



The Battle Against Proposition 8 Heats Up

By Lin Orndorf
Out in Ashville
October 21, 2008

The battle to save a civil right for gays and lesbians in California is heating up as election day draws near.

A recently released poll, taken between September 28 and October 5 of 1,008 likely California voters for the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic group opposed to same-sex marriage, showed that support for Proposition 8 had grown to a 9 point lead with 52 percent intending to vote for the measure.

Although the sample is small and there is a margin of error of 3.1 percent, this survey does indicate that California voters are leaning towards taking rights away from its gay and lesbian citizens in every region except the Bay Area where 58 percent of likely voters are opposed to Proposition 8.

But there is still time to tip the balance in opposition of the ballot measure and no one fighting to retain same-sex marriage, which was only granted in May by the California Supreme Court. One by one celebrities and politicians are speaking out against the measure and donations to fight it are pouring into the state on a daily basis.

Most recently, Senator Joe Biden, Barack Obama's running mate in the 2008 Presidential Election, stated on the Ellen DeGeneres Show Monday, "If I lived in California, I'd clearly vote against Prop. 8. And, by the way, Barack and I both opposed a similar attempt nationally...I think it's regressive, I think it's unfair, and...so, I'd vote 'No'."

Also on Monday, more than a dozen pastors proclaimed their opposition to Proposition 8 and their support of same-sex marriage from the the step of city hall in San Francisco. At the same time they announced that some 2,200 faith leaders nationwide have signed an open letter to religious leaders calling for support and recognition of gay marriage.

Speeches and statements are only part of the battle facing Proposition 8 opponents. Money is the other.

LGBTQ groups and other same-sex marriage proponents have been struggling to match the millions already raised by the amendment's supporters, mostly for television ads leading up to the election.

Now the LGBTQ blogosphere and press that helped pressure Ellen DeGeneres into making a donation to buy time for a television ad to fight Proposition 8 are taking up the cause themselves.

8 Against 8 is a collective of eight lesbian bloggers who have teamed up to fight the California ballot measure aimed at taking the right to marry away from gay and lesbian couples. If the

measure passes, it will also nullify thousand of now legal same-sex marriages.

The eight bloggers are Grace Chu and Grace Rosen of Grace the Spot, Dorothy Snarker of Dorothy Surrenders, Lori Hahn of Hahn At Home, Kelly Leszczynski of The Lesbian Lifestyle, Sinclair of Sugarbutch Chronicles, Riese of This Girl Called Automatic Win, Renee Gannon of Lesbiatopia, North Carolina's own Pam Spaulding of Pam's House Blend. The 8 Against 8 Campaign calls on the public to donate to the "No to Prop. 8" campaign and defeat the anti-gay marriage measure on November 4.

"We've joined the NO on 8 campaign because we believe every Californian deserves the freedom to marry the one they love. Prop. 8 would create a separate set of rules for same-sex couples, treating them differently under law," the bloggers wrote in a release. "Regardless of how you feel about marriage, it is a right that belongs to all of us, without exception."

On her blog, Pam's House Blend, Pam Spaulding states, "I live in North Carolina, a state where my wife and I have no legal rights as a same-sex couple." She and her partner were legally married in Canada but neither the United States nor North Carolina recognize their marriage.

Spaulding continued her statement about her decision about fighting Proposition 8 by saying, "It is for that reason that I have donated to defeat Proposition 8. California's legislature, representing the people, and its courts, representing the rule of law, have moved to recognize the right of gay and lesbian couples to marry. We cannot allow an established civil right in the Golden State to be overturned at the ballot box. Every dollar you can give in these last in these last few days helps fight the dollars donated to enshrine discrimination into California's constitution. As we've seen this election cycle, small dollar donations can make a huge difference."

Spaulding and the other members of 8 Against 8 ask that the public join them in making a donation to NO on 8 - Equality California. "Your generous contribution will help NO on 8 defeat this misguided measure," wrote the bloggers. "Thank you for standing with us to support freedom, fairness and equality."

Lesbian bloggers aren't the only ones getting into the fray over 8. Gay blogger, author and Sirius Radio talk show host Michelangelo Signorile has launched his own fundraiser. Signorile is auctioning off a bear he built at Build a Bear. All the proceeds from auctioning the bear, dubbed Rocco 2, will go to fight Proposition 8.

Signorile built Rocco 2 himself and outfitted him with a variety of souvenirs representing Signorile's experiences at both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. Rocco 2 is wearing a Sirius Satellite Radio hat, Signorile's official credentials from the conventions, two buttons; one reads "Transgender Delegate" and the other reads "I'm Doing My Part to Piss off the Religious Right." To complete the ensemble, the bear is wearing sunglasses and is holding a cell phone. He also comes with his very own birth certificate.

Building a bear to auction is not a new idea for Signorile who explains on his blog, "We did something similar a few years back, benefiting the Mathew Shepard Foundation, asking listeners to bid on Rocco 1, raising some good money for the cause, though that auction lasted for ten days..."

But time is of the essence with the election and vote on Proposition 8 is than two weeks away.

"With limited time left in the campaign and money needed, we're keeping this auction to 7 days; it ends next Sunday night. But let's do the best we can No on 8 and find Rocco 2 a home. I will be talking about him on the show every day urging people to go to ebay and bid, and of course posting on the blog all week reminding you about the auction," says Signorile.

The California gay community may be helped in the fight against Proposition 8 with a large

voter turn out for the presidential election but only if progressive voters outnumber conservatives. But last minute donations will certainly help supporters of same-sex marriage and the LGBTQ community get their message about this fight for civil rights out to more voters.