

To: Marc Soloman
From: Sue Burnside, fieldhack@earthlink.net
Subj: Strategy to Overturn Prop 8
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As a professional campaign consultant, one of California's 18,000 gay married couples, the Field Director of the first same-sex marriage ballot initiative in the United States (Hawaii in 1997), and co-chair of the National Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund Campaign Board, I have both a professional and highly personal stake in the fight to overturn Prop 8.

Having crunched the demographics backwards and forwards, I am convinced that we should refrain from rushing in 2010, and instead to build on grassroots passion and strategically prepare for a "Yes on Marriage Equality" referendum in 2012. We have passionate supporters of marriage equality – but we need to convert that passion into an organized, sophisticated grassroots campaign that can systematically reach out to soft opponents and convert them into supporters of marriage equality. If we cannot harness our passion, we will not win – no matter if we are going in 2010 or 2012.

Facts:

- Our community and many political allies have been working hard since November 2008. But even after eight months of grassroots activism about marriage equality and the existence of 18,000 married couples throughout the State, our polling numbers have not moved (Field, PPIC and Binder/Simon polls).
- The majority of California voters do not support same sex marriage. No ballot initiative has walked into Election Day without a 50% positive polling number and won in California.
- The California electorate is angry about the budget crisis and worried about the direction the country and state are headed. In this political climate, people tend to vote NO on ballot measures. We have to get a Yes vote!
- Given the national economy, California's deep recession and the fact that few major donors have agreed to pledge large funds to an immediate rematch, it's hard to see how we raise the \$30-\$40 million it would cost to run and win this campaign.
- The Governor's race will be the top of the ballot in 2010. Some argue that all the Democratic candidates will favor marriage equality. But in a statewide run off in November, the Democrat nominee might not be an outspoken supporter, given that we only won 13 of 58 counties.
- Anti gay-marriage forces can get more people to vote in a low turnout environment than we can. If you look at the voters by age likely to vote in a 2010 election, people over 60 represent 37% of likely voters versus 27% in a 2012 general election. Our strength lies in getting young people to vote – in November 2012 voters under 30 will represent 20% of the electorate but in 2010 they will only represent 7% of the electorate. By 2012 there will be 776,000 new voters under 21 years old added to the voter rolls (our best group). On the other end of the age spectrum, there will be fewer older voters – more than 122,000 voters will die (the opposition's most reliable voting bloc) Take a look at historic spreadsheet below.
- We would need to be prepared to get on the ballot in just two months (the deadline to submit language for the initiative is September 25, 2009 and have the full 150 days to circulate the petition). Any ballot campaign expert will tell you that having the exact right ballot language is often the difference between winning and losing. With just two months until the deadline for submitting ballot language, we may not have time to develop the strongest possible language.
- The current poll models a 2012 electorate as it stands today, but not fully reflecting where things will be in November 2012. You cannot poll future voters if they are not on the voter file. The 2% increase suggested by the polling is nothing to be laughed at but I believe given the inability to accurately gauge the real number without using the above information (new young voters and dying old voters), the increase would be closer to 4% for a 2012 election.
- Prop 8 lost in Los Angeles, the largest urban base. Our state map looks worse than the map that recalled Governor Gray Davis (Davis got 80% in SF County but we only got 75% -- this trend continues for all urban areas in the state). This highlights that urban areas have more people of color voters and we need to do organizing in order to get a larger percentage of the vote.

- Whenever there is social progress, it always takes time for public opinions/gut reactions to change. Look at Bill Clinton, the father of DOMA – just a couple of days ago he acknowledged that his views have changed. As Californians adjust to the 18,000 marriages that were performed between June and November 2008 over the next four years and become accustomed to the social practice across the country, the issue will increasingly become a non-event.

But the most important reason for deferring a huge push until 2012 is DEMOGRAPHICS. Waiting for two years more means 9+% more young voters becoming eligible to vote and a 5% drop-off in senior voters.

Historical Turnout in November elections

Age	% of vote	2006	% of vote	2008	growth
18-29	7%	567,738	16%	2,071,341	1,503,603
30-49	30%	2,450,681	35%	4,579,963	2,129,282
50-60	26%	2,181,427	23%	3,023,969	842,542
61-70	18%	1,514,518	14%	1,871,309	356,791
71-80	11%	911,955	8%	1,035,385	123,430
80+	8%	636,072	5%	677,537	41,465
Total		8,262,391		13,415,487	5,153,096

Based on state voter registration history

by 2010 315027 new registered people between 18-29
 by 2012 776081 new registered people between 18-29

Moving forward here are some suggestions

Because we are no longer being pushed by circumstances as we were in 2008, we have time to set the necessary groundwork to win our next ballot initiative. But even with a slightly longer time frame of a 2012 election, we need to start the real work *now*.

- 1). The first thing that needs to be done is to create a clear universal frame and messages for all of the non-profits and community organizations to use. Use education dollars not campaign dollars to do the work.
- 2). Seek to develop a structure and process for communication; possibly develop a steering committee.
- 3) Build a Statewide roundtable for every group to participate that would like to see marriage passed. These groups should create best practices, targets and programs that include contact and programmatic benchmarks to all our persuasion targets, including these key groups: Voters aged 45 to 60, Latinos, Asian-Pacific Islanders, African Americans and a religious program modeled after the Let California Ring Santa Barbara program and Hawaii ACLU programs in every county.
- 4). Create a base program, "LGBT activist summer" modeled after Union summer; Sponsor coming out programs with visibility; Create a permanent vote by mail (VBM) program for LGBT voters statewide.
- 5). With a 2012 campaign we will need a massive war chest. Start now. Hire a fundraiser, stop the competition for the best list -- let the campaign have the best list to raise the most money.

6). Create a coordinated data base of identified voters. The VAN program is great for New Jersey but the best data in the nation is in California from PDI-- you cannot micro target voters without accurate data with complete voter history. Waiting until 2012 would give us the time to identify the 16% of swing voters that are shown in polling and the 39% of our hard core supporters.

7). Voter registration and Vote by Mail (VBM) and Permanent Absentee Voting (PAV). Turning out our base is absolutely critical. The opposition base is more passionate and organized today.

8). Create a grassroots army that is well trained and disciplined.

9). When it is time to draft a ballot measure, find the smartest, most dedicated ballot initiative people in the nation to run the campaign.