

Paterson Seeks Escape From 'Dysfunctional Albany,' Pledges Support For Gay Marriage In LGBT Video

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Here's the video Gov. David Paterson sent in lieu of a personal appearance at last night's National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's 2008 New York Leadership Awards dinner, at which he was supposed to be honored (along with filmmaker John Waters).

Paterson opted to skip out on the event in favor of attending the ongoing budget negotiations in Albany.

Here's his opening joke:

"Good evening. If any of you can hear me, please contact the FBI or Interpol. I'm being held hostage in the dysfunctional Albany. I wanted to come to this dinner tonight. I'm actually tied to this chair and a gun is being pointed at my head. They're trying to get me to reverse my opinions on a number of issues, but I won't do it. If I am shot or killed during this interview, remember that I did the right thing."

On a more serious note, Paterson went on to declare, in the "spirit of Dr. King," that the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community deserves equal rights, adding that he was proud to have run on a ticket with (now former) Gov. Eliot Spitzer that was the first in the country to advocate for same-sex marriage "and to win on that premise."

Recalling how the Assembly passed gay marriage last year for the first time, Paterson said that while he lobbied for that vote, he came to the realization that while marriage equality in New York "may not come just this moment...it is no longer an issue mostly for conviction, it is an issue for courage."

"We will push on and bring full marriage equality in New York State," Paterson said. "And when we have done that, we're going to do more."

"We're going to protect young people from bullies. We're going to protect against the discrimination of people in the transgender community, and we're going to fight for decent and affordable healthcare for all citizens in this state."

"If you will join with me, and if we work hard enough, we can change the face of New York, which will be the catalyst to changing national policy."