



Prop 8 report says exit poll overstated black support

58 percent of black voters supported measure

By CHRIS JOHNSON, Washington Blade | Jan 7, 12:09 PM

A report released Tuesday by the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force found that a prominent Election Day exit poll overstated the number of black California residents to support Proposition 8.

While the CNN exit poll says 70 percent of black voters supported Prop 8, the new report used data from a variety of sources to conclude that support from black voters was around 58 percent.

Comparatively, 49 percent of white voters, 59 percent of Latino voters and 48 percent of Asian voters approved the measure.

Jaime Grant, the Task Force's policy institute director, said the report "thoroughly debunks" the 70 percent figure often touted in association with the black vote.

"We're really interested in getting the 57 to 58 percent out into the public eye because there's just been such nasty national dialogue about a supposed LGBT [and] black civil rights divide that we don't think really exists," she said.

The report says that party identification, ideology, religiosity and age had a larger impact on the vote than other characteristics, such as race. The report found that 81 percent of Republicans, 70 percent of weekly churchgoers, and 67 percent of voters age 65 and older supported Prop 8.

While concluding that blacks and Latinos more strongly supported Prop 8 than other ethnic groups, the report says that this support was "not to significant degree after controlling for religiosity."

"That is, much of the stronger support found for Proposition 8 among those groups is explained by their increased levels of attendance of religious services," the report says.

Grant said the data show a need for gay outreach in the faith community and that "there's a lot of moveable people in that very voting block of weekly religious [attendees]."

"I think this report says something to us about sort of getting over the tenuousness that the community tends to have about working in faith communities," she said.

Identifying age as a strong factor in supporting Prop 8, the report says that aging and generational replacement "may hasten the arrival of a day when a majority of Californians votes in favor of marriage equality."