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letters

What the OCA initiative could do!

To the Editor:
Do we actually realize how drastically OCA's hate initiatives could affect us? Many of our community events occur in government facilities. If the OCA gets its way, Gay Pride and National Coming Out Day won't happen. The Park Blocks, Pioneer Square, and Waterfront Park would no longer be available for our events, as parade and rally permits would be illegal. The Portland Gay Men's Chorus could no longer sing at the Schnitz. Carol Steinel couldn't appear in the Main Auditorium, and the Lesbian Choir would be barred from the East Side Performance Center. The Lesbian Community Project would be evicted from its city-owned space. Our freedom of speech and freedom of expression could be severely curtailed. Our existence as a community could be finished.

Our survival as human beings could also be jeopardized. Extreme interpretations of an OCA anti-gay law could result in massive firings from our civil service jobs and denial of unemployment benefits. Public employee retirement pensions could be frozen and attempts to recover them challenged. Gay bashers could declare open season on us, and we would have no legal means of redress.

Many in our community are poor, contrary to OCA propaganda. Indigent gays and lesbians could be denied Food Stamps, welfare, and public housing. Access to state-aided medical care could be blocked. State funding for AIDS programs could be wiped out.

OCA-inspired laws could exterminate us, just as Hitler's policies destroyed nearly 8 million Jews in Europe. If the OCA succeeds in targeting and eliminating us, who will be next? People who part their hair differently from Lon Mabon, people whose beliefs deviate from the "right" version of fundamentalist Christianity? Where will it all end?

Let's hope none of these initiatives make it to the petition-signing stage. But if they do, find out what you can do legally to impede that progress. Write and phone your city commissioners and state legislators, come to "No On Hate" meetings, stop your factional bickering, and above all, get off your complacent butts (some of you), and VOTE! Our votes will make a difference on a state level between preservation of our basic human and civil rights or our destruction as a community.

If you value your freedom as gay and lesbian persons in Oregon, do all you can to stop these nazis in Christian trappings before it's too late.

Sally Cohn
Portland

Thanks LCP

To the Editor,
I would like to thank the Lesbian Community Project for their fundraising efforts on behalf of child abuse prevention programs and for the donations they have sent to the Kids Can program.

Kids Can is a program of Community Advocates. During this school year, Kids Can volunteers will bring a message of empowerment and teach assault prevention skills and strategies to over 11,000 elementary and pre-school aged children in the tri-county area. Community Advocates also sponsors Fighting Chance, a self-defense program for teen and adult women.

Seventy percent of Community Advocate's budget comes from private donations by individuals and groups. The donations from many caring people in this community are greatly appreciated.

Jan Kudema
Portland

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