

Speak Out

just asking Considering the Defense of Marriage Coalition was able to collect more than twice the required signatures, how confident are you feeling about our chances to defeat the anti-gay amendment to the Oregon Constitution in November?

It's necessary to remember that these anti-gay coalitions and other hate groups are usually Christians, so their "grassroots" campaign probably consisted of a lot of preachers delivering the anti-gay sermon from the pulpit in order to encourage their congregations to sign the anti-gay petitions—which I'm sure were strategically placed near the front door of the churches. The politics of Christianity is repugnant to most, and I believe that a majority of Oregonians will see through this thinly veiled assault on gays and lesbians come November.

DOUG SANDSTROM
San Francisco

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I made my decision to move to Oregon based on the state's history of allowing and supporting individual rights and freedoms and, at the same time, celebrating the diversity that is Oregon. The signatures were collected from a select group, and while they are numerous (and maybe more than we expected) my faith in Oregon doesn't allow me to believe that they represent all of us, rather that we underestimated the size of the group.

My partner and I believe that when all of the voters in Oregon are canvassed, and not just the selected who were approached on Sunday mornings, the outcome will support us. Love will abide.

ELIZABETH SAGER
Beaverton

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While it's frightening how many signatures the Defense of Marriage Coalition gathered, I still think we have a good chance of defeating this amendment. I feel most Oregonians believe in equal protection under the law. It will take some serious community organizing to get the vote out, but we can do it if we work hard.

So all you folks who don't normally vote, get out there! Throw a voting party and get your friends to vote! My future children thank you.

FRANCIE NEVILL
Portland

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It's frightening to think that they collected as many signatures as they did, but the fight is far from over. As long as we don't give up, eventually this wall will come down also.

LINDSEY MARPLE
Lake Oswego

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I believe that those of us who are in favor of freedom of choice and association and freedom to love and marry are in for another huge fight in the upcoming elections, similar in

nature to the Oregon Citizens Alliance battles of the 1990s. I do not know if we can defeat this measure, but we must try. To sit idly by means certain defeat for anyone of a differing view than the ultraconservative fearmongers.

Thank you for letting me have my say.

JAMIE ACACIA KNOTT
Portland

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No matter what, I think there are so many other issues on the agenda that nobody is taking our cause seriously. More importantly, I'm not sure we as a gay/lesbian community are taking it seriously.

Our numbers make us a minority. How many of our minority group are in serious, long-term, committed relationships? That number must be even fewer! If those of us who are not in committed relationships right now don't have the ability to see into their own futures, then our numbers will be too few—and those of you who are still waiting to meet the partner of your dreams will have nothing more to carry into your futures than regrets.

ROSANNE DORNON
Keizer

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I know as a community with our friends and our family behind us, we can overcome anything. There is nothing stopping us other than people who aren't registered to vote! If you haven't gotten registered, you are holding back your community and your future. You the public have the power to take back your liberties.

This nation is supposed to be about equal rights for all, not special rights for "some." Adding an amendment to the Oregon Constitution that excludes gay people from marrying is making and giving straight people special rights! It would also be, in effect, "legally" discriminating against a group of U.S. citizens.

We haven't fought for the past 40 years to take a step back 35 years! Get registered, get going, and get voting to take back equal rights!

SAVANNAH VERONICA JACKSON
Ms. Pride 2003

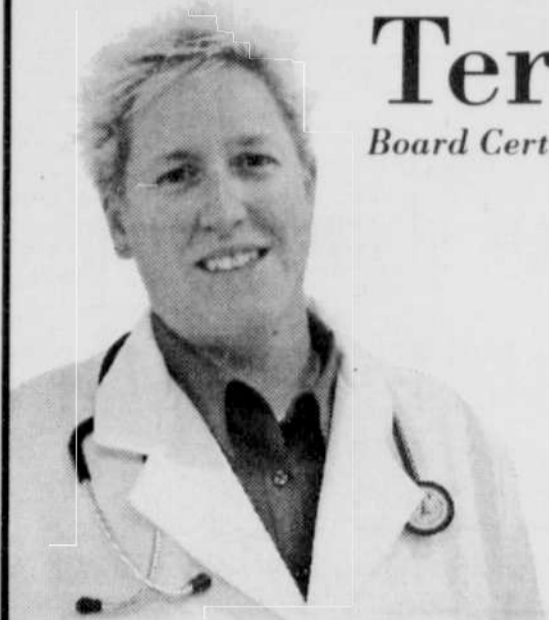
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I cannot believe the Defense of Marriage Coalition turned in 244,587 signatures, the highest number ever submitted for an initiative measure in Oregon history. Don't be delusional and take it for granted that we can easily defeat the anti-gay amendment—vote, be active, and be politically aware so that the first step in the right direction when Multnomah County issued marriage licenses was not for nothing. FIGHT and VOTE!

YVONNE P. BEHRENS
Portland

next issue How do you feel about U.S. Sens. John Kerry and John Edwards skipping the vote on the Federal Marriage Amendment? Were they running scared from an important civil rights issue, or were they playing it safe to ensure victory in November? (Please see related item on Page 14.) Respond at www.justout.com. (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)

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