



For Immediate Release: November 22, 2010
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AFER Statement on Kristina Schake's White House Appointment

This morning, the White House announced the appointment of the American Foundation for Equal Rights co-founder and board member Kristina Schake as Special Assistant to the President and Communications Director to First Lady Michelle Obama.

“Kristina was instrumental in the conception of the American Foundation for Equal Rights and she’s played a key role in every strategic success we’ve had as an organization. She’s one of the most intelligent and valuable resources the equality movement has ever seen. We’re sad to see her go but, are extremely proud of where she’s headed.”

-Chad H. Griffin, Board President of the American Foundation for Equal Rights

Kristina has had an exceptional career in California. Along with Chad Griffin, she is co-founder and partner of Griffin|Schake, a full service strategic communications and social marketing consulting firm where she has represented many high profile clients. She has worked as the Chief Communications Strategist for California First Lady Maria Shriver, been a top advisor to The California Endowment, and has worked closely with the United States Green Building Council. Schake also served as the first Communications Director of the California Children and Families Commission and as Executive Director of I Am Your Child Foundation, to name a few.

Her resignation from the American Foundation for Equal Rights Board of Directors will be effective November 30th, 2010.

BACKGROUND:

The American Foundation for Equal Rights is the sole sponsor of the *Perry v. Schwarzenegger* case against Prop. 8. Its legal team is headed by Theodore B. Olson and David Boies, who notably faced-off in the *Bush v. Gore* case that ultimately decided the 2000 presidential election. Since launching the *Perry* case just 18 months ago, the Foundation has endeavored to expand equality for all Americans by linking marriage equality to the nation’s founding constitutional principles, including the right of all Americans to equal protection under the law.

“Fourteen times the Supreme Court has stated that marriage is a fundamental right of all individuals. This case tests the proposition whether the gay and lesbian Americans among us should be counted as ‘persons’ under the 14th Amendment, or whether they constitute a permanent underclass ineligible for protection under that cornerstone of our Constitution,” attorneys Theodore B. Olson and David Boies wrote in their brief to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

“More than 30 years ago, the United States Supreme Court recognized that marriage is one of the basic rights of man,” Olson and Boies wrote in their original filing in the *Perry* case, referring to the Court’s decision in *Loving v. Virginia*, which struck down bans on interracial marriage.

The case will next be argued before the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on December 6, 2010.

For more information, visit www.AFER.org.

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the First Lady

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**KRISTINA SCHAKE TO JOIN FIRST LADY'S OFFICE AS
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR**

The Office of the First Lady announced today that Kristina Schake will be joining the staff as Special Assistant to the President and Communications Director to the First Lady. She will start in the East Wing in December, 2010.

"I'm thrilled to welcome Kristina to the team. Kristina brings a wealth of expertise that I know will make her a tremendous asset in the East Wing," said First Lady Michelle Obama. "Kristina has done extensive work throughout her career on child nutrition and community health issues, and that paired with her experience as part of a military family will bring invaluable insight to our work on childhood obesity and our efforts to support military families. I look forward to working with Kristina on these efforts and more in the months and years ahead."

Kristina Schake is co-founder and principal of Griffin | Schake, a California-based public affairs and strategic communications firm. She is a seasoned expert in helping major foundations, non-profit organizations and civic leaders bring about critical social change through policy, legislative, social marketing and media initiatives. Ms. Schake served for several years as the senior communications strategist for First Lady Maria Shriver, the Women's Conference and the California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities Initiative. Ms. Schake and her company also helped make issues such as stem cell research and early childhood education a national priority and helped change California's political landscape on renewable energy and civil rights. Before forming her firm, she was the Director of the Governor's Summit on Obesity and the Communications Director for First 5 California, which provides education, health care, child care and nutrition programs for the state's youngest children. A native Californian, Kristina is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University.

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