



**Grassroots Input on California's Next Marriage Equality Campaign**

**A Compilation of Findings from  
Over 40 Community Town Halls**

**June – July 2009**

## Why Get Engaged?

***“Remember that people want to be included in decisions that affect their future. This is not a matter of personal power, but one of self-worth.” Martin Luther King, Jr.***

Between June 16<sup>th</sup> and November 4<sup>th</sup>, 18,000 same-sex couple married. We tasted equality and will no longer accept second-class status. The passage of Prop 8 forces us to go back to the ballot box to restore the freedom to marry and we know what we need to do to win. To succeed, we have to empower local communities and that is why Marriage Equality USA and other allied organizations launched the Get Engaged Tour.

Armed with the results from the latest and most innovative poll on marriage equality, a coalition of organizations, pollsters, and local leaders held over 40 community gatherings to present this information, along with estimates that show for a November 2010 election, we must find 1,000 new supporters a day (of which some must be former Yes on 8 voters). It is half that for a November 2012 election. While this task is daunting, it is not impossible if we engage and empower our local communities across California.

	Estimated Support and Turnout		
	No on 8	Turnout	
<b>Where We Are Today</b>	Nov-08	Nov-10	Nov-12
% Support	48%	46%	47%
# Supporters	6,401,482	4,458,162	6,407,423
<b>What Is Needed to Get to 51%, All Our Supporters Voting Plus</b>			
% New Supporters		5%	4%
# New Supporters		457,359	540,403
Days to Election Starting Aug 1, 2009		458	1,193
New Supporters Needed/Day		999	453

Hundreds of thousands of people marched in the streets after the passage of Prop 8 and thousands of supporters came to Fresno to Meet in the Middle and pledged to overturn Prop 8. To be the change we want to see, we needed to start our next campaign the right way, by listening. Therefore, we shared the latest polling information and provided local voting analysis on Prop 22 and 8 by city and county and what each location would need to deliver to win statewide. We then asked these local communities when they wanted to back to the ballot box, what they wanted to see from a central campaign and what they needed in their local communities to succeed. Here is what they said...



## When Do We Go Back to the Ballot Box?

### November 2010!!!

***“Look at the numbers, it’s a tough fight but winnable. If we don’t go forward, it sends a message that we are not dedicated. The other side is watching and if they perceive it is not important, they will go after the 18,000 marriages, then adoption, etc. Fight! Draw a line in the sand now and don’t let them win.” West Hollywood***

### November 2012!!!

***“November 2010 is too much pressure, people don’t think clearly or strategically when they are under pressure. We won’t lose momentum; the train has left the station. We finally have an opportunity to achieve tangible goals at the federal level – repealing DOMA and Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. All gay Americans can benefit from federal momentum and the trickle-down effect will make it easier for us when we go for November 2012.” Mendocino County***

As these quotes illustrate, we received a range of opinions and at every gathering, our community members presented passionate arguments for 2010, 2012 and 2014. The chart below presents each Get Engaged Tour events' straw poll findings or overall lean on when to go back to the ballot and it is clear, there is no consensus. However, the comments we received clearly identify the factors that need to be considered in making the final decision.



### Why We Must Go in November 2010

**Opportunity knocks and we must answer.** The November 2010 election brings an unprecedented opportunity we cannot pass up. We will have a Democratic candidate for Governor who supports marriage equality and it could be Gavin Newsom who has advocated for our rights from the start. We might even have a Republican candidate that supports marriage equality. We know we will not have the same “top of the ticket” support in November 2012.

**We cannot lose momentum.** “We can’t abandon people; we should seize the momentum and not lose faith. We need to be an example for the rest of the county – everyone was affected by Prop 8 – we need to win it back and show other states it can be done.” (*San Joaquin*) “Facts won’t win this election, stories of the heart will and we just have to get out there now, get this over with, so we can move on with our lives.” (*Bakersfield*) The passage of Prop 8 brought tens of thousands of people to the street all over California and across the nation, we have seen hundreds of grassroots organizations come alive in support of marriage equality, and we had thousands of activists come to Fresno to meet in the middle and pledge to overturn Prop 8. We cannot stop this momentum and we must plug these volunteers into our next campaign or our grassroots community will go to seed.

