



Obama campaign names LGBT director

SUMMARY: David Noble, former head of the National Stonewall Democrats and now with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, is known as a coalition-builder.

June 11, 2008

Sen. Barack Obama's campaign has appointed David Noble, former chief of the National Stonewall Democrats and now director of public policy and government affairs at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, as director of the LGBT vote, the campaign announced Wednesday.

Noble will step down from his position at the task force and officially start with the campaign June 21.

As the campaign switches gears to the general election, deputy campaign manager Steve Hildebrand said, "We have moved aggressively to set up our national LGBT vote operation and to staff it with the best people we can possibly get." Hildebrand, who is gay, called Noble a "well-seasoned" political operative.

"He is experienced at many levels, he is a passionate advocate for the LGBT community across the country, and he will be an important voice for Barack Obama in this critical election," Hildebrand said during a 20-minute conference call with reporters.

"We know there is a tremendous difference between the positions held by John McCain as the Republican nominee and Barack Obama as the Democratic nominee, and Dave will be the voice and the organizer behind making sure that voters all across the country know the difference between the records and the positions of these two candidates for the presidency."

Acknowledging that he had a lot of work to do in just under five months between now and the general election, Noble said he was "thrilled" to join the Obama team and had "really been proud to watch [Obama] speak about LGBT issues on the stump, not just to LGBT audiences but to everyone as he's been campaigning."

Noble, who has a history of coalition-building in the gay community, said the fact that the Obama campaign reached out to him is just one sign of how serious it is about making sure that LGBT people have not only the information they need to make an informed decision for November but also have ways to get involved.

"No matter how they are organized now at their grassroots level, they're going to have access to the campaign," Noble said.

Asked whether Noble would be focusing his LGBT outreach efforts more on red states or blue states, Hildebrand noted that just eight weeks ago the campaign had launched a 50-state voter registration drive.

"Dave will be helping design those programs to be specifically reaching out to gay voters and asking them to increase their participation in politics, whether that means getting them registered to vote or ensuring that they do vote in November, whether they're voting for Barack Obama -- which would obviously be our hope -- or John McCain or one of the other third-party candidates," said Hildebrand.

"The bottom line is, within Barack's heart, he believes that our democracy will be stronger if more people participate in politics and voting."