

BY RYAN J. PRADO

**BRO Announces It Will Not Move Forward with Gay Marriage Ballot Initiative in 2012**

Basic Rights Oregon announced Wednesday, November 9 that they would not move forward on a ballot initiative to legalize gay marriage in Oregon for the 2012 general election. After months of speculation, online surveys, town hall-style meetings and the recommendation of an advisory group consisting of prominent Oregon equality advocates, BRO's board of directors said that there was not enough of a majority to risk mounting a costly effort for marriage equality this time around.

"We have considered the possibility of putting this issue on the ballot for the 2012 election," read the statement. "However several factors, including the expense of waging a statewide political campaign in the midst of an economic crisis, led us to conclude that [we] are better off extending our education campaign and building momentum for a later election."

Over the previous three years, BRO has launched increasingly more visible ad campaigns designed to educate potential voters on the plight of gay and lesbian couples denied the right to marry in Oregon. Television ads aired in 2010-11 across the state, featuring Oregon gay and lesbian couples relating their perspectives on marriage equality, met with positive feedback. But despite convening

with additional community leadership for advice, as well as evaluating data from an online survey that garnered more than 1,000 respondents—a majority of whom told BRO not to move forward in 2012 unless there was a solid chance of victory—the organization's next step became clear as an informal early November deadline loomed.

"Today we recommit ourselves to this effort," continued the statement. "We're committed to opening a new dialogue with our friends, family and neighbors and, ultimately, winning the freedom to marry."

The announcement resonated community-wide Wednesday. The Oregon Family Council said that though they are relieved BRO is postponing their efforts, the OFC's work to defend Oregon's Constitutional definition of marriage will continue soon enough.

"[BRO has] made it clear...that a battle to change marriage is coming. Therefore we will remain vigilant in our efforts to educate Oregonians about the importance of protecting marriage and the impact that redefining marriage can have on society," said OFC communications director Teresa Harke.

Michael Kaplan—Cascade AIDS Project executive director and BRO advisory group member—said he fully supports the board's decision not to move forward.

"BRO led an incredibly thorough and thoughtful process with a clear goal: ensuring

a winning path for marriage equality," explained Kaplan. "I think taking time to make sure all our ducks are in a row in Oregon makes good sense, and has me confident that with BRO's leadership, we will get there."

For more on the decision, turn to p. 3 for insight from Basic Rights Oregon executive director Jeana Frazzini.

**Ben Cohen Announced as Special Guest for PCC's First Ever Lavender Career Panel**

Portland Community College's Rock Creek Campus Career Resource Center, in partnership with the new **Queer Resource Center**, will host its first ever **Lavender Career Panel Monday, November 14 from 5:30 to 7 p.m.** The inaugural event will feature an esteemed panel of LGBTQ professionals and allies from all walks of life, including English rugby icon Ben Cohen.

Cohen, who is among the first straight professional athletes to focus his philanthropic work to help the LGBTQ community via his StandUp Foundation, will anchor the panel, sharing personal stories to inspire impetus for success and satisfaction in attendees' careers.

"Having Ben on the panel can facilitate a dialogue from an allied perspective, and that is equally as important for the success of the panel," explains PCC career resource special-



Ben Cohen is coming to town!

ist Tamara Ryan. "As allies, we all have that 'unique moment' that inspired us to take action, and my hope [is] that allied students will find their own reasons for a call to action by attending."

Other panelists include Q Center's Paul Fukui, Beth Allen Law PC attorney Megan Gluth, PABA president Jill Nelson and more.

Ryan hopes that the diversity of the panel will instill students with a renewed self-confidence in their ability to achieve their goals.

"From my personal experience, seeing 'someone like me,' a Mexican-American woman, in



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