**Waiting is unacceptable.** “How can you tell someone to wait when they want to get married?” (*Palo Alto*) “The consequences of waiting are too much. There has been a rise in hate crimes. People have been harassed in schools and gay kids have committed suicide. History is on our side. Victory in the other states is because of our post-Prop 8 outpouring of anger.” (*San Francisco*) “The timing is always right. It’s about dignity and we should never stop putting it on the ballot.” (*San Jose*) In addition, a decision to wait could cause backlash for organizations whose members have voted for moving ahead. “If you decide to wait, then remove me from any and all e-mail databases. This decision is unacceptable and any group that decides it is a good decision will no longer receive my financial support. I’m tired of giving, giving, giving and now being told I have to wait.” (*Sacramento*)

**November 2010 will be less expensive than 2012.** We know people are tired and the economy is bad, but the same is true for our opposition and a campaign during a Governor’s race will be less expensive than a Presidential one. “And in 2012, we will have to compete with the Obama campaign for dollars and volunteers.” (*San Francisco*)

**We cannot be afraid of losing.** “I strongly believe we should move ahead now. I’m not afraid to lose – losing got us together and brought more straight people into the movement. I see some folks are tired, but it’s ok because others are getting involved and when we set a date, more people will get involved. I think we will make progress – I think we will win – but even if we don’t, it will help us get to 2012.” (*Berkeley*) Besides, Harvey Milk did not win the first time he ran for office, but he kept trying until he did. We gotta have hope, we can’t lose the faith, and we must be unstoppable.

#### **Why We Must Wait Until November 2012/2014**

**We have more support in November 2012.** The polling data and voter demographics show we are better off in a Presidential election where more people vote, including supporters like youth. “We have a one to two point advantage if we wait. And that’s even before considering what additional momentum we could gain with advances at the federal level. That’s significant.” (*Mendocino*)

**Changing hearts takes time.** “While the idea of waiting long doesn’t feel good, the thought of 2010 brings a mad panic to the pace. Ideally, people would change their mind with one conversation, but it doesn’t always happen that way. It usually takes more and that takes more time.” (*Berkeley*) “We need to give people a little time before we approach them again. Like a mushroom mycelium, we need to let marriage equality sink down into the soil and with time and water – it will start organically breaking down the resistance and turn it into compost.” (*Mendocino County*)

**Economic conditions are too bad now.** “Our donors are telling us in this economy, they are going to have to make choices on where they donate. Will it be to marriage equality or will it be to support social services. We’re concerned that our organizations could lose financial support when we are under significant strain already.” (*Community Service Executive Directors*) “People are tired. They are broke. They are concerned about the economy.” (*San Joaquin*) “Labor is not interested in 2010; their #1 concern is the economy and they won’t have resources to help us.” (*Livermore*)

**We cannot make the same mistakes twice.** We have not done the work that needs to be done and we are concerned that rushing into campaign mode will dismiss the issues we have identified as important. “The question isn’t do we wait until November 2012. The question is can we spend the time more wisely. If we decide to go for 2012, that means we’re putting it to building true coalition and infrastructure. We know we haven’t done enough with faith and people of color work. What can we really do in 2 years?” (*San Francisco*)

**Federal advances can be made now.** One way we can capture the grassroots energy is to direct it towards change at the federal level and outside California. “I was for 2010, but now I’m 2012. We need to take a national view and help out Maine.” (Hayward) Imagine the support we could provide if our statewide volunteers focused on passing Hate Crimes legislation, ending Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell and then phone banking for Maine to help maintain their freedom to marry. We could even March on Washington and not worry about a November 2010 deadline and work to overturn the so-called Defense of Marriage Act by sending our personal stories on why marriage matters to our House and Senate representatives and the local paper as well.

