



LGBT Community Leaders Release Letter Rejecting Divisive Tactics in Fight to Overturn Prop 8

By Greg Hernandez on November 13, 2008 3:41 PM | Out In Hollywood

This seems to be much-needed and I'm glad to see it.

Dear Community,

We are on the cusp of a new era as our country has elected its first African-American president, Barack Obama. We hope this unprecedented event will usher in a new chapter in our nation's history.

This past week has been a difficult time. With the passage of Proposition 8 in California to change the state constitution to eliminate the right to marry, our community has experienced a difficult defeat. We are angry and upset by the passage of Proposition 8 and the betrayal of the promise of equality that has been the hallmark of the Golden State. Yet, we know that this is only a setback in--not the end of--our journey toward full equality for the LGBT community.

It is natural to analyze what went wrong. But in recent days there has been a tendency to assign blame to specific communities, in particular, the African American community. The fact is, 52 percent of all Californians, the vast majority of whom were not African Americans, voted against us. In addition, the most recent analysis of the exit poll that drove much of this speculation determined that it was too small to draw any conclusion on the African American vote, and further polling shows that the margin was much closer than first reported. Most importantly, though, none of this discourse changes the outcome of the vote. It only serves to divide our community and hinder our ability to create a stronger and more diverse coalition to help us overturn Proposition 8 and restore full equality and human rights to LGBT people. It also deflects responsibility from the group that is responsible for this miscarriage of justice: The Yes on 8 campaign. They waged a deceitful and immoral campaign that brought about this violation of our human rights and dignity. We as a community have come so far. Let's not lose sight of this. Since Proposition 22 passed eight years ago by 22 percentage points, we have made our case to the people of California. We have talked to our families, co-workers and friends about what true equality looks like. In so doing, we have narrowed the gap substantially since that time. And, in the last week, we have continued to move forward with a great wave of non-violent protest and a strong and powerful legal case put together by some of the keenest legal minds, supported by the governor, our senators and many other elected officials in our state. Moreover, we have seen a great national movement growing in support of equal rights for the LGBT community as a result of our actions in California.

We are hopeful the election of Barack Obama signals a new spirit of collaboration among diverse groups of people. There are many allied communities--straight, African-American, Latino, Asian Pacific Islander, people of faith, and secular people--who are energized to join with us as never before. This is progress! LGBT people are a part of all those communities, and with the support of our straight allies, we know that justice will prevail.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said it best: "The arc of moral justice is long, but it bends toward justice." Now is the time to come together as one community working together toward human

rights and full equality. We are confident that with our growing coalition we will ultimately win this fight.

Sincerely,

Ron Buckmire
Barbara Jordan/Bayard Rustin Coalition

Rea Carey
Executive Director, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

Jennifer Chrisler
Executive Director, Family Equality Council

Oscar De La O
President & CEO, Bienestar

John Duran
Member, West Hollywood City Council

Rabbi Denise L. Eger
Congregation Kol Ami

Lorri L. Jean
CEO, L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center

Kate Kendell
Executive Director, National Center for Lesbian Rights

Geoff Kors
Executive Director, Equality California

Francine Ramsey
Executive Director, Zuna Institute

Rev. Susan Russell and Rev. Ed Bacon
All Saints Episcopal Church, Pasadena

Rodney Scott
President, Christopher Street West/LA Pride

Joe Solmonese
President, Human Rights Campaign

Rev. Dr. Neil G. Thomas
Metropolitan Community Church/LA

Vallerie D. Wagner
National Black Justice Coalition

Marshall Wong
Co-Chair, API Equality--L.A.

