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I let crystal meth make my decisions for me, and they were all bad.

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NORTHWEST news

DOLLARS AND SENSE

No on 36 campaign receives national seed money, prepares to launch ads by Meg Daly

When it comes to same-sex marriage rights, emotions and stakes are running high. So too is the cost of the battle to keep discrimination out of the Oregon Constitution.

According to communications director Shauna Shindler Ballo, the No on Constitutional Amendment 36 campaign's projected budget is \$2.9 million. Nearly two-thirds of that money will be spent on television advertising time from now until November.

Ballo says the campaign recently passed the \$1 million benchmark in its fund raising, with the help of two national nonprofits: \$500,000 from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and \$39,500 from the Human Rights Campaign. HRC has pledged an additional \$100,000.

While anti-gay ballot measures including amendments to ban same-sex marriage will be on many state ballots this fall, NGLTF and HRC see Oregon as the state where defeating the amendment is actually possible.

"Polls show that Oregon is deeply divided, and we have a good chance of winning if you guys have the resources you need," said J. Smith, a spokesperson for HRC.

Smith was referring to a July poll commissioned by No on 36 indicating that 49 percent of Oregonians favored the amendment while 46 percent opposed it. The poll was conducted by Decision Research in Washington, D.C.

The president of Decision Research, Bob Meadow, told *Gay City News* that usually 30 percent to 35 percent favor same-sex marriage, with 60 percent to 70 percent opposed. By comparison, Oregon numbers are encouraging.

HRC field organizer Heather Wellman says, "It makes sense to put resources in Oregon where it can make the biggest impact."

HRC has officially endorsed No on 36, and Wellman says it has contributed a small amount of focus work and strategic advice as well as funding. "In addition to federal work we do, our mission is to help states."

Funding from national organizations has been essential seed money, Ballo says. However, she says, "In-state contributors are who is going to get us to our goal."

No on 36 press secretary Rebekah Kassell adds, "It's very exciting that our friends nationally have stepped in to help us." However, she



J. Smith of the Human Rights Campaign is encouraged by polls indicating that Oregon has a strong chance of defeating Measure 36

says, "We only have seven weeks left in this campaign, and it's Oregonians who will make sure we win."

The national supporters also recognize this fact. "Oregonians care about fair-mindedness in their constitution," Smith says.

The unique makeup of the state lends itself to a potential win. "Oregonians have been having a conversation about GLBT issues for 20 years," Kassell says. "People here have already aligned themselves with a position of fairness."

No on 36 will be launching television ads the week of Sept. 13 to run until the Nov. 2 election. Its opposition, the Defense of Marriage Coalition, has begun its print campaign, with billboards already springing up along Interstate 5. The coalition's initial television campaign, which includes more than \$100,000 worth of ads, will begin Sept. 13 as well.

No on 36 ads will be targeted at undecided voters, a narrow but vital slice of the electorate. Kassell says that the campaign is still in the process of finalizing the ads but that viewers can expect to see real people talking about the very real harms to Oregonians that the anti-gay constitutional amendment would enforce.

"There is no one clear-cut ad that will speak to [undecideds]," Kassell says. "We will try to reach them in a variety of ways."

Ballo adds: "This is an issue people feel strongly about. Everyone thinks they're an expert on marriage."

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