**Gay it forward.** Fresno participants played off the movie, “Pay It Forward” and said, “We need to go out and support other organizations and causes today and then they will support us tomorrow.” “Can LGBT community be included in other November 2010 campaigns, learn the ropes? While we gain skills on what we need to do to run a campaign in November 2012, we can also be building community and coalition. And I’m excited about what we could accomplish if we had the time for public education organizing.” (Stanislaus)



## How Do We Win?

***“For me, it’s less about the timing. It’s more of a question on HOW do we WIN this, I mean WIN this. We have been promised, ineffectively led, and disappointed. Now the question has to be ‘What do we need to do to WIN this time?’” It would be irresponsible to lead people down an impossible road. Let’s follow one that leads us to victory. Let’s rebuild our community’s confidence and let’s do it RIGHT this time!” Mendocino County***

One message that came out loud and clear at Get Engaged tour gatherings across the state, we need our leadership to come together to apply the lessons learned from the No on 8 campaign and provide a roadmap to victory that allows our communities to get engaged.

- “People perceive there is a leadership vacuum and don’t think anyone is doing anything. We can’t see collaboration amongst organizations and we need a plan.” (San Francisco)
- “I agree there has been a loss of momentum after the post-Prop 8 rallies, but that’s because we don’t have a plan to hold onto.” (Sacramento)
- “We will not support any effort to drive a ballot initiative until we have an organized strategy and clearly defined leadership so we can win.” (Coachella Valley)
- “What I have been seeing in the media lately is that people think there is a leadership vacuum that all the organizations are just waiting. We need to know there is actually strategizing going on and that you are talking and working together on a plan. I’m not for 2010, but I could be convinced otherwise if I saw a plan.” (San Francisco)

So next are the common elements and ideas that our Get Engaged Tour participants shared on what they hope to see in a future campaign and what they want included in a campaign plan.



# What Do We Want in a Future Campaign and Campaign Plan?

## 1. We want to be proud of our campaign.

***“We need our next campaign to come out of the closet and have the courage to do what we need it to do. It can’t be about tokenism, we need to be bold and proud.” Stanislaus, Tulare, Merced, and Calaveras Regional Gathering***

While Prop 8 was put upon us, the next campaign is ours of the making. We choose the messaging, we choose the initiative, and we choose the timing. We want to make the right choices for our community as a whole. We want a campaign that will serve as a role model for other states and one that will make us proud to support. As one San Francisco participant stated, “It’s important to not sacrifice the principles we developed. We don’t want gay people to be invisible.” We want our campaign to share the values that we are fighting for:

- Fairness and equality,
- Dignity and respect,
- Hopes and dreams,
- Inclusion and diversity,
- Freedom to be who we are, and
- Transparency and open communication.

We want those values to be reflected in the campaign we produce and how we are treated by our leadership and how we treat them.

## 2. We want persuasive ballot language that does not jeopardize our kids.

***“It all comes down to language – we need to make it clear. We should call it the ‘Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act.’ It passed the California Legislature twice and that would work with California voters as well.” San Francisco***

Not one Get Engaged Tour event came out opposed to a provision on religion and not one supported a provision related to school curriculum. While some participants felt it was unnecessary to include the religious exception, they accepted the positive impact it had on conflicted voters. In addition, our Get Engaged Tour with San Diego Faith Leaders were all in support. However, our community strongly opposed any provision related to curriculum. As one of our Hayward participant stated, “Children are our future. Anything that might slow down the trend towards their acceptance is not worth it.”

Get Engaged Tour participants acknowledged that our opposition will bring up curriculum and we must address it but not by risking unintended negative consequences, by impeding teaching tolerance and respect for all families, and by enshrining potentially harmful language in our state constitution. As one young participant in the Get Engaged Family Camp said, “Tell them about the bullying in schools and what we went through in the Prop 8 campaign. We want to be safe at school and we want our parents to be married.” Get Engaged Tour participants suggested starting with a public

education campaign targeting Parent Teacher Associations, California Teachers Association, Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network, local school boards and other related organizations.

### **3. We want to understand the “nuts and bolts” of running a campaign.**

***“We need to educate our community. We are very emotionally engaged, but we don’t have all the information and understanding of what it would take to run a campaign.” Inland Empire***

If there is one thing we found through the Get Engaged Tour, our community wants to be an active participant in the next campaign. “For the first time, I felt like I was part of the campaign. Participating in the Get Engaged Tour made me feel like a partner, not a pawn in this process. You asked for our input and we will come back to give more.”

