

# MARCH

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and "unnatural."

Braving the rain, marchers gathered at the Glendale Nursery on Franklin Boulevard and snaked their way along Main Street toward the Springfield Public Library.

After assembling on the library's steps, a microphone was passed to anyone interested in speaking.

Congressman Peter DeFazio, D-Springfield, said he intended only to march and listen to speakers, but his own feelings about the measure compelled him to seize the microphone himself.

"Things like the OCA and Measure 9 are meant to distract us from the real issues," DeFazio said. He said the attention focused on Measure 9 could be used more constructively to find solutions for school funding, homelessness and other issues.

The Oregon Citizens Alliance sponsors the measure.

Scott Seibert, member of the No on 9 campaign's state steering committee, said the measure encourages people to discriminate and persecute homosexuals, citing some recently committed hate crimes.

"Ballot Measure 9 is a violent act, but we must not respond with violence," Seibert said. Seibert encouraged the crowd to combat bigotry by voting.

"No matter what happens on Tuesday, we are a proud and loving people," he said.

Brandon Perry identified himself as a gay Springfield resident and addressed his remarks to Springfield Councilman Ralf Walters.

Walters has been outspoken in his support of Measure 9 and of a similar amendment Springfield adopted to the city charter earlier this year.

"I hope you're listening, Mr. Walters," Perry said. "This is a government by and for the people, and I'm one of them. We're here and we're queer, so get used to it."

Sally Meng marched with her son, who is gay. Meng said the measure makes her "sick to the depths of my soul. It's like a personal attack on my child." Both are members of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

Brook Steinbrecher marched and carried a sign that read, "I love my lesbian mom." Steinbrecher said she's uncertain the measure will be defeated.

"There's always a chance it could pass, and that scares the hell out of me," Steinbrecher said.

The march's route afforded protesters a chance to witness the kind of bigotry they were speaking out against.

Vandals had spray-painted derogatory terms on windows of The McKenzie, a Springfield restaurant, apparently in response to anti-Measure 9 material posted inside. Restaurant owner David Gibson stood outside and greeted the passers-by.

"None of this stuff ever happened before the OCA came to town," Gibson said.

Gibson said he would continue to display No on 9 materials at the restaurant.



Dwyer says, "We don't need rhetoric, half-truths and slogans. We need leadership that recognizes our problems and formulates solutions."

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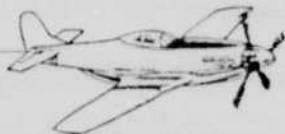
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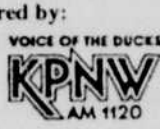
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