"We have a president now, and you serve him," he said. "I want you to walk down the hall, walk into his office and say, 'Sign that executive order.'"

Through loud applause from the audience, Gore, who has rarely mentioned President Clinton during the campaign, responded.

"I don't think Bill Clinton needs a lecture from Bill Bradley on how to stand up for African-Americans and Latinos," he said to an equally positive response.

Gore also said that while in the Senate, Bradley failed to help the mayor of a New Jersey city who sought

federal action against racial profiling.

Bradley and Gore agreed on a number of issues. Both stated their strong support for affirmative action programs, agreed to appoint many minorities and women to cabinet positions and other government jobs and called for South Carolina to stop flying the Confederate flag atop its Statehouse.

Both candidates sought to show their past accomplishments demonstrated a commitment to civil rights.

Bradley, who played basketball for 10 seasons with the NBA's New York Knicks, said his experiences with black teammates had taught him respect and tolerance.

"I learned more from them than they ever learned from me," said Bradley, who spoke to reporters after the debate along with legendary Boston Celtic Bill Russell. "I learned there were many things I would never know about what it's like to be an African-American."

He condemned the recent comments by Atlanta Braves relief pitcher John Rocker, who made critical public remarks about minorities, women and gays. Rocker should be suspended or fired, Bradley said.

Gore also condemned Rocker's remarks but said he was encouraged by Rocker's recent meeting with Hall-of-Famer Hank Aaron and former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, both of whom are black.

"If he has more meetings like this, he's going to be on the road toward the forgiveness he eventually needs to receive," he said. "Part of Martin Luther King Jr.'s message was to love your enemies and plant the seeds of

"We have a long way to go, and until we get to that day, we still need affirmative action."

Bill Bradley

Democratic presidential candidate and breathing" document. Bradley said he would appoint no justice who would "roll back the clock on civil rights."

Bradley and Gore also agreed that the criminal justice system discriminates against minorities.

Bradley said the sentencing gap between crack and cocaine offenders should be narrowed. Gore said law enforcement and sentencing should be reviewed to ensure fairness.

Bradley said the country has made progress on racial issues, but more remains to be done.

He said the country must improve economic opportunities for minorities and women, and people must change their hearts.

"We have a long way to go, and until we get to that day, we still need affirmative action," he said. "Everything I do as president will be aimed toward bringing that day about."

Likewise Gore stressed that improved race relations will require presidential leadership to improve the social and economic prospects of all citizens.

"We must have a president who is willing to break down barriers and unlock the economic potential of all people."

reconciliation in your heart."

As for his record, Gore took credit for supporting affirmative action and proposing a comprehensive education plan to save failing schools. He also said school voucher programs would hurt public schools, and he criticized Bradley for his support of vouchers while in the Senate.

Bradley said he supported experimentation with vouchers while in the Senate but no longer supports the idea.

The candidates disagreed about the use of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to expand civil rights for gays.

Gore supports expanding those rights, but he favors using legislation separate from the Civil Rights Act. If the act were open for debate in the Republican-controlled Congress, he said, crucial provisions protecting civil rights for minorities could be altered, or even lost.

Bradley disagreed, saying the Civil Rights Act should be used to protect the civil rights of gays. He added, however, that he would not send the act to Congress if it appeared its original purposes would be altered.

As for Supreme Court appointments, Gore said he would appoint judges like Thurgood Marshall, who believed the Constitution is a "living

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NU continues refusal of gay partner benefits

BENEFITS from page 1

Officials from the University of Iowa in Iowa City could not be reached for comment; officials at Iowa State in Ames and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities said their domestic partner benefits plans have worked well.

Gary Wiggins, manager of staff benefits at Iowa State, said his university has been offering domestic partner benefits to gay faculty and staff members for more than seven years.

"Originally, there was some controversy from people in the community," he said. "People were worried the university would lose a lot of money, but we've seen no big losses."

"They're no different from married couples. This really is a pretty low-key situation."

Gay faculty and staff members wishing to receive benefits for their partners must sign agreements with the university, stating they are partners. They must also show some kind of joint financial bond, Wiggins said.

"They need to show us that their names are on a common rent statement or loan," he said. "They can also make their partner the beneficiary of their life insurance. Any financial record that indicates that the two people have been together for at least six months to a year works."

Wiggins said only five of Iowa State's 6,470 employees take advantage of domestic partner benefits, which include full medical and dental coverage.

"It's really gone quite smoothly," he said.

The University of Minnesota requires domestic partners sign a form stating they are partners, said Mary Alice Beevor, benefits specialist for the university.

"We feel that that is enough," she said. "If anyone would lie about their domestic partnership, then we'd go after them for insurance fraud, and that's a pretty big deal."

Minnesota requires the employees' partners to find their own insurance, then they are reimbursed by the university.

Nearly 150 employees have signed the form that entitles them to domestic partner benefits, but only 42 have taken advantage of the plan, Beevor said.

Adams said NU's benefits board has looked at its peers' domestic partner benefits plans, but she said until Nebraska's Legislature budges, the board will not.

"It's a pretty closed case," she said. "But if the following of the Vermont case picks up, maybe the board will be more open-minded."

"I wouldn't count on it, though."

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