

ON THE RECORD

Court orders state to register same-sex marriages

by Jim Radosta

The Oregon Court of Appeals ruled July 9 that the state must register the 3,000 marriages of same-sex couples that took place earlier this year in Portland.

Circuit Court Judge Frank Bearden ordered the state April 20 to register the marriage licenses issued in Multnomah County. The state had requested that the portion of the ruling requiring registration be stayed, but the appeals court refused to grant a restraining order.

"These couples have already done what any other couple seeking to marry has already done to marry in the state of Oregon," said Rebekah Kassell, spokeswoman for Basic Rights Oregon. "It's only fair that the state register those marriages—and that they are afforded the same protections and responsibilities of marriage that any other Oregon couple is afforded."

County Commissioner Lisa Naito praised the decision. "It is one more step towards equal privilege in granting marriage licenses regardless of gender," she said.

Commissioner Serena Cruz called the ruling "another important court victory in the advancement of civil rights.... The state of Oregon can no longer deny these couples access to the privileges, rights and responsibilities that are granted to straight couples."

Cruz added: "The state should end the uncertainty it has caused for the 6,000 people who married in Multnomah County. There have now been three court decisions ordering the state to provide the full legal recognition these couples deserve."

Bush Blames Oregon

In his weekly radio address July 10, President Bush blamed Oregon and other states for his support of the Federal Marriage Amendment.

"This difficult debate was forced upon our country by a few activist judges and local officials who have taken it on themselves to change the meaning of marriage," he said. "In Massachusetts, four judges on the state's highest court have ordered the issuance of marriage licenses to applicants of the same gender. In San Francisco, city officials issued thousands of marriage licenses to people of the same gender, contrary to the California family code. Lawsuits in several states, including New Jersey, Florida, Nebraska and Oregon, are also attempting to overturn the traditional definition of marriage by court order."

Bush added, "All of us have a duty to conduct this discussion with civility and decency toward one another." But, as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force pointed out, queers are not the ones using disgusting and hateful rhetoric in this debate.

"The president's close buddies on the religious right," executive director Matt Foreman said, "claim that extending equal marriage rights to gay people will doom Western civilization, overturn bans on polygamy and bestiality and, in the words of the \$125 million behemoth Focus on the Family, result in families with 'higher levels of poverty, welfare dependency, child abuse, sexual abuse, substance abuse, premature and promiscuous sexuality, early unwed pregnancy, educational failure, juvenile delinquency, adult criminality and suicide as well as lower levels of

physical and emotional health....' The president [seems] oblivious to the fact that there's no way for him to say gay people should not be afforded equal marriage rights without also meaning that gay people and our relationships are inherently inferior, subhuman. Yet, he asks that we discuss this civilly and with respect."

Smith Ignores HRC Ad

The Human Rights Campaign took out a full-page advertisement July 13 in *The Oregonian* discouraging U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., from voting for the Federal Marriage Amendment.

The ad quoted from the paper's July 11 editorial: "To his credit, [Smith] has exercised a moderating influence on his own party on gay rights. So it was disappointing to learn Friday that Smith intends to vote with GOP reactionaries in favor of a retrograde amendment to the U.S. Constitution, banning gay marriage.... Most Americans understand the politics of distraction.... Smith should reconsider his vote. A champion of gay rights has no business aiding such a political prank."

HRC urged supporters to call Smith's office in Washington, D.C. The nationwide ad campaign resulted in more than 200,000 messages to Congress.

Apparently, Smith wasn't listening. He voted to move forward on a version of the amendment that would have jeopardized state civil unions and domestic partnerships.

Online ads also appeared on regional newspaper sites in Oregon, Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio and California; on the Web sites for *Mother Jones*, *Utne*, *Alternet*, *Salon*, *Slate*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and CNN; and on more than 20 progressive blogs. The campaign demanded that the Senate stop wasting time on the amendment and focus on priority issues like the deficit, job loss, health care and terrorism. **JR**



Serena Cruz

PHOTO BY MARY DAVIS

We agree.

Oregonian Editorial, July 11, 2004

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"Realizing it could jeopardize state efforts to set up parallel protections for gays, whether Vermont's civil unions or California's domestic partnerships..."

"Even though Republican leaders admit they don't have the votes to pass the amendment, they rushed the proposal to the floor... Most Americans understand the politics of distraction."

"Smith should reconsider his vote. A champion of gay rights has no business aiding such a political prank."

**Tell Senator Smith you do too.
Call (202)224-3753.**



HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

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HRC's full-page ad in *The Oregonian* didn't get through to Gordon Smith

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Watch naked animals go wild in a really cool place.



It's time for the Grand Opening Party at Rose City Veterinary Hospital! There probably won't be exotic dancing but there will be naked animals and a fun party in the coolest pet hospital you have ever seen! Portland's oldest pet hospital has been beautifully remodeled by WPH Architecture from Portland. With its exciting lobby, enclosed courtyard, TV room for the kids and luxury suites for the pets it's designed to pamper you and your pets to the max. So Dr. Quirk and Dr. Kochis invite you to put on at least a little of your finery and help us celebrate our new space.



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