

Joint Statement to LGBT Oregonians and our Allies

## **OREGON LGBT LEADERS CALL FOR UNITY**

In any election year, there is a tremendous amount of information to take in and process - this year it has been particularly difficult for those of us who are committed to achieving full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans.

Nothing can take away from the incredible, awe-inspiring election of President-elect Barack Obama, the election of fair-minded majorities in Congress, Oregon, and elsewhere. However, how do we reconcile the painful losses to our community in California, Arizona, Florida, and Arkansas?

Since Measure 36 amended the Oregon constitution in 2004, we have lived with the painful reality that our families are treated differently and are excluded from the dignity and respect that come with marriage. This injustice continues to sting.

But too often we express our pain and disappointment in ways that not only obscure the truth and compromise our core values, but are also counter-productive.

This is happening right now as people divide our country and our community by blaming people of faith, African American voters, rural communities and others for the loss in California.

The truth is that millions of voters took a stand against discrimination. And they did so in numbers greater than we have ever before seen. Eight years ago Californians passed a marriage ban by a 22% margin. This year it was only 4%. While far from a victory, this shift represents historic progress.

These pro-equality voters came from all walks of life -- communities of color, faith leaders, labor and business leaders, Republicans, and Democrats.

And let's be clear: our movement for equality is bigger than one vote, broader than one issue, and stronger than the fear and intolerance that we must overcome.

The truth is that if we want to ensure that all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Oregonians experience equality, we must continue to build a broad, inclusive and politically powerful movement. We must change attitudes, including our own. And we must reach fearlessly for the promise of equality, despite temporary setbacks.

We must build bridges, not throw stones. We must be the change we wish to see in the world.

In Oregon, our path to marriage requires that we build a tremendous statewide coalition that will allow us to remove Measure 36 from our Constitution. That won't happen overnight. And we must build power that not only impacts marriage equality, but also addresses the urgent needs of LGBT youth, transgender people, and LGBT people of color.

Now is the time for our community to unite – to respect our differences and honor our diverse perspectives. It's true that we have to share our anguish over what has been lost. But we also have to share our hope for what lies ahead.

There has been a lot of discussion about various forms of protest and demonstration in the week since the election. This energy to organize wide-scale resistance is exciting and energizing. We applaud those in our community who are stepping up to lead the way.

And we call on everyone in our community to move forward together, to speak with one voice, to believe fundamentally in the power of inclusion and to reject the desire to place blame.

Finally, we want to offer some ideas for concrete action. If you believe, as we do, that marriage equality is worth fighting for, then we ask you to make a commitment to take one meaningful action every week and every month until every Oregonian has the freedom to marry the person of their choosing. You can make a difference in your community:

\*Get started next week with a community dialogue about the vote in California. In Portland, a number of organizations have joined together to present "United & Moving Forward: A Roundtable Discussion on the outcome of Proposition 8." Details below.

\*Be sure you know who your state legislator is and let them know how important marriage equality is to you. Write a letter to your local paper calling for marriage equality.

\*Pledge a monthly contribution to an organizations that support and build our community – whether they are working on the front lines of our work around HIV, legislative issues and creating fair and just policies for all or they are connecting and supporting us as gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered, seniors, children, youth and families.

\*Volunteer in your community – join the social justice committee at your place of worship, organize a team for the 2009 Lobby Day, talk about LGBTQ issues, come out to your friends, family, neighbors and colleagues.

Together, we can build a movement for equality for all Oregonians.

In solidarity,

Jeana Frazzini, Executive Director, Basic Rights Oregon  
Kendall Clawson, Executive Director, Q Center  
Kevin Easton, Executive Director, Equity Foundation  
Michael Kaplan, Executive Director, Cascade AIDS Project  
Rev. Nathan Meckley, Senior Pastor, Metropolitan Community Church of  
Portland  
Favor Ellis, Program Director, SMYRC (Sexual Minority Youth Resource  
Center)  
Teri Noble, State Coordinator, PFLAG Oregon State Council  
David Martinez, Co-Chair, Portland Latino Gay Pride

Portland Latino Gay Pride, Unity Project of Oregon, Basic Rights Oregon, Q  
Center, Human Rights Campaign, Metropolitan Community Church, Equity  
Foundation, NW Gender Alliance, and Pride Foundation

## **INVITE YOU**

United & Moving Forward:  
A Roundtable Discussion on the outcome of Proposition 8

The Media has placed much attention on the minority vote and role of other constituencies in this campaign. With divisive language and questionable reporting, the public is jumping to conclusions. We want to bring our community together to discuss what took place in California, share accurate and updated information, and most importantly brainstorm ways we can move forward.

## **JOIN US**

Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 6pm  
Think Tank, Courtyard Room  
Jupiter Hotel  
800 East Burnside  
Portland OR, 97214

For more information contact David Martinez at (503) 307-9143 or email [latinogaypridepdx@yahoo.com](mailto:latinogaypridepdx@yahoo.com)