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camp. Notably, she said that during the off-season the company would be utilizing their organizational presentations and their introductions with new employees and athletes to stress the importance of knowing what it means to be in—and represent—Portland, and what it means to be a Trailblazer. She said this conversation moving forward will include a message of inclusivity and respect. For now, though, any tangible plans for a PSA, commercial or video are in the infancy stages.

"It's something we're absolutely taking very seriously," said Rose, who also referred to the Trailblazers' work in programs with the Special Olympics to eliminate the use of the "R" word. "We want to get behind this, locked arms with the rest of the NBA. What we completely and clearly understand is that the expectations are very different in this community. We need to know and be of the values of this community, and that's going to be different all around the country. This message, though, is united. For us to be able to get the word out in Portland is one thing; being able to really get behind a national movement as well is where the change really happens."

Stay tuned for updates on this story as it develops. In the meantime, visit change.org/petitions/portland-trail-blazers-make-an-it-gets-better-video to sign Zeller's petition.

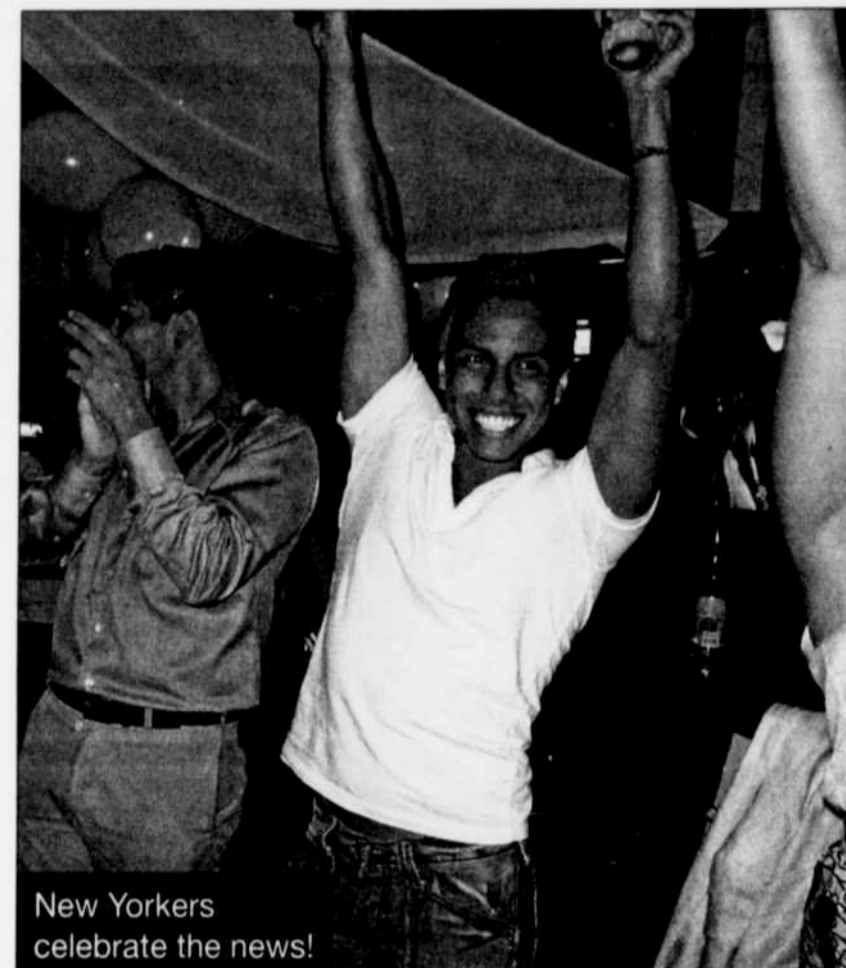
New York Gay Marriage Decision Provides Momentum for Marriage Equality in Northwest

Oregon marriage equality advocates were just one contingent of a large swath of Americans celebrating the news that New York's GOP-led legislature had approved a bill to legalize gay marriage in the state June 24. But with marriage equality legislation having been introduced earlier this year in the Washington state Senate, as well as the perennial push for a ballot initiative in Oregon to overturn Measure 36, questions are brewing over what's next in the Pacific Northwest's fight for fairness.

Both Basic Rights Oregon and Equal Rights Washington agree that the marriage equality victory in New York is an opportune time to galvanize visibility, awareness and momentum for the LGBTQ movement.

"All states that are getting close to marriage equality are buoyed by New York for both the momentum it builds and the money it frees up for efforts around the country," explained ERW vice chair Ty Stober.

"We're very excited about the New York vote and the recent polling here in Oregon,



New Yorkers
celebrate the news!

both of which show the evolution of thought around marriage equality," said Jeana Frazzini, executive director for BRO. "It also shows that when we make marriage personal and not political, minds can change."

Frazzini is referring to a new survey conducted by Public Policy Polling, which found that 48 percent of Oregon voters support marriage equality, compared to 42 percent against it. The numbers mark a shift in public opinion about gay marriage since the 2004 election, in which nearly 57 percent of Oregonians voted to approve Measure 36—a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage in the state.

Both BRO and ERW have remained cautious about taking on the introduction of a ballot measure in 2012, choosing instead to gather more information, insight and perspective from the communities of their respective states before embarking on such a costly campaign. Both organizations have said a decision could be announced nearer to this fall.

The statistics found by Public Policy Polling show that though there are promising upswings in the attitude toward gay marriage in general, a ballot measure would face a tough fight.

The same poll asked voters to choose among gay marriage, civil unions—which are already allowed in Oregon—and no legal recognition for gay couples. In that scenario, 43 percent backed gay marriage, 33 percent supported civil unions and 22 percent said there should be no legal recognition for gay couples. These numbers have led to the fear that opponents of gay marriage could stymie support for a ballot measure by contending that civil unions are sufficient enough for gay couples.

"Once we enter a heated political campaign, it will be impossible for our message of love, commitment and fairness to be heard over the din of the opposition's negative advertising," Frazzini said. "In the coming months, we'll continue to engage Oregonians in conversations about why