*(Mendocino)* In addition, participants also appreciated the Camp Courage trainings that gave us confidence to share our “stories of self” which is not only an essential component of our campaign, but provides confidence to be out and proud about our lives.

We want to know what it takes from start to finish, from registering new voters and gathering signatures for a ballot initiative to getting out the vote. We want to know what our voters look like, how many vote absentee, and the best options to reaching out to voters in rural or urban communities. We can gain this experience by volunteering for another campaign in November 2010 or providing that information as we launch our own campaign. However, either way, we need to understand how our local communities can best contribute to a statewide campaign.

### **4. We want an on-line menu of volunteer options that support our campaign.**

***“With the No on 8 campaign, we were told to phone bank. Now, we have multiple statewide organizations stepping over one another telling us to canvass. It’s 110 degrees in the shade and they want us to go door-to-door? We need more than one option for our volunteers.” Central Valley***

Our campaign plan needs to identify a variety of volunteering opportunities that all lead to the same goal – identifying conflicted voters and supporters and eventually getting out the vote. “We need to have on-line access to canvassing, phone banking, tabling, public education, and other materials that are clear and multilingual. We need the freedom to access them wherever we are.” *(San Diego)* “We want the grassroots to feel connected to the central campaign. We do not want just to follow orders, we want to have a say in how we implement the campaign at the local level. We want the campaign to come up with different options for local organizers so we can pick from a menu of approaches that best fits our community.” *(Claremont)*

Obama’s campaign provided volunteers across the nation an ability to phone bank and the Yes on 8 campaign had materials that one could download via the web in 10 languages ranging from Armenian to Vietnamese. The Courage Campaign has on-line technology to support some of those volunteer needs; Marriage Equality USA has tool kits and training materials on other volunteer options; Equality California has canvassing materials; Latino Equality Alliance supported the Get Engaged Tour with translation services; and there are dozens of other organizations that have materials and can provide support for volunteer options that will help our next campaign.

We need to think outside of the box and support the creative suggestions we've seen from our grassroots community and heard on Get Engaged Tour, including:

- White Knot conversation starters (<http://www.whiteknot.org/>),
- Marriage Equality story quilt with personal stories on why marriage matters,
- Personal Ads in local papers (like the one to the right),
- Napa faith leaders publishing an open letter to the community in support of marriage equality, and
- Women's National Basketball Association pride night.

"We need to support the arts and artists doing work around marriage equality. Art entertains and informs without being as direct. It is less confrontational and a different way to share the truth." (*Mendocino*) We can all remember "Prop 8 – The Musical" (<http://centripetalnotion.com/2009/03/09/16:45:16/>) and how we wished it came out before election.

### LOST AND FOUND

Lost. My right to marry the person I love. Last seen on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008. If found, please return to law abiding, tax-paying citizen. It is dearly missed.

## 5. We must support local coalitions and targeted communities across California.

***"We are building something here in Orange County. We've got a lot of heart and people who are willing to work. We have new members who are getting involved in our coalition every day, but it's still new and tentative. November 2010 is a lot of pressure without some assistance, either monetarily or in the form of volunteers. We have the leadership and passion; we just don't currently have the means." Orange County***

The Get Engaged Tour struck gold in California when we discovered the existing networks of support within each region's marriage equality coalition across the state; some of these coalitions were extension of local No on 8 committees and others were groups that formed after the passage of Prop 8. Many of these coalitions are already working to build support for marriage equality, by developing local speaker series; canvassing; establishing subcommittees to reach out to communities including faith, youth and people of color; and working collectively on rallies and local events. Not only were these coalitions key to helping organize the Tour, it became clear with the detailed feedback they provided that supporting local coalitions could prove the key to winning marriage equality.

Below are a few of the local coalitions that participated in the Get Engaged Tour:

- Los Angeles County's OUT West Coalition
- Los Angeles County's Coachella Valley Marriage Equality Coalition
- Orange County Equality Coalition
- Riverside and San Bernardino County's Equality Inland Empire
- San Diego's Marriage of the Minds and Community Leadership Council
- San Mateo County's Peninsula Marriage Equality Coalition
- Santa Barbara's Strategic Alliance for Marriage Equality
- Santa Clara County's Marriage Equality Silicon Valley
- Sonoma County's Coalition for Marriage Equality
- Stanislaus County's Building Community for Full Equality

In other communities, such as Napa, Sacramento, and San Luis Obispo, multiple local organizations have come together to develop informal coalitions to help coordinate local efforts. San Diego's coalition has created an even more formal structure by renting a large space where multiple organizations will be housed together.

