

## Speak Out

Capitol steps with posters. The last two days I created a banner with Minnis' photo billed as "Obstructionist at Large." The very last day I sat there with that propped up against the building and a "Governor: Can You Help Us Get Civil Rights" sign in my hands.

The governor and two likely security agents walked by my peaceful protest but did not stop to talk. A couple of Salem residents checked on me every couple of hours. I had six interactions with the press because of the banner, and Lane County Commissioner Peter Sorenson spoke on the Capitol steps to a few of us in favor of this legislation.

The Democrats fumbled the ball here and there this session—notably Senate President Peter Courtney having daily "open caucuses" with the media, which also let the Republicans know the Democrats' pre-huddle plays and positions on bills. Of course, the Republicans did not also have open caucuses, thus having a clear advantage. We lost a great opportunity. This session we had Democratic Senate majority, a supportive governor and reportedly enough House ayes if Minnis had allowed a vote. Who knows who will hold these seats two years from now.

Future ballot measure? Keep in mind we are a "minority" asking for a majority of people to vote for our civil rights. It would be an expensive and risky proposition of which today I don't think I would personally invest much time and money. I still wonder if combining civil unions and anti-discrimination in one bill was best. It was usually referred to as "the civil unions bill" even by representatives, having the anti-discrimination part of it obscured. If they had been separated, maybe at least anti-discrimination would have been passed. I would have the same feelings about any future ballot measure.

To supportive senators, thank you so much for the hard work, passionate floor speeches and Senate passage of SB 1000. Thanks also to supportive House reps. Without singling any Democrats out, you have got to play a wiser game, be as tough and as sly as the Republicans, take clear and steadfast positions on the issues, yet not lose sight of doing the people's work. A tall order, perhaps, but you've got to do it or Dems will be beaten every session unless you have control of both houses. Only if/when Republicans start playing nicer, then perhaps you shall, too. Please understand this!

To the governor, since you had previously made your supportive position well-known, at least in the last session days you could have strongly repeated that position and kept the ses-

sion going until HB 3508 was voted on. If there's anything you can do while still in office, please help us get civil rights.

To fellow GLBTs, you have to show the state you want civil unions and anti-discrimination more than I think we did. Do not get easily discouraged along the way nor wait for one activist group to tell you to pick up the phone or be present in the Capitol Building. Do it on your own initiative, too.

And lastly, Portlanders, get Karen Minnis out of there! Rally in Minnis' district about her obstructionism on SB 1000, HB 3508 as well as other bills...unless that would just end up helping the queen in 2006. At least centuries ago, the guillotine was an option for *Royalty Gone Wild*.

WILLIAM STARK  
Eugene



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## from the web

**What do you think about the Gay.com ads depicting two naked men wrapped in an American flag?**

The Gay.com billboard is visually arresting. But it's obviously directed first at potential subscribers to Gay.com and secondly at the public at large. It elicits an emotional response, all right. But by choosing to use the image of two naked, young hard bodies (such as those seen in ads for phone personals and bathhouses) and the suggestive slogan "Come Together," it fails to make its case that "gay people deserve to love, to be together and to enjoy all the ideals and privileges that the American flag represents."

The ideals and privileges that the American flag represents do not begin and end with sex. They can also include recognition of a couple's right to shared interests, caring for and raising children, building a home, mutual support, suc-

cess in business or traveling together—all in a legally secured atmosphere. Would the outcry from critical groups have been as loud if two typical gay men who look like your next-door neighbor were shown fully clothed, riding motorcycles together, camping or with their dogs, cats, birds or children? Even sitting together on the couch at the end of the day, sharing a glass of wine or a laugh over a book at Powell's? What about two elderly men embracing? There are plenty of middle-aged and older gay couples, but the public never hears about them. Nobody sees them.

If PlanetOut's Creative Services didn't run this one by a straight focus group before going ahead with the project, it should have considered doing so.

MICHAEL TAYLOR  
Portland

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