

elections

NATIONAL

Obama Wins Presidency

The United States elected its first racial minority president when U.S. Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., handily took 349 electoral votes and 52 percent of the popular vote. His opponent, U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., won 133 electoral votes and 46 percent of the popular vote.

Within the first minute of Obama's victory speech addressing more than 200,000 people at Grant Park in Chicago, the 44th president referenced gays in a call for unity.

"It's the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Latino, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled—Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been a collection of red states and blue states: We are, and always will be, the United States of America," he said.

Gay Candidates Make History

The first gay man to run for the U.S. House of Representatives as an out sexual minority won his race Nov. 4. Jared Polis was voted into office from Colorado's 2nd Congressional District, encompassing Boulder and areas north and west of Denver.

Only lesbian U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., won a congressional campaign as an out sexual minority.

Other gays in the House who came out after their election were Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., and former Reps. Gerry Studds, D-Mass., who is deceased, Steve Gunderson, R-Wis., and Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz.

Other gays and lesbians elected in 2008 were Jason Bartlett, who came out in his current term and was re-elected to the Connecticut House; Thomas Robichaux and Seth Bloom, both gay, who simultaneously became the first openly gay elected officials in Louisiana when they were elected to the Orleans Parish School Board in an October primary; John Perez, who became the first openly gay person of color elected to the California Assembly; Lupe Valdez, who was re-elected as sheriff of Dallas County, Texas; Kevin Beckner, who won a seat on the Hillsborough County Commission in Florida, becoming the first openly gay candidate elected in the county; and Rebecca Kaplan, who will be the first out lesbian to serve on the Oakland, Calif., City Council.

ARIZONA

Voters Pass Marriage Ban Again

Arizona, which already prohibits same-sex marriage, passed a constitutional measure Nov. 4 by a 56 percent simple majority, restricting marriage to one man and one woman.

Voters rejected a similar constitutional amendment in 2006 that would have also blocked the state from recognizing civil unions.



U.S. Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., promises to bring change as the nation's 44th president.

ARKANSAS

Adoption Ban Passes

The Arkansas Family Council, which passed the state's constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, collected enough signatures to place a referendum on the ballot to ban same-sex couples from adopting children.

The ballot measure passed 57 percent to 43 percent Nov. 4. The law will limit adoptions and foster care of children to people who are legally married.

The measure was sparked from a state Supreme Court ruling last year that overturned a Child Welfare Agency Review Board policy banning gay people from serving as foster parents. In its unanimous ruling, the court said homophobia was behind the attempt to restrict adoption to married couples.

CALIFORNIA

Marriage Ban Passes

Proposition 8, which overturned the California Supreme Court ruling that gays and lesbians are legally entitled to marriage, passed with 52 percent of the vote.

Between 3 million and 4 million absentee and provisional ballots were tallied to decide the nail-bitingly close race.

The California attorney general declared that the 18,000 same-sex couples who wed

between June 16 and Nov. 4 remain legally married.

The battle for same-sex marriage in California was the costliest ballot measure in history—totaling more than \$67 million. Much of the money came from outside California.

Legal challenges to Proposition 8 were announced Nov. 5, including a writ petition filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, Lambda Legal and the National Center for Lesbian Rights. The groups charge that the amendment is invalid because the initiative process was improperly used to undo the constitution's core commitment to equality.

Attorney Gloria Allred also announced a lawsuit against Prop 8 on behalf of clients Robin Tyler and Diane Olson. Allred and her law firm represented the couple in their victory before the California Supreme Court. Her clients became the first to marry in Los Angeles County in June.

FLORIDA

Marriage Ban Passes Again

Despite a law restricting marriage to one man and one woman, Florida voters passed a constitutional amendment Nov. 4 limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples and banning civil unions with 62 percent of the vote.

Opponents believe the amendment may be used to deny partner benefits to unmarried couples who live together. **10**

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