



Prop. 8 fundraising already near \$8 million

Monday, August 4, 2008

Supporters of the marriage ban on California's Nov. 4 ballot raised about \$3.7 million between Jan. 1 and June 30, while opponents generated approximately \$4.1 million, according to documents filed Thursday with the California secretary of state.

The semiannual statements, filed by committees raising funds for and against Proposition 8, herald the start of an epic fund-raising battle over the ballot initiative amending the state constitution to stop same-sex marriage, which became legal in a May 15 decision from the California Supreme Court.

"Given the magnitude of this issue and the fact that it's playing out in our largest state, I'm not terribly surprised by the amount of money that's been attracted," said Steven Billet, director of legislative affairs at the Graduate School of Political Management at George Washington University. "It's probably going to attract a lot more before it's all said and done."

Estimates suggest the total from opponents and supporters, many of them outside the state, could reach \$30 million. Thursday's filings show hundreds of thousands of dollars in contributions from anti-Prop. 8 groups such as the Gill Action Fund, the Human Rights Campaign, **the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**, the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Service Center, the Horizons Foundation and the Democratic National Committee's federal fund.

Also appearing are large and moderate contributions from individuals, such as \$50,000 from Ambassador James C. Hormel of California and \$3,000 from Mary Cheney of Virginia.

Thousands of modest donations from individuals nationwide poured in to fight Proposition 8. According to the "No on 8 Equality for All" campaign, the lead committee established to fight the marriage ban, more than 96 percent of its donors have contributed less than \$1,000, and Internet donations total approximately \$480,000. Those numbers are likely to continue to grow, if the past few weeks offer any indication.

Not included in Thursday's filings are contributions made after June 30, such as \$250,000 in late July by Pacific Gas and Electric Company; \$500,000 from David Maltz, a Cleveland businessman; and \$1 million from Utah software entrepreneur Bruce Bastian, who announced his contribution at the San Francisco HRC dinner July 26.

Altogether, the total of contributions received Jan. 1-July 31 to fight Proposition 8 approaches \$6 million, according to Marty Rouse, national field director for HRC and an executive committee member of Equality for All.

Notably, the fund-raising pace for marriage-ban supporters appears to have slowed since April 1. The ProtectMarriage.com campaign raised just over \$1 million from April 1 through June 30, Thursday's filings show, compared with slightly over \$1.5 million raised from Jan. 1 through March 31.

ProtectMarriage.com spokeswoman Jennifer Kearns did not return calls seeking comment.

In contrast, the Equality for All coalition reported nearly \$2 million raised between April 1 and June 30, more than three times the amount it raised between Jan. 1 and March 31.

Rouse cautions that the changed pace may not remain in favor of the ban's opponents.

"That's just a temporary blip," he said. "Once these numbers get out, we are going to see supporters of the ban ramp up their fund-raising efforts."

Proposition 8 supporters, led by ProtectMarriage.com and the National Organization for Marriage, reported hundreds of thousands of dollars raised from organizations such as Focus on the Family in Colorado, which gave over \$400,000; the American Family Association from Mississippi, which contributed \$500,000; and the Knights of Columbus, headquartered in Connecticut, which placed \$250,000 into the campaign.

Businessman Terry Caster, owner of A-1 Self Storage Co. of San Diego, and his family contributed nearly \$300,000 to support the marriage ban, while hotelier Doug Manchester gave \$125,000. Both became the target of protests last month by equality advocates.

By comparison, the entire contest on the amendment to ban same-sex marriage in Wisconsin, which voters there approved in 2006, generated around \$4.3 million from opponents of the ban and at least \$634,384 from supporters.

"Supporters and opponents of the ban are realizing that this fight is the largest fight on a GLBT issue in many years and in many years to come," Rouse said.