Through the Get Engaged Tour, local communities and coalitions have begun assessing their needs and identifying new organizations or members to reach out to with the goal of becoming more diverse. Below are some of the ways these coalitions indicated a statewide campaign or statewide organizations could help.

**Help Identify Local Contacts and Create a Shared Statewide Rolodex of Supporters.** Part of the Get Engaged Tour had participants look around the room to see who wasn't present and needed to be brought to the table. Many coalitions recognized that they need more volunteer support and their leadership should reflect the diversity of their community. While they identified possible organizations or individuals to contact, they also indicated it would be very helpful if the statewide organizations, in particular those who represent communities of faith or people of color, would share or encourage their mailing lists for their region to participate in these local coalitions or identify local contacts who could serve in leadership roles. "We need a mechanism for the statewide campaign to support these coalitions on an on-going basis; if they identify supporters in our county, they should ask these new supporters if they'd like their contact shared with local coalitions." (*Stanislaus*) Marriage Equality USA has been developing a statewide coalition roster. We invite other organizations to add their contacts and help grow a comprehensive, ever-updated and expanding roster that coalition members can access.

**Listen and Support Local Efforts, Do Not Impose a One-Size Fits All Strategy.** Statewide organizations and a campaign could help local coalitions by getting to know them first. Each coalition faces different challenges. Larger counties, like Los Angeles and San Diego, likely will need to be divided into multiple coalitions that can focus on a subset of cities or populations within it. The Inland Empire, Orange County and rural counties, like Mendocino or Napa, are too spread out for door-to-door canvassing but neighbor-to-neighbor phone banking or radio talk show reports may be more effective; they also face challenges identifying volunteers because they lack a Castro, West Hollywood or Hillcrest neighborhood where they can find additional supporters. Central Valley counties that had low No on 8 percentages need to be able to provide a supportive and safe environment for many community member who are not open about their sexual orientation. However, our campaign can't just headquarter these efforts in Fresno and then expect Kern, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and other distant counties to participate; the region is just too large. Bay Area Counties with higher support can focus on signature gathering efforts and ways to support other less-supportive counties with volunteers and funds. Counties like San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara could benefit from suggestions on how to target their college populations to register absentee and vote and need to be more connected with the larger statewide campaign structure.

A statewide campaign cannot impose a "one-size fits all" field plan. Campaign leaders must meet with local coalitions, listen to their collective wisdom, tap into existing support, and provide resources so these coalitions can develop local campaign plans that address the uniqueness of their region but still feeds into a statewide plan. "We need to be able to provide our on-going feedback and input to a central campaign and have it heard." (*San Diego*) In some cases, statewide organizations (e.g., Equality California, Courage Campaign and Marriage Equality USA) have active members serving and supporting these coalitions. Providing these coalitions support is the most direct way to promote marriage equality and

the most efficient way to launch Get Out the Vote efforts across the state. Finally, supporting local coalitions will promote community development by investing in these local leaders and volunteers and at the end of the campaign, not only would we gain votes, we strengthen the progressive community and improve the livelihood of local residents and supportive businesses in these communities.

**Create Resources that Can Help Support Local Coalitions and Leadership.** “The coalition aspect is not without occasional tensions, but for the most part, we are coming together as a united and also incredibly varied force.” (Orange County) “We need better communication between the larger organizations and our coalition. We cannot continue to effectively build and use our human and financial resources without communication and dialogue with the larger movement.” (Santa Barbara) There are a variety of ways a statewide campaign could foster the growth and development of these local coalitions, including:

- Establishing a monthly statewide coalition call to share campaign information, progress reports, and new projects;
- Developing regional teams where coalitions and statewide campaign advisors can work more closely together;
- Developing a buddy program that partners newer coalitions with more established ones;
- Creating an on-line roster of community supporters that is searchable by region and targeted communities;
- Identifying facilitators that can support the challenges and opportunities of working on diverse teams; and
- Producing standard materials or tool kits to support coalition projects and day-to-day operations.

