

## **Foley Finally Comes Out, Claims He Was Molested**

October 3, 2006

*by 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff*

(West Palm Beach, Florida) Former Florida Congressman Mark Foley at the center of a child abuse scandal finally acknowledged Tuesday that he is gay. The announcement came at the end of a short statement delivered by his lawyer David Roth, in which the disgraced politician claimed he had been molested as a child by a member of the clergy

Roth quoted Foley as saying the attacks occurred when he was between the ages of 13 and 15. At the end of his statement Roth said: "Finally, Mark Foley wants you to know that he is a gay man."

Questions about Foley's sexuality had circulated for several years.

In May 2003 he took the unusual step of calling a news conference to denounce a report in a South Florida alternative newspaper that he is gay. Foley refused to answer questions about the subject, saying his sexual orientation had nothing to do with his duties as a lawmaker. Since then he has continued to avoid answering the question.

His coming out in the midst of a sex scandal involving teenage congressional pages will likely continue to fuel attacks by some conservatives who have tried to paint it as a gay issue, and it is equally unlikely the statement will quiet gay activists who draw a distinction between homosexuality and pedophilia.

Earlier on Tuesday a national LGBT youth organization demanded a full investigation of Foley's email and text messages to Capitol Hill pages.

"Gay or straight, Congressman Mark Foley's behavior is like that of a predator who should be arrested and prosecuted for his criminal behavior; and those around him who knew, and did not act to stop him, are just as guilty" said Craig Bowman, the Executive Director of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition.

"We are talking about a sixteen-year-old who was exploited by a person in power - someone he should have been able to trust," said Bowman in a statement.

The Florida Republican resigned his seat on Friday after it was disclosed he had sent "inappropriate" emails to a former Congressional Page. Monday allegations began surfacing that Foley also sent messages to other former pages and the Republican leadership in the House had known about the situation for some time.

**Matt Foreman, the executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force agrees that the issue is not sexuality.**

**"Given the fact that the current Republican leadership in the House has never hesitated to attack gay people, it's even more absurd for people like Newt Gingrich to say the reason they didn't take prompt action was because they didn't want to be accused of 'gay bashing.' Cut me a break," said Foreman.**