

GUEST COMMENTARY

BY ROEY THORPE

No regrets

Will you wake up Nov. 3 and wish you'd done more?

After months of working toward this moment, Election Day is here!
You may be looking at your calendar and thinking I'm off a few weeks—or perhaps off my rocker—but it is true. Ballots began to be mailed out across Oregon starting just after midnight today, and people will start voting as early as today or tomorrow.

Ask yourself if you have done everything you can to make sure we win the No on Constitutional Amendment 36 campaign.
Will you wake up Nov. 3 with the knowledge that you were a part of this victory—that you have been a part of this historic moment, doing everything you could to help the campaign? Or will you wake up Nov. 3 and wish you'd done more?

During the past several weeks, the proponents of Constitutional Amendment 36 have spent close to a million dollars running one misleading, hurtful commercial after another—yet they have not gained any ground. They have sent out misleading mail pieces, and still they have not gained any ground. They have lied to voters by saying this amendment will not change the constitution. And still they have not gained any ground.

But this week, we are turning the tide. Just as undecided and persuadable voters—the ones we need to reach most—began paying the most attention to this race, we are reaching them with a flurry of television commercials, radio ads, mail pieces and direct voter contacts from volunteers across Oregon.

On their televisions and radios, in their mailboxes, in their voters' pamphlet and from friends and family like you, voters across Oregon are hearing how this amendment will change our constitution to hurt gays and lesbians. And the more they hear, the more they reject it.

The tide has turned in this race, and we are more certain than ever that we will win.

But we still need your help. In these final few weeks before Nov. 2, we each need to be doing everything in our power to defeat this amendment. Make no mistake—this election will come down to very few votes.

We need to make sure that every NO voter we know is returning his or her ballot. We need to help walk door to door and phone voters who still haven't made up their minds. We need to tell everyone we know—our families, friends, neighbors and co-workers—how this amendment will personally affect us and ask them to please vote against placing unequal treatment into our constitution.

The rest of this campaign will be tough. There will be more hurtful ads from the other side as they become more fearful of losing. But we will be tougher. They will throw everything they have at us. But we know from experience that telling the truth about our lives, and how unequal treatment is hurtful to our families, will move our fellow Oregonians.

There will be moments when everything seems to be going our way—and times when we feel like everyone is against us. But we will never lose faith. We will never stop working for victory.

We've been down this path too many times before. But I hope you'll be heartened by the knowledge that even though all those past ballot measures took so much out of our community, the truth is that they changed our culture in Oregon to bring us to this moment. Those struggles mattered, and it mattered that we won, and that happened because so many people stood up and came out and took tremendous risks. Our polling shows us as starting at least 20 percent ahead of every other one of the 11 states facing an anti-marriage amendment this fall. That's because so many people in this state have sacrificed so much, but look at the difference it made.

You don't get civil rights by sitting around waiting for them to fall in your lap. You don't get them without sacrifice and risk and pain. We are paying that price now. I know what it feels like to drive down a street with "Yes on 36" signs on all sides, or to find out that a close friend "just can't go there" on this issue.

But you know what? Those feelings were there all along—they aren't being created, they're just being given the light of day. And as painful as it is to see and experience, prejudice is like a vampire—daylight kills it pretty fast. And without that daylight and discussion and, frankly, some pretty offensive and hurtful things being said, we don't have the opportunity to educate people about the truth of our lives.

This fight is worth it. And when the dust settles on Election Day, we will have defeated this amendment.

We are at a defining moment, not only in this campaign, but in the long-term struggle for equality for GLBT people. This is one of those points that we will look back on and remember for the rest of our lives.

You will be an important part of this victory. Please go to www.noon36.com today to make a contribution, sign up for a volunteer shift and to learn how to answer difficult questions from undecided voters. We cannot defeat this amendment without the efforts of each and every one of us.

Thank you for standing with us through thick and thin. Together, we can and will win! **JO**

ROEY THORPE is the executive director of Basic Rights Oregon.

On the cover: Clockwise from top right: Portland City Council hopeful Sam Adams on the campaign trail; Howard Dean (left) stumps for mayoral candidate Tom Potter; the No on Constitutional Amendment 36 campaign's African American Action Team visits a local barbershop
ADAMS AND POTTER PHOTOS BY BRYAN GRIMES; NO ON 36 PHOTO BY MOOF MAYEDA

just out

The IN publication for the OUT population

FOUNDED 1983 • JAY BROWN AND RENÉE LACHANCE

Vol. 21 No. 24 October 15, 2004

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Subscriptions are \$22.50 for 12 issues. First Class (in an envelope) is \$40 for 12 issues.

Contact *Just Out* at P.O. Box 14400, Portland, OR 97293-0400; 503-236-1252, advertising 503-236-1253, fax 503-236-1257; e-mail justout@justout.com. Visit our Internet site at www.justout.com.

REFLECTIONS

20 years ago in *just out*... VOL. 1 No. 24, SEPT. 28-OCT. 26, 1984

- The American voter is facing an extremely difficult challenge in the elections of 1984. Does one cast a ballot in favor of conscience or greed? If you are a member of a minority, if you are black, gay or lesbian, Oriental or anything other than a WASP, you are in for trouble. A vote for Reagan is an act of treason.

- A total of 13 candidates have filed so far for the Portland City Council seat to be vacated by Charles Jordan. One candidate emerges above the rest as the clear choice for the position. School board member, community activist and educator Herb Cawthorne is the most progressive candidate in the race. He fully supports the rights of gays and lesbians to have protection against discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations.

- The director of the U.S. Public Health Service said last week that a blood test would soon be available to determine whether a person had been exposed to AIDS but that positive test results, "will not necessarily mean you have" the disease.



- Phoenix Rising recently announced the appointment of Patricia J. Chance and Robert Weinreich as co-directors of its counseling service.

- State Rep. Vera Katz, D-Portland, will be holding two town hall/community meetings during the month of October. Since 1973, when she was first elected to the House of Representatives, she has sponsored and worked for legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation in housing, employment, credit and public services."

- The Portland City Council will have hearings Oct. 3 on making Portland a Nuclear Free Zone.

- The Lesbian Forum meets Oct. 16 to discuss "Lesbian Prosperity." Where's the money in Portland's lesbian community?

- Jemmin' at the Gender Gap—a festival of women's music featuring Loose Wimmin', We Three, Joyful Sound, Ban-shee, Jane Howard, Motherlode and Jazz Contribution—will be held Oct. 21 at Starry Night. Hosts for the evening include Ruth McFarland, Margaret Strachan, Margie Hendrickson, Rebecca Webb, Barbara Roberts and Margie Boulé. Tickets are sliding scale, \$5-\$10.

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