Finally, we need a central website (which could start with the Get Engaged Tour website - [www.getengagedtour.com](http://www.getengagedtour.com)) that provides an on-line means to share information, materials, creative options and feedback on efforts to support for marriage equality.

## **6. We want a fundraising plan and a way to donate locally.**

*“I can’t see the coordination between groups. It is very confusing to know where I should donate and how I can support effort in my community.” San Joaquin*

Get Engaged participants expressed that in this economy, people aren’t going to write a blank check to a future campaign. In addition to asking how much this campaign would cost, questions still came up about how previous campaign funds were spent and what happened to the remaining resources. Many participants expressed frustration at being asked for money from multiple organizations claiming to do the same thing. They wanted to see better coordinating or at least a guide that provided information on each organization, its leadership and how it adds unique value or contributions to securing marriage equality. With donor fatigue and the explosion of statewide and grassroots organizations seeking funds, there needs to be better coordination and transparency on how funds are distributed if we want to be successful.

Many grassroots organizations and local coalitions expressed frustration that they didn't know how to access potential donors to pitch new innovative projects and that the biggest organizations were vacuuming up all the local dollars with no indication of where the money will be spend and that there needs to be more opportunity for funding some of these

low cost ideas. In addition, some donors want the ability to direct their funds towards specific programs, purposes, or communities. In developing a campaign plan, there should be flexibility and opportunities for donors who want to support specific campaign goals (e.g., outreach to African Americans and the Faith community, Spanish language materials, or support for Central Valley communities). "We need monetary resources to support marriage equality work in our local communities. I won't donate to a statewide campaign, I want to donate locally. I would reconsider if I could request a portion of my funds to go my local coalition." (*Stanislaus*)

## **7. We need a place and a space for everyone who wants to contribute to our campaign and we must have a campaign leadership that is held accountable.**

*"We need all our organizations to work together as a coalition, otherwise we cannot win. We need to spend a little more time with the choir and make sure we are all singing the same key. It has been disharmonious and it doesn't sound good to the community." Mendocino*

During the No on 8 campaign, we had dozens of organizations that participated as campaign leaders and coalition partners. After Prop 8's passage, the number of grassroots organizations that sprouted has quadrupled. "There are too many organizations, each competing for my person power and dollars. To be truly effective, it would be great to receive 'clear' marching orders from a central source, along with an understanding of the various organizations and their roles so we know where our interests' best fit in terms of volunteering or donating." (*Walnut Creek*) Our campaign plan needs to identify the overall leadership structure, the various projects our campaign will need (e.g., canvassing, training, technology, media relations, translation support, etc), and a decision on whether these projects are implemented statewide or regionally. Once those roles and projects are identified, organizations can determine where they can best contribute to the next campaign. This information, including role or project vacancies, can then be shared with the public to help fill vacancies and provide more clarity on future campaign operations. "We need to have a system of checks and balances for our campaign leadership. We need to be able to provide them input and have our voices heard. We need to have some means of oversight or expectations that they need to fulfill and if they fail to meet those expectations, there needs to be some mechanism to change our leadership." (*Santa Rosa*)

## **8. Our future campaign leadership cannot represent just one or two organizations; it must reflect the diversity of our community.**

*"The biggest job in getting any movement off the ground is to keep together the people who form it. The task requires more than a common aim: it demands a philosophy that wins and holds people's allegiances; and it depends upon open channels of communication between people and their leaders." Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Get Engaged participants expressed the importance of promoting inclusion and diversity, with one participant stating, "Our campaign strategy must focus on inclusion and tapping the collective wisdom that we bring. We hold the answers." If our campaign promotes equality and inclusion, it will lead us to better decisions and help us reach out to those who are not yet with us. The Poll for Equality project whose marriage equality polling results were presented in the Get Engaged Tour is one example of what can happen when we promote inclusion and diversity. By expanding poll funders include communities of Faith, labor and Asian Pacific Islander, Latino and African American communities, we

asked better questions and reached out to broader communities and two of our top messages came represented the insight and perspectives of religious leaders and family organizations.

Leaders from Communities of Faith, People of Color, and Straight Allies must be full partners at the drafting table as we from a new campaign leadership structure that reflects the diversity of our community and the state. To challenge “group think” and bring the best and most diverse input to the table, the campaign leadership must include representatives from the non-profit and grassroots leaders, the business community, labor and elected officials. Representatives should come from all walks of life, from all regions of the state who are not afraid to disagree about being disagreeable. “We must empower communities of color and amplify their voices because they can speak personally and resonate with authenticity and not just for some hastily invited guest speaking opportunity; they have to be the very backbone of the leadership of our next campaign.” *(Oakland)*



## How Did We Get This Done?

A broad coalition of organization banded together to poll Californians on their support for marriage equality, messaging, and initiative options. The Get Engaged Tour provided us an opportunity to share these finding and obtain community insight and feedback on how to proceed in the next campaign. These Get Engaged community gatherings also provided local leaders an opportunity to identify volunteer and establish or expand local coalitions to integrate into a future statewide campaign. Between June 22<sup>nd</sup> and July 23<sup>rd</sup>, Get Engaged events were held in the following locations:

Bakersfield	Mendocino	Riverside	San Mateo
Berkeley/Kensington	Modesto	Sacramento	Santa Barbara
Claremont	Morgan Hill	San Bernardino	Santa Cruz
Fresno	Napa	San Diego - Metro	Santa Rosa
Grass Valley	Oakland	San Diego - North	Seaside
Hayward	Pacifica	San Diego - South	Stockton
Irvine	Palm Springs	San Francisco	Walnut Creek
Livermore	Palo Alto	San Jose	West Hollywood
Marin	Redlands	San Luis Obispo	

In addition, several community specific Get Engaged events were held with Faith Leaders in San Diego, Youth at a Family Camp in San Francisco, and statewide Community Service Executive Directors. Finally, Marriage Equality USA produced an on-line survey for individuals to provide feedback if they were unable to attend one of these events. If you are interested in hosting a Get Engaged Tour event, it is not too late to start getting organized in your hometown. Just send us an e-mail to [getengaged@marriageequality.org](mailto:getengaged@marriageequality.org) and we will send you all you need to get engaged.

The Get Engaged Tour was the brainchild of Molly McKay, Marriage Equality USA’s Media Director and feedback from each Get Engaged event was provided to Pamela Brown, Marriage Equality USA’s Policy Director, who authored this report.



## Whom Do We Have to Thank?

Finally yet importantly, we would like to thank Amy Simon of Goodwin Simon Victoria Research and David Binder of David Binder Research who took on almost 30 organizational leaders as clients, educated us about polling research, and incorporated our feedback into an innovative and unprecedented poll. However, they did not stop there. They participated in the Get Engaged Tour by presenting this polling data at almost every Tour location. When they were not available, they reached out to others in their offices or profession who generously volunteered to help. So we would also like to thank Sara Knight at Goodwin Simon Victoria Research; Senji Carpenter, Shanan Alper and Nick Johnson at David Binder Research; and Jill Darling, Jennie Pearson, and Doug Strand. Collectively you educated our community, treated us with dignity and respect, and answered all our questions. We will remember you as statistically significant when it comes to our marriage equality movement.

We would also like to thank the following organizations that came together to provide input and fund this innovative poll, illustrating how much better our work can be when we listen to and integrate diverse perspectives .

ACLU	Equality California	Liberty Hill Foundation
Alice B. Toklas LGBT Democratic Club	Equal Roots Coalition	Love Honor Cherish
API Equality	FAIR	Marriage Equality USA
API Equality - Los Angeles	GLAAD	Meet in the Middle
BAYMEC	HONOR PAC	National Center for Lesbian Rights
California Faith for Equality	Human Rights Campaign	The Task Force
Calitics CaliPAC	John Burton	Our Family Coalition
Center Advocacy Project (San Diego LGBT Center)	Jordan/Rustin Coalition	Souther Christian Leadership Council - LA
Courage Campaign	LA County Federation of Labor	Stonewall Democratic Club (Los Angeles)

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