

To: Marc Solomon
Marriage Director
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Fr: Richie Ross

Re: Analysis and Suggestions

The Numbers First:

Put percentages aside. Look at real numbers. Proposition 8 won by 600,000 votes. The central questions are:

Can we get 300,000 switched? And how does time impact that?

Since the latest research shows 60%-23% support for marriage equality among voters under-30 years of age, how many more of them will be "Likely Voters" in 2012?

In 2008...

170,734 of 18/19-year-olds voted.
189,735 of 20-year-olds voted.
181,363 of 21-year-olds voted.

In 2012, we will have a new batch of 18, 19, 20, and 21-year-olds that will add 515,875 new likely voters. If 60% of them vote with us and half of the "swing" voters join them, we can expect 353,374 NEW supporters among likely voters. Our net growth (new voters with us minus new voters against us) will be 162,501.

At the same time, records indicate that about 110,000 older voters die each year. In 2012, 440,000 of the 2008 voters will have died. If we again apply the poll to that raw number, our natural opposition will shrink by 101,200 of total likely voters.

I don't present these facts as an argument for 2012, but rather to allow the community to consider them in arriving at a decision.

The Couple Next Door:

The biggest assets the community has today are the 18,000 legally married same-sex couples.

If you accept this is a cultural issue, then we should approach it culturally, not politically.

Culture is about normative behaviors. These 18,000 couples can "normalize" same-sex marriage to other Californians.

I propose "The Couple Next Door"... a campaign of stories told by the gay and straight families who live next door to each other.

It allows people to express how their initial discomfort turned first to acceptance and finally to genuine neighborliness. It shows the faces and voices people talking about "the couple next door" and how they watch one another's kids, are involved in neighborhood issues together, volunteer at the schools, borrow the lawnmower, etc.

This approach:

- 1) Educates people to a fact. There are 18,000 legally married same-sex couples today. No one knows that.
- 2) Changes the dialectic. Opposing legalization threatens these "couples next door."
- 3) It replaces confrontational and aspirational language with invitational language. If people living next door to each other can share how their attitudes changed, it invites others to rethink their position, instead of either arguing that they should, or asking them to "please..."

I hope these thoughts are helpful to you.