



Multnomah County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey praised the United Way of the Columbia-Willamette "for doing the right thing"

UNITED WAY REVISES POLICY

The United Way of the Columbia-Willamette board unanimously endorsed a new policy April 22 requiring its funded partners to have a comprehensive nondiscrimination policy or certification of nondiscrimination practices in place to receive financial support.

The revised rule bans bias based on race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ancestry, veteran status, mental or physical disability, or any other status prohibited by applicable law. This means the Boy Scouts of America's Cascade-Pacific Council will lose its United Way support if it does not lift its gay ban by next year.

The decision is a major victory for Multnomah County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey, who stepped down from the United Way's board in the fall of 2000 over the matter. She told *Just Out* she also was pleased that the board added the phrase "celebrate diversity and practice inclusion" to its list of core values.

"I was really impressed by the work that they had done," Rojo says. "I had lost faith in the organization when I was a member, and tried to get them to look at this and to do this thoughtful, considerate process.... I realized then that if they are not all-inclusive and find all-inclusive organizations, I could not be a part of it, even though I believe that United Way does really good work."

Last September, Rojo convinced commissioners to require an all-inclusive nondiscrimination policy for beneficiaries of the county's Charitable Giving Campaign, which allows employees to support several nonprofits through payroll deductions. She believes the Boy Scouts do "tremendous work" but must give every child the opportunity to join.

"It's a tough time for a kid growing up...and it must be especially hard for a gay boy who has nobody to turn to and not a peer group that accepts him," Rojo says. "The Boy Scouts would be such a wonderful place for, I think, gay boys to...be accepted and grow and learn with them."

Oregonian columnist Renee Mitchell fueled to the heated controversy April 25 when she wrote that the new policy will hurt poor and minority children. BRO will hold a community dialogue 4:30 p.m. May 21 in the first-floor conference room at 123 N.E. Third Ave. to discuss, among other topics, how to avoid pit-

ting economic and racial justice against gay equality in the future.

JUDICIAL CANDIDATE RALLIES SUPPORT

U.S. Attorney Michael Mosman, the leading candidate for a U.S. District Court seat in Portland, met with gay rights activists April 25 to address his views on equality.

At issue was his role in *Bowers vs. Hardwick*, a 1986 U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding a Georgia statute banning sodomy. Mosman—who had written memos favoring Georgia's position while serving as a law clerk to Justice Lewis Powell—maintained that the documents he prepared for that case did not reflect his personal views.

"They're not an attempt to lead Justice Powell by the nose and sort of manipulate him into the vote," Mosman told *The Oregonian*. "I'd like to do what I can in any appropriate setting to repudiate the idea that I have anti-gay views."

In attendance at the meeting were Roey Thorpe, Basic Rights Oregon executive director, and Terry Bean, Human Rights Campaign co-founder. The gathering was arranged by U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., who announced May 1 that he would throw his support behind Mosman.

"Mr. Mosman looked me in the eye and answered all of my questions regarding his views on equal rights, and I believe he was completely candid," he said in a statement. "I am convinced he is committed to equal rights for all Americans, and I believe his extensive criminal justice background will serve as a real asset to the court should he be confirmed."

BRO followed suit shortly thereafter, announcing it would not oppose Mosman's nomination. According to Thorpe, he answered questions about his current views on privacy, parenting and employment rights for queers.

"Mr. Mosman made it clear that he feels that he is open-minded and unbiased in his views about gay civil rights," she said. "I felt that his answers revealed him to be a person who has changed a great deal over the years."

HATE CRIMES ACT REINTRODUCED

U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., reintroduced legislation May 1 that would add

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