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Sexual Minority Delegates Represent Oregon at DNC

Laura Calvo's love for politics ignited the day her Costa Rican parents received American citizenship. Her mother registered to vote within an hour of receiving citizenship documentation.

Hallie Travis, a former North Carolina Republican, changed sides in her 20s during the HIV/AIDS crisis and her suspicious discharge from the Air Force after marching in San Francisco's Pride parade in her military blues.

These women will unite as delegates for U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., at the Democratic National Convention from Aug. 25 to 28 in Denver.

Calvo, a transgender lesbian from Portland, and Travis, a lesbian from Seaside, have both been elected to Oregon's LGBT Caucus, the largest and most organized Democratic caucus in Oregon.

This is the first year the DNC has instilled an "inclusion goal" for minority representation. Nationally and statewide, sexual minorities surpassed the 7 percent mark for what Calvo feels is one of the most historic conventions in history. Not only will it feature the first black presidential candidate and the first woman ever to come so close to a nomination, it will also see the largest number of queer delegates since its start.

Calvo is one of eight transgender delegates among 4,000 total delegates. In 2003, her coming-out story made the front page of *The Grants Pass Courier* as it coincided with her testimony in favor of a statewide queer-specific nondiscrimination bill. When she encountered a transphobic work environment as a police officer, she realized she had no legal protection.

Politics became Calvo's lifeline. She holds numerous positions in political organizations: regional director for the National Stonewall Democrats, credentials committee chairwoman for the Democratic Party of Oregon and treasurer for the Oregon Democratic Party GLBT Caucus, Multnomah County Democrats and Multnomah County Democrats. "It is the most viable vehicle for us to contribute to the struggle for equality," she says.

Travis has participated in every major congressional race wherever she has lived. She has worked at the Library of Congress and the National Aero-



Hallie Travis, vice chairwoman of Clatsop County Democrats, will represent queer Oregonians at the Democratic National Convention.

nautics and Space Administration and is vice chairwoman of Clatsop County Democrats.

Travis believed strongly that Clinton's name should appear on the ballot. In the past, all candidates' names have appeared, but a drive for "unanimous acclamation" of U.S. Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., threatened this tradition. A decision was announced Aug. 14 that both names will appear.

Oregon's LGBT Caucus will announce its platform at the convention, including immediate, full federal civil partnership benefits and an end to the ban on gays in the military.

Calvo and Travis stress that gays are not single-issue voters. They hope the caucus will serve as a double-sided tool: to educate the Democratic Party about queer issues and to educate the queer community about politics.

No Lemonade for Lemons Case

Oregon's domestic partnerships will not be voted on this year at the ballot box.

The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals issued an opinion Aug. 14 upholding an earlier U.S. District Court decision in the Lemons vs. Bradbury "case of the disenfranchised signers" in favor of Secretary of State Bill Bradbury. The lawsuit sought to radically change the way the state of Oregon handles referendum and initiative petition signatures.

In an unusually quick ruling, the three-judge court found that the plaintiffs—petition signer Phillip Lemons and his lawyers, the anti-gay Alliance Defense Fund—did not have their equal protection and due process rights violated by not being allowed to "contest," in person, their signatures on a referendum initiative last fall. The referendum sought to send Oregon's Family Fairness Act to the ballot, but the organizers failed to gather the required signatures. The legislation, which went into effect in February, provides a panoply of rights and responsibilities to same-sex couples.

As reported in the July 18 cover story, "Death of a Movement," this means that November 2008 is only the second presidential election since 1984 that doesn't include an anti-gay measure on the Oregon ballot.

No statements have been released from David Crowe's Concerned Oregonians or Restore America, but if his earlier promises are to be believed, new initiative petitions will be filed as early as this fall seeking to repeal the Oregon Family Fairness Act.

Basic Rights Oregon executive director Jeana Frazzini said she was "thrilled and excited" by the court's decision. "We've said all along that the case lacks merit, and that's now been affirmed in

both the lower court and the 9th circuit. And it's a great relief that the thousands of caring couples affected by the domestic partnership law can breathe easy."

Frazzini added that BRO planned to "not only be keeping an eye on what's happening in California this year, but looking at how we can support our neighbors to the south," referring to the state's upcoming Ballot Measure 8, which aims to reverse its recent same-sex marriage victory.

"The vote in California will be indicative of how we move forward," Frazzini said. "Domestic partnership is a bridge, and we remain committed to full marriage equality. It's not just the work here in Oregon, but it's part of the national picture."

BRO Accepts Honoree Nominations

Basic Rights Oregon wants you to name names.

At the agency's 26th annual dinner and auction, community members nominated by their peers will be honored for their commitment to equal rights. BRO is accepting nominations for people "who have dedicated their time, talent and treasure to helping the fight for equality and fairness throughout our state," according to the agency's Web site.

One winner will be chosen from the following regions: Portland, Washington County, Salem, Corvallis, Eugene, southern Oregon, central Oregon, eastern Oregon, northern Oregon coast, central Oregon coast and southern Oregon coast.

The event's theme is "Metamorphosis," aimed at "embracing the transformation of our movement for equality as we celebrate our successes and take on new challenges," according to site. Radio personalities Daria O'Neill and Mitch Elliott of The Buzz 105.1 FM and songstress Storm Large are the evening's hosts.

Along with the usual live auction, BRO has added a silent auction and is accepting donations of auction items.

The dinner will take place from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Oct. 11 at the Oregon Convention Center, 777 N. E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Tickets are \$150.

Nominations will be accepted through Sept. 1 at www.brodinner.com. jo

By STEPHEN MARC BEAUDOIN, JULIUS CALASICAS, JAYMEE R. CUTI, BEN FERGUSON and MATTHEW